



Photo courtesy of Klel Carson
The La Grande wrestling team won the Oregon Classic for the first time.

Tigers bury competition at Classic

Observer staff

REDMOND — La Grande went a perfect 6-0 in duals Friday and Saturday to dominate at the Oregon Classic in Redmond and come away with the 4A team title at the tournament, the Tigers’ first Oregon Classic title. “The wrestling world describes it as the dual meet state championship,” LHS head coach Klel Carson said. Carson added the win is a confidence-booster for the team. “We know for sure that our varsity lineup is the toughest in the state,” he said.

Prep wrestling

The Tigers were nearly perfect in their pool Friday, winning three duals against Molalla, Madras and Woodburn by a combined score of 228-6. That included 78-0 victories over Molalla and Madras that saw them collect pins in 19 of the 23 contested matches. Fourteen of the pins happened in the first round, and eight took less than a minute, with the quickest being Spencer Gerst’s 12-second pin of Madras’ Shain Beymer at 220 pounds. Lincoln Clark needed

only 17 seconds to pin Molalla’s Dakota Orfield in the 220-pound bout in the first dual. The domination continued against Woodburn, with La Grande posting nine more pins in a 72-6 win, all of which took place in the first round of the matches. Gabe Shukle had the fastest pin, topping Grant Morales in just 20 seconds at 285. “They were going after kids. It was awesome,” Carson said of the speed of many of La Grande’s victories. See Wrestling / Page 7A

Strong finish lifts Huskies

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

ELGIN — Elgin simply needed to get back to playing team basketball. That, head coach Kevin Johnson said, was the key Saturday in the Huskies finishing off a 43-33 home win over Imbler, one that moved the team to 2-0 in the early stages of Old Oregon League play. “The guys weren’t playing together as a team, they weren’t utilizing each other with the team concept that we continue to push, and that last timeout that I took about 1:30 left, that’s the conversation I had,” Johnson said. Elgin largely played team ball to build an early lead, which reached as much as 17-6 early in the second quarter following a steal and layup by Jordon Palmer and a field goal by Corbin Remington. Imbler got back within a point late in the second quarter, briefly pulled ahead in the third on a 3-point play by Nate Bingaman and later at 29-28 on a Wyatt Frost field goal, and was still within 35-33 after a Bingaman free throw with 2:40 to play. But Elgin had the final say. Tristan Simpson had a loose ball knocked into his hands and made a jumper to extend the lead to four. Remington added two free throws and Gage McKay followed with two late baskets for the final margin. Meanwhile, the Huskies stepped up defensively, holding Imbler to just four free throws in the fourth quarter and forcing eight turnovers. Imbler was 0-for-10 from the floor in the final period, while Elgin was 4-for-12. “We’re not the most talented team, so we have to play together. If you don’t, then you’re going to get beat,” Johnson said. McKay and Simpson combined for 11 of Elgin’s



Staff photo by Ronald Bond
Elgin’s Tristan Simpson, right, drives to the hoop Saturday during the second half of an Old Oregon League basketball game in Elgin.

Prep boys hoops

13 points in the final period. Simpson, who finished with 11 points, also had five of his team-high 11 rebounds in the fourth and added three steals. Johnson credited the senior for how he stepped up down the stretch. “With his aggression, when I can tell him to go do something, he goes and does it, and there’s no questions asked about it,” Johnson said of Simpson. “He’s a workhorse, got a great mind, nothing flusters him.” Imbler found a rhythm offensively after falling by double digits in the second quarter to get back in the game. Frost scored twice inside during a 10-0 run, one

that Jayce Burnette finished with a layup to make it a 17-16 game with 1:21 to play in the half. The teams traded baskets, but Palmer canned a 3-pointer just before the break to put Elgin up 22-18 at halftime. Burnette had the first five points of the third, including a 3-pointer to put the Panthers ahead for the first time, 23-22, with 6:21 to play in the period. The teams traded the lead six times in the quarter before Clay Wilhelm’s putback late gave Elgin a 30-29 lead going into the fourth. The Huskies led the rest of the way. Burnette had 10 points for Imbler and Frost scored eight. Frost also had six

rebounds and five blocked shots. Elgin (7-5 overall, 2-0 OOL) visits Griswold Tuesday, while Imbler (4-9, 2-2) hosts Cove Friday. Also Saturday Heppner 52, Union 46: The Bobcats dropped their second Blue Mountain Conference game of the season Saturday on the road in Heppner. Keegan Glenn scored 17 points to lead the Bobcats and Jace Phillips added 14 points. Glenn had 12 of his points in the second half. Union trailed by just three points at the half and 34-28 after three quarters but couldn’t complete the rally in the fourth as the Mustangs went 10-for-14 from the See Roundup / Page 7A



Staff photo by Ronald Bond
Elgin’s Jocelyn Palmer scored 22 points Saturday in the Huskies’ win over Imbler.

Elgin overcomes slow start, tops Imbler in OOL play

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

ELGIN — Elgin guard Jocelyn Palmer anticipated the Huskies might get off to a slow start in Saturday’s game against rival Imbler. The junior, though, helped spark the offense, connecting on three 3-pointers and finishing with 22 points as Elgin pulled away from the Panthers for a 43-23 home win in Old Oregon League action. “This week was a rough week at practice so we kind of expected it,” Palmer said. “Maybe we were underestimating them a little bit.” The Huskies never trailed, but held just a 2-0 lead until Jayden Palmer’s 3-pointer with 55 seconds to play in the first quarter, and a free throw and basket by Kaelin Evans made it 8-0 after one.

Prep girls hoops

Jocelyn Palmer caught fire late in the second quarter with a pair of 3s to extend the lead to 20-3 at the half. The Huskies held Imbler scoreless for the game’s first 11 minutes and without a field goal until the third quarter. “Our coach pulled us in and he just really elaborated on the fact that this is a really important game and from here on out it’s really important, and there’s no letting up,” Jocelyn Palmer said of what finally got Elgin going. She followed with seven more points in the third, including her third 3 of the game for an 18-point lead. Imbler found a rhythm offensively in the third to See Elgin / Page 8A



Staff photo by Ronald Bond
Union’s Autumn Daggett, left, and Stanfield’s Alexis Shelby battle for possession Friday night during a Blue Mountain Conference basketball game in Union.

Big run lifts Union past Stanfield

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

UNION — A major run spanning the third and fourth quarters Friday turned what was shaping up to be a close contest between two of the top three teams in the Blue Mountain Conference into a dominant win for the Union Bobcats. Union ended the third quarter on a 15-2 tear and extended the run to 22-3 early in the fourth on its way to a 57-39 home win over the Stanfield Tigers. “Good win for us. Stanfield’s a great team, and I expect good things from them on their home court,” head coach Rhondie Rickman-Johansen said. “I love playing good teams. They’re going to be a force to contend with.”

Prep girls hoops

The teams entered Friday as two of the only three unbeaten teams in BMC play, along with Enterprise, and jockeyed back and forth for 2-1/2 quarters. Stanfield, in fact, took a 29-28 lead with 5:16 to play in the third on a runner by Nyah Tejeda, who had 19 points to lead all scorers. Callie Glenn, who had 16 points to lead Union, countered with a 3-pointer 13 seconds later to give the Bobcats the lead for good and trigger the game-breaking salvo. Taylar Daggett and Brianna Kohr each hit 3s as part of the run to help push the lead to 43-31 after three, while Stanfield didn’t score in the final 4:13 of the quarter. Another

field goal by Kohr and consecutive steals and layups by Glenn and Autumn Daggett gave Union its largest lead of the night at 50-32 with 5:48 to play. “We started playing better defense, getting steals. A couple girls got on fire and were shooting really well,” said Audrey Wells, who had eight points for the Bobcats. “We just started working well together as a team and that gave us an edge.” Union ramped up the defense in the second half to put the game away, limiting Stanfield to just 25% shooting after halftime. The Tigers also committed 25 turnovers on the night, 14 in the first half. Union’s defense played a key role in forcing See Union / Page 8A