

Rangers take two from Bobcats

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

The Union/Cove Bobcats baseball team has made strides in its effort to rebuild from a rough stretch that saw it win only four games over three years. The team has already matched its win total from a year ago, and hung with Dufur/South Wasco County in a doubleheader Monday in Union.

The Bobcats, though, suffered a pair of tough-to-take last-inning losses, falling 4-3 in the opener of Monday's doubleheader and 5-4 in the nightcap.

"We're getting there," head coach Jon Reynolds said. "At this point last year, we didn't have a chance to even do that. And we've been (close) in all the games (except for two). Our pitching is the biggest difference. We're throwing strikes, we're playing defense, now we just have to start hitting the ball. We have to score more runs."

The Bobcats entered the bottom of the seventh of the opening game trailing 4-1, but gave themselves a chance to pull even despite not getting a hit. Anthony Goodwater walked with one out, Levi Obendorf walked with two outs, and Gannon Carreiro reached on an error to score Goodwater. D.J. Coon was hit by a pitch to load the bases, and Keegan Glenn hit a grounder that was booted at second base to score Obendorf. Dufur, though, got out of the frame with the win when Carreiro was thrown out at home trying to also score on the error.

Reynolds, in hindsight, believed it was still the right move to send the runner in that scenario.

"You have to make them make a play," the coach said. "He's bobbling it at second base, the fastest guy on the team is rounding third, I'm sending him every time. I would rather make that gamble than see with two outs if the next guy is going to hit the ball. They just made a good play."

Union/Cove's other run came in the fourth inning on a Hunter Coon RBI single.

Carreiro allowed three runs on 10 hits in 4-2/3 innings, striking out four and walking three to keep the Bobcats close.

Game two was another nail-biter that Dufur stole late.

With the score tied at 4-4 in the



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Union/Cove's Keegan Glenn scores on a wild pitch during the second game of Monday's doubleheader against Dufur/South Wasco County.

bottom of the seventh, Russell Peters of the Rangers, the designated home team in the nightcap, roped a one-out double and scored on a two-out single by Louis Red Cloud for the walk-off win.

"He was solid all game. He's just a good ball player. He stepped up and hit the ball," Reynolds said of Peters.

Peters made a key play in the top of the seventh as well with a diving catch of a Hunter Coon liner that prevented a double or triple.

The Bobcats took an early lead in game two, scoring in the first when D.J. Coon singled with one out, moved up on a wild pitch and scored on an error.

The Rangers scored twice off Glenn, the starting pitcher, in the first before the sophomore settled in. Glenn walked four batters in the first, but then he found the strike zone and command of his curveball. He went on to allow four runs on six hits, walk six and strike out nine batters in 5-1/3.

"I was a little tense the first

inning," Glenn said. "I went back in the dugout between innings and told myself to relax a little bit. Went out there, quit thinking as much, pitched and it worked out."

Union/Cove scored three times in the top of the third without a hit, taking advantage of three errors and three walks by Dufur pitcher Brock LaFaver. Errant throws by the pitcher allowed Carreiro and D.J. Coon to score, and a wild pitch let Glenn score for a 4-2 lead.

Dufur rebounded for two runs in the home half of the third, then the teams matched zeroes until the Rangers' winning hit.

Union/Cove managed just three hits in the nightcap, two of which were by Glenn, who felt the team played well in spite of being swept.

"We got the loss, but it was two of the best games we probably played this year," he said.

The Bobcats (3-5 overall, 1-4 Special District 7) travel to Stanfield/Echo for a doubleheader Saturday. ■

Lillard's long buzzer beater lifts Blazers into second round

By Anne M. Peterson
The Associated Press

PORTLAND — After Damian Lillard hit his walk-off 3-pointer to send the Trail Blazers along in the playoffs, he waved goodbye to the Thunder bench.

"That was the last word," he said afterward. "That was having the last word."

Lillard finished with a franchise playoff-record 50 points and Portland eliminated Oklahoma City from the postseason in five games with a 118-115 victory on Tuesday night.

With the game tied, Lillard dribbled just inside of halfcourt near the Blazers logo and then pulled up and hit the game-winner at the buzzer from 37-feet. After his wave, Lillard was mobbed by his teammates and the crowd chanted "MVP! MVP!"

Lillard finished 10 3-pointers, second-most ever in an NBA playoff game.

"All of those things that we did to give ourselves a chance to win were huge," Lillard said. "And my part in it, I think, was probably my most important performance."

Portland advances to the Western Conference semifinals to face the winner of the series between the Nuggets and San Antonio. Denver won 108-90 earlier in the night to take a 3-2 lead in that series.

It was the 12th straight road playoff loss for the Thunder, who have been eliminated in the opening round for three straight seasons.

Russell Westbrook had 29 points, 11 rebounds and 14 assists for his 10th

career playoff triple-double and his second of the series. Paul George added 36 points.

"Very, very disappointing. It's as simple as that," George said. "We let this one slip away but it is what it is."

Lillard had 34 points in the first half alone — more than Westbrook and George had combined (32) for the Thunder — but the Blazers had just a 61-60 edge going into the second half.

The Thunder led 90-88 going into the final quarter. Westbrook hit a 3-pointer to extend the lead while Lillard took a break on the bench.

Oklahoma City went up 105-90 with 7:45 left on Dennis Schroder's pull-up jumper as Portland struggled.

Lillard's 3-pointer pulled the Blazers within 108-103, but Westbrook answered with his own 3. CJ McCollum's bank shot cut Oklahoma City's lead to 113-109 with 1:39 left. Maurice Harkless added free throws to get the Blazers within two.

McCollum tied it with a jumper with just under a minute left, but George scored on the other end. Lillard's layup re-tied it then Westbrook missed a layup with 18.3 seconds left to set up Lillard's epic buzzer beater.

"I don't care what anybody says that's a bad shot," George said about Lillard's 3. "But he made it and that story will be told, but it was a bad shot. You live with it."

McCollum finished with 17 for the Blazers and Enes Kanter had 13 points and 13 rebounds. ■

LHS tennis splits home finale against TigerScots; girls golf wins

Observer staff

The La Grande Tigers boys tennis team went 4-3 in Tuesday's home match against the Weston-McEwen TigerScots, while the LHS girls went 2-3 on the afternoon. All the matches were pro-set matches as opposed to the regular best-of-three set matches.

LHS won two singles matches, with Devin Ingram edging Elijah Kelly, 9-8, after winning the tie-breaker, 7-2, while Adam Remily routed Harry Shaul 8-0. In doubles, La Grande earned wins from Nick DuVernay and Kaleb Myer over Cade Bryan and Alex Wood (8-3) and Mason Mellinger and Gabe Blackman beat Elijah Kelly and Cade Bryan (8-2).

Colm Cahill dropped an 8-2 match against Noah Kelly in singles and Cayson Forsberg fell to



Ronald Bond/The Observer

La Grande's Brittany Robles returns a shot during Tuesday's home match against Weston-McEwen.

Lebraun Albert, 8-2. In the other doubles match, James Thurman and Scott Remily lost to Noah

Kelly and Lebraun Albert, 8-4.

On the girls side, Brenna Bushman and Emily Wilson came

away with wins for La Grande in singles play. Bushman defeated Shelby Yunk, 8-3, and Wilson blanked Ace Jensen, 6-0.

Rebecca Conklin dropped an 8-2 set to Tenley Alderson, and in doubles both teams of Britany Robles and Maritza Villagomez, and Marla Ortiza and Lilia Torres dropped 8-0 matches.

The Tigers visit Nyssa Thursday.

TIGERS WIN IN BAKER

Katie Williams had a career-best score of 87 to take third and lead the La Grande Tigers girls golf team to a victory Monday at the Baker Invitational.

"I knew she was going to break 90 soon," LHS head coach Cally Goss said, noting Williams shot a 38 on the front nine. "She has been so close and striking the ball so cleanly. It was nice to

see her work pay off. She's been working really hard."

Three of the four Tigers broke 100 as they finished with a score of 379. Morgan Tussey posted a score of 92 to place fifth, Baylee McNeil added a 98 and Tori Bowen had a 102.

"It was the most positive day we've had all year," Goss said. "It was really good for our team. I was so proud of them and they were very excited to get the team win."

The Tigers are back on the course today at Wine Valley in Walla Walla, Washington.

EAGLESTAKE SECOND ON THE TRACK

The Joseph Eagles boys track and field team scored 87 points to take second at the Weston-McEwen Small School Invite

See Roundup / Page 7A

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