

Union takes second at tourney

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

Maybe the Union Bobcats boys basketball team needs to be nervous more often.

The Bobcats channeled their pre-game anxiety into a first-half shooting frenzy to build a double-digit lead that they never gave up as they topped the Grant Union Prospectors, 58-49, Friday in the Blue Mountain Conference semifinals in Pendleton to earn a state playoff berth.

"We had a good pep talk beforehand and (I) said, 'Are you nervous, or are you ready to go because you prepared?' They decided they were ready to go," Head Coach Dan Daggett said. "Man, we shot the lights out of the ball in the first half."

And it was seemingly every player in red who came on the floor who had the hot hand. The Bobcats opened the game 7-for-11 from 3-point range and 11-for-18 overall. Even shots launched from the NBA 3-point line on the floor at the Pendleton Convention Center were going in.

Three-pointers from D.J. Coon and Jace Phillips early in the second quarter extended a four-point lead to 30-17, and a late trey from Keegan Glenn capped the half and put Union up 37-21.

"Our mindset is if we get a little space, that's all it takes," Glenn, who led Union with 21 points and 11 rebounds, said. "Once we're all on, we just fire it from anywhere we can."

The 54-percent shooting percentage in the first half didn't carry over, as Union was just 21 percent in the second half, which allowed Grant Union to close in. The Prospectors twice got as close as four, including at 49-45 on a Tristan Morris layup with 3:21 to play. But Glenn scored twice late to help keep Grant Union at bay, and the Bobcats



Jace Phillips takes a shot for Union in Friday's win.

went 5-for-8 from the free-throw line in the final 2:50 to hold on.

"The biggest thing was calling a timeout and getting our team to settle back in on (defense)," Daggett said. "The boys weathered the storm."

Glenn said it was the defensive play early, in fact, that gave Union the lift it needed.

"When we came down on defense the first possession and got a stop, then the second possession and got a stop, it led into our offense pushing the ball up the floor, so getting the stops on defense really led to the momentum," he said.

Cole McLean added 12 points and six steals for Union, and Hunter Coon scored eight as seven players scored.

The win locked up the Bobcats' first playoff berth since 2017.

"It's an awesome opportunity," Glenn added. "Last year, we didn't get to play in a state playoff game."

The Bobcats fell short, though, in their bid for a BMC tournament title, losing to the Heppner Mustangs in Satur-

day's championship game, 63-50.

The Mustangs quickly built a double-digit lead, went into the half up 29-18 and controlled the contest most of the night.

Glenn had 14 points and 10 rebounds for Union. Phillips also had 14 points and Tate Lantis reached double figures with 10 points.

The Bobcats (16-8 overall) will travel to face defending state champion Columbia Christian on Friday in their first-round game.

STANFIELD 53, ENTERPRISE 41

The Enterprise Outlaws boys basketball team saw its season end with a 53-41 loss to the Stanfield Tigers Friday at the Blue Mountain Conference tournament in Pendleton.

Enterprise fell behind by eight at halftime and watched the deficit grow to 42-26 by the end of the third quarter.

Devin Greer scored 14 points and Dylan Marr had 13 for the Outlaws, who finished with a record of 9-15. ■

Enterprise, Union are playoff bound

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Enterprise Outlaws girls basketball team couldn't have asked for a better start, but then cooled off considerably in a 41-33 loss to the Heppner Mustangs Friday in the semifinals of the Blue Mountain Conference tournament in Pendleton.

"It's a classic example of being all jacked up to start the game and then coming down off of it," Head Coach Mike Crawford said. "They were all excited to the point of wasting a huge amount of energy."

Enterprise jumped out to a 10-2 lead just 2:23 into the game, with a steal and layup by Shelby Moncrief and a put-back by Ashlyn Gray capping the hot start.

Heppner, though, came back to take the lead by the end of the first, 13-12, on a Marlee Mitchell 3-pointer, then went ahead for good 17-14 on a Jacee Currin 3-point play midway through the second quarter.

The lead reached 34-23 late in the third before Enterprise put together a 9-0 run to get within 34-32 with 6:11 to play after a layup and jumper by Carsyn Miller. Sydney Wilson responded with a 3-pointer for Heppner to stop the run, and the Outlaws converted just one free throw the rest of the way.

Wilson and Currin were key for Heppner. Wilson finished with 19 points and 12 rebounds, and Currin had 11 and 15, respectively.

"The two players we had to deal with were Wilson and Currin. We didn't shut them down at all," Crawford said.

Both teams struggled from



Enterprise's Shelby Moncrief, left, drives to the hoop against Heppner Friday.

the floor, with Heppner shooting 15-for-54 and Enterprise 14-for-54. But the Mustangs hit four 3-pointers to none for Enterprise and outrebounded the Outlaws 47-33.

Miller and Moncrief both scored eight points to lead Enterprise. Gray added six points and 13 rebounds.

The loss didn't keep Enterprise from the playoffs, as the Outlaws finished high enough in the OSAA rankings — seventh — to garner an at-large bid to state. It did, though, eliminate their hopes of playing their first-round game at home.

But it could still work out well for the Outlaws.

"We needed to win this game in order to host. However, we may face a better opponent," Crawford said.

The Outlaws recovered from the loss in Friday's game to top the Union Bobcats in

the third-place game Saturday, 46-34.

The Outlaws held just a 28-27 lead entering the final quarter, before putting up 18 points in the fourth to pull away.

Moncrief had 17 points for Enterprise, and Miller had 10 points and seven rebounds.

Callie Glenn had 11 points for Union, and Kylie Marriott grabbed 18 rebounds.

Union reached the third-place game by defeating the Stanfield Tigers in its first game at the district tournament Friday, 51-41.

Stats were not available.

Enterprise (18-6 overall) will travel to face Portland Christian in the first round of the playoffs Saturday, while Union (14-10) visits Coquille in its first-round game, also on Saturday. It's the Bobcats' first playoff berth since 2015. ■

EOU sends five to nationals

Observer staff

The Eastern Oregon men's wrestling team saw five athletes qualify for the NAIA National Championships and placed sixth as a team at the Cascade Collegiate Conference Championships Friday and Saturday in Great Falls, Montana.

Drake Randall (165 pounds) reached the finals and took second to lead the Mountaineers, who finished with 74.5 points. Randall's championship match against Providence's Adrian Lyons-Lopez went to overtime, where the Argos' wrestler earned a win by fall in the second extra period to claim the title. Mhar Caballa (125) shook off a first-round loss to win four matches in a row and take third. In the third-place match, Caballa earned a 3-1 decision over Menlo's Ian Morken to com-

plete his comeback.

Blake McNall (133) also placed third and won his final three matches after an early loss. He finished the tournament with a 12-5 decision over Embry-Riddle's Collin Anderson in the third-place match.

Ryan Redford (184) was the Mountaineers' third third-place finisher. Redford reached the semifinals before he lost, then recovered to win his final two and beat Providence's Randy Kessler by a 5-3 decision in the third-place match. Rounding out the placers for EOU was Harley DiLulo, who took fifth at 197. DiLulo traded wins and losses through his first four bouts before finishing with a 9-3 decision over Menlo's Bruce Valdez in the fifth-place match.

The national championship tournament is March 1-2 in Des Moines, Iowa. ■

Eastern hoops splits on the road

Observer staff

The Eastern Oregon women's basketball team saw its 48-game Cascade Collegiate Conference winning streak end at the hands of the last conference opponent to beat EOU.

Oregon Tech rallied in the fourth quarter to upend No. 9 Eastern Oregon, 74-69, Friday night to hand the Mountaineers their first loss in CCC play since the Owls defeated EOU 69-65 on Jan. 15, 2017.

EOU held a 54-52 lead entering the final quarter, but a Bailey Nelson 3-point play triggered a 7-0 run that gave the Owls the lead for good. Maya Ah You-Dias hit a jumper to pull EOU within 60-59 with 6:14 to play, but the margin reached as much as seven in the final minute.

Ah You-Dias had 18 points, six rebounds and six assists to lead Eastern. Both Julia Hanni and Maren Herrud scored 14 points. EOU, though, was just 1-for-11 from 3-point range.

On Saturday Eastern Oregon started a new winning streak with a tightly contested 73-72 win over rival Southern Oregon in the regular-season finale for both teams.

The Raiders got as close as 71-70 on a Destinee Jones layup with 43 seconds to play. EOU twice split two free throws to push the lead to three, and the tying 3-point attempt by Daranda Hinkey in the final seconds missed.

Maren Herrud and Maya Ah You-Dias both scored 10 points — both on 6-for-14 shooting — to lead EOU. Jane Nelson added 10 points, and Beverly Slater scored nine.

Eastern Oregon (25-3 overall, 19-1 CCC), which reached the 25-win plateau for the third year in a row, hosts Multnomah at 7 p.m. Tuesday to begin the CCC tournament.

MEN SPLIT, ENTER CCC TOURNEY WITH FIFTH SEED

A day after suffering a blowout loss at Or-

egon Tech, the Eastern Oregon men's basketball team finished the regular season with a 64-61 win at Southern Oregon Saturday when Jordan May knocked down the game-winning 3-pointer with five seconds to play.

The win meant that EOU would clinch the fourth seed if Corban won at home against Northwest Christian, but NCU had other plans as it scored a 75-73 overtime victory. The win gave NCU the third seed, Corban the fourth and dropped EOU to fifth.

The Mountaineers were seemingly in control against SOU. They led for all but three minutes and were up 57-47 after a Zane Wright 3-pointer with 6:39 to play. But SOU scored seven straight to get close, and eventually tied the game on a 3-pointer by Tristen Holmes with 24 seconds to play.

May, though, had the final say as he hit the winning trey for his second game-winner in eight days. He also hit a buzzer-beating 3-pointer against Warner Pacific on Feb. 8.

May finished with 19 points to lead EOU, which won despite shooting 36 percent and going just 5-for-17 from 3-point range. Jarek Schetzle added 16 points and 15 rebounds, and Landon Jones had 13 points.

It was a stark contrast from Friday, when OIT pulled away in the second half for a 91-61 win over the Mountaineers.

EOU led the Owls 18-15 in the first half after a May 3-pointer, but a 19-5 OIT run gave the Owls a 34-23 lead. They led 46-36 at the half, then opened the second half on a 15-5 run and cruised to the win.

Schetzle finished with 14 points to lead the Mountaineers. May had 11 points, and Jones scored nine.

Eastern (15-14 overall, 10-8 CCC) travels to Corban Wednesday for the CCC quarterfinals. ■

EOU softball drops openers

Observer staff

The Eastern Oregon softball team dropped two contests in Redding, California, to open the 2019 season, losing to Simpson, 6-0, and to William Jessup, 8-7.

Eastern had just two hits in the opener — a Haley Ebner single and a Rayne Spencer double — against Simpson who struck out seven. Lauren Spencer allowed four runs — three in the first inning — on

five hits in three innings in the loss for the Mountaineers.

EOU took a 5-3 lead into the sixth inning in its second game against William Jessup, but the Warriors plated five runs in the frame against EOU starter Ashton Kazmierski to take the lead.

Eastern's offense found a rhythm in the contest, collecting 13 hits, including a solo home run in the sixth by Madison Parker that pulled

the Mountaineers within 8-6. Sarah Bonner added a sacrifice fly, and EOU threatened in the seventh, but couldn't pull even.

Shevan DeFreitas and Spencer both had three hits. Parker had two, and Bonner had two RBIs. Kazmierski allowed eight runs on 10 hits in five-plus innings.

EOU (0-2 overall) faces the same two teams again today and then Simpson in a doubleheader Tuesday. ■

Eight qualify for 2A/1A state

Observer staff

Steven Beckman and Zeb Ramsden both clinched district titles, and the Joseph/Wallowa Eagles wrestling team earned four state placers and took fifth place at the Class 2A/1A Special District 4 Tournament Friday and Saturday in Halfway.

Beckman (113 pounds), a two-time defending champion at 106, won the district title at his new weight class by defeating Heppner's Trevor Antonucci by a second-round fall in the final. Ramsden (132), meanwhile, went 4-0 and beat Culver's Anthony Hood by a 4-0 decision in the title bout.

Both Austin Brockamp (170) and Jonah Staigle (195) went 2-1 to take second and reach state. Brockamp, after falling in the title bout, defeated Heppner's Charles Cason by a 16-0 technical fall in the second-place match. Staigle also recovered from a title match loss to take second, earning the No. 2 spot by rule over Crane's Tanner Davis due to an earlier win over Davis.

Enterprise took seventh with 66.5 points and put two wrestlers through to state. Trace Evans (138) went 3-1, reached the final and took second place by rule over Union/Cove's

Carter Blackburn after beating him earlier in the tournament.

Klint Norton (285) went 2-1 for second, losing the championship match but winning second by rule over Martin Negrete of Culver.

One surprise for the Outlaws was Shane Lund, a three-time state qualifier, slipping to third at 132 after losing the second-place match to Anthony Hood by fall.

Union/Cove, which took ninth at 59.5 points, saw Jaxon Blackburn (126) qualify for state by finishing second. Blackburn went 3-1, losing only in the title match, and won the second-place match by fall over Crane's Glen Starbuck.

Imbler, which was 10th with 48.5 points, also got a wrestler into state as Logan Butcher (145) placed second. Butcher went 4-1 on the tournament, lost just the title bout, and defeated Grant Union's Justin Hodge by a 5-3 decision in the second-place match.

Reece McConnell (138) went 2-2 and placed fifth to lead Elgin, which was 12th with 12.5 points.

The eight state qualifiers next take to the mat at the state tournament Friday and Saturday in Portland. ■



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