

Local high school cross-country teams shine at championships

Wallowa Valley, Union/Cove boys claim victories; girls take second

EO Media Group

LEBANON — It may not have been “official” in the eyes of the Oregon School Activities Association, but the Wallowa Valley Outlaws boys cross-country team again proved it is the best in the state.

Buoyed by three top-five finishes and by having its top five runners inside the top 20, Wallowa Valley breezed to the de facto Class 3A state championship — as it was expected to on paper — Saturday, April 10, at Cheadle Lake Park in Lebanon.

“It was just a great team effort by the kids,” head coach Dan Moody said. “They pushed themselves. They were going hard. They don’t take anything for granted. It’s great. Sometimes kids do that. They don’t. They went after it.”

And the Union/Cove high school boys cross-country team also took to the winner’s podium, earning the title for the 2A/1A cross-country championship.

The Oregon School Activities Association did not sanction a state-wide event in the culminating week of Season 2, but instead East Linn Christian hosted a state-style event in Lebanon that brought in many of the top-ranked teams.

Kellen Peters, East Linn Christian athletic director and cross-country coach, had reached out to fellow small-school cross-country coaches about putting together an unofficial state championship for runners at the 3A/2A/1A level.

“Back when we found out there would be no OSAA state championships, I saw the look on my students’ faces,” Peters said. “I know I’m not the only coach who is seeing those faces. I understand why the OSAA can’t do it,



Tom Nordvedt/Contributed Photo

The Wallowa Valley boys cross-country team poses with the state title trophy after winning the 3A state meet Saturday, April 10, 2021, in Lebanon.



Jill Pedro/Contributed Photo

The Union/Cove high school boys cross-country team stands on the podium Saturday, April 10, 2021, in Lebanon after winning the boys 2A/1A cross-country championship.

but with some help, we are able to do something for the kids.”

The Outlaws scored 34 points as a team to easily outpace second-place La Pine, which scored 68 points. Third-place Westside Christian closely followed with 74 points.

“We knew that La Pine was probably our main competition,” Moody said. “We’ve got the target on our backs.”

Wallowa Valley, which returned the core of its state-title-winning team from 2019, was nothing short of dominant. Henry Coughlan led the pack for the Outlaws by taking second in a time of 16:01.15. Shortly after him in third was Zac Knapp in 16:18.81, and Bayden Menton placed fifth in 16:59.01.

The Wallowa Valley girls cross-country team scored 81 points in Saturday’s de facto 3A/2A/1A state championship in Lebanon to place second, and in the process flipped the

script from the district meet earlier this month by edging Heppner. The Mustangs, who on April 2 topped Wallowa Valley on the way to the district title, scored 83 points Saturday to place third.

COVE/UNION FINISHES STRONG

All seven of the boys running for Union/Cove finished in the top 50 out of a field of 111 at the 2A/1A cross-country championship. Three runners finished in the top 20: sophomore Taylor Fox at No. 4 with a time of 16:48.99; senior Israel O’Reilly at no. 7 with 17:02.12; and freshman Eli Williams at No. 15 with 17:51.98.

The boys team finished the day with 48 points, edging out Bandon by 2.

The Union/Cove girl’s team earned 81 points Saturday to place second to Bandon, which took the 5,000 meter championship with 46 points.

Prep football roundup

By BRETT KANE
For The Observer

Enterprise finishes with win over Cove

COVE — Despite the loss of three starters, the Outlaws managed to round out their abbreviated season with a win on their first and only road contest of the year Friday afternoon, April 9, defeating the Cove Leopards 40-18.

“On offense, we started three freshmen, and on defense, two,” Enterprise head coach Rusty Eschler said. “They stepped up and played well. They were a little nervous at kickoff, but as the game went on, they settled in real well.”

Eschler said the lack of their regular lineup took some getting used to for the remaining Outlaws, who ended up tallying 408 total offensive yards on the night.

“We were missing our quarterback, tight end, outside linebacker and starting guard,” he said. “It took some time, but the team adjusted.”

Enterprise’s 3.5-game 2020-21 season began with a 42-0 home loss to Wallowa, followed by a 48-12



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Cody Hibbert (12) of La Grande performs an ankle grab on Drake Harper (16) of Baker on Friday, April 9, 2021, preventing Harper from rushing down the field at Community Stadium in La Grande. The Baker Bulldogs defeated the La Grande Tigers 22-7 in the final match of the season.

win over Union and a two-quarter matchup with Imbler on April 2. The Outlaws were set to face Union in a rematch, but the Bobcats had to cancel due to a lack of players.

“Imbler was gracious enough to play us two quarters after they played lone,” Eschler said. “It’s been a tough season. It was a way different year than we’ve ever had before. But the kids got to play three-and-a-half games. That’s better than nothing. You wish you could have all six games, but it is what it is.”

The Outlaws wrapped up the season with a 2-1 overall record in 1A Special District 2 play. Cove finished 0-4.

Baker topples La Grande

LA GRANDE — The 4A Greater Oregon League’s top-ranked La Grande Tigers saw their win streak and season come to an end Friday night, April 9.

La Grande’s four-game season ended in a heart-breaker in their lone home appearance of the year, losing to Baker 22-7. The Tigers were coming off a 54-6 road win over Ontario last week and ended the season 3-1. Baker finished at 3-3.

Wallowa wins on the road

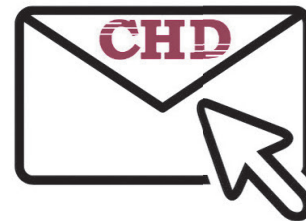
ELGIN — The Wallowa Cougars (4-1) prevailed on the road Friday, April 9, against the Elgin Huskies (0-2) 58-42.

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EOU volleyball, women’s soccer head to nationals

The Observer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Eastern Oregon University’s volleyball team has earned its seventh straight bid to compete for the national championship. And the Mountaineers women’s soccer team qualified for the fourth year in a row to attend the national tournament.

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics released its fields for the Women’s Volleyball National Championships and the Women’s Soccer National Championships. The Mountaineers join 48 teams qualifying to compete for the volleyball crown, according to reports from EOU Athletics, and a 40-team field vying for the soccer title.

The Mountaineers will play host to the Bobcats of University of California, Merced, in the opening

round. EOU earned an automatic qualifying bid to this year’s national tournament after finishing the regular season undefeated at 15-0 overall and going 14-0 in Cascade Collegiate Conference play. Entering the NAIA postseason, EOU boasts a 16-1 overall record.

The Mountaineers and Bobcats will square off Saturday, April 17, with first serve set for 5 p.m. inside Quinn Coliseum, La Grande.

Eastern Oregon University also is in the final cut for the women’s soccer and will be the No. 2 seed in the Santa Barbara bracket.

The Mountaineers will travel to Santa Barbara, California, and are grouped with No. 1 seed Westmont (California), No. 3 seed La Sierra (California), and the Oregon Institute of Technology. Westmont is the host for the group.

Grande Ronde Hospital and Clinics proudly welcomes:

Jennifer Hoffman, FNP-C

To the GRH Urgent Care team as a Family Nurse Practitioner

Nurse Practitioner Jennifer Hoffman joins the GRH team from an urgent care facility in Peoria, Illinois. She is a Midwest native and grew up on a small hobby farm, caring for many kinds of animals throughout her upbringing. She loves the outdoors, including fishing, camping, hiking, hunting,



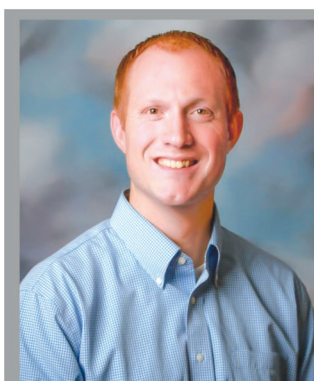
Jennifer Hoffman, FNP-C

boating, and skiing, and fell in love with the western united states many years ago. After a recent vacation to mountains in the area, she and her family concluded it was time to plant some new roots “out west”. Jennifer enjoys working in urgent care, particularly the variety and challenges that the field presents. She is passionate about her work, meeting patients where they are at in their healthcare journey, and treats everyone as if they were her own family. She looks forward to building new memories in beautiful Eastern Oregon. **Join us in welcoming Jennifer and her family to Union County!**

GRH Urgent Care

10303 S. Walton Road, Island City • 541.962.7845 • grh.org/urgentcare

To learn more about Jennifer and the rest of the Urgent Care team, take a look at our online provider directory at grh.org.



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