

LHS basketball: 'We're going all the way'

Core group of seniors have Tigers ready for deep postseason run

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — When the final buzzer sounded at the end on Friday, June 18, following another victory, this time over Baker City, the La Grande girls basketball team celebrated perfection.

The Tigers wrapped up their regular season with an undefeated 10-0 record to finish at the top of the Class 4A Greater Oregon League. In a season delayed by COVID-19, the core group of seniors — Camryn Collman, Ella Dunlap, Lauren Rinker, Grace Perry and McKaylee Orton — have led the team to the new heights.

“A big part of the reason that we’re sitting in the position we’re in is because of those kids that have put in the time in the offseason,” La Grande head coach Brian Wright said.

Collman, a senior guard, is committed to play collegiate basketball at the University of Portland next fall.

“She’s really passionate about playing basketball and has put in the time to become such a good player,” Wright said.

Collman leads the team in scoring and controls the



The La Grande girls basketball team celebrates a victory against Baker on Friday, June 18, 2021. The 44-35 victory concluded a perfect 10-0 regular season for the Tigers as they head into state competition.



La Grande head coach Brian Wright goes over the game plan during a timeout against Baker on Friday, June 18, 2021. La Grande defeated Baker 44-35 to conclude the regular season 10-0.

pace of the game at the point guard position for the Tigers.

For the senior leaders, the delayed basketball season created an environment unlike any other in previous years. All five athletes are participating on the basketball team after having graduated earlier this month.

“It’s a unique experience,” Collman said. “I’ve graduated, so I don’t go to school in the morning and just come to practice, but it’s so amazing to play and still be a part of the team.”

Counterbalancing Collman on the perimeter, Dunlap adds low-post scoring and up-close finishing abilities to La Grande’s starting five.

“We have a really good guard in Camryn that can score and defend. Then Ella is so tough on the block,” Wright said. “It’s our game plan to run a lot of triangle offense and look for the low block.”

The duo creates difficult matchups for opposing defenses and have been a crucial part of La Grande’s undefeated

regular season. Although La Grande is anchored by its seniors, four sophomores and two juniors fill out the roster and contribute to the team’s success.

“They look up to us and trust us a lot, so we feel comfortable around each other and we’re able to play well together,” Dunlap said.

Dunlap is attending Eastern Oregon University to study special education next fall and plans on potentially joining the university’s basketball team as a walk-on.

Rinker, Perry and Orton round out the group of graduating seniors. All three were named first-team Greater Oregon League in soccer this year in addition to their success on the basketball team.

“In a very short season, it really helps to have five kids, four that have been in the program since Day 1, who know their stuff,” Wright said. “If we’d have started out with underclassmen it just wouldn’t be that way.”

The Tigers will begin state competition on Tuesday, June 22, against a team yet to be announced. La Grande had high hopes at the Class 4A state level last season, but the tournament was called off due to COVID-19.

“This year everyone has stepped up, it’s been amazing seeing everyone grow as a team,” Collman said. “We’re going all the way.”

Area athletes fill all-star roster

11 athletes from Union, Wallowa counties take part in Oregon All-Star Volleyball Match

By **RONALD BOND**
Wallowa County Chieftain

LA GRANDE — The return of the Oregon All-Star Volleyball Match at Eastern Oregon University Saturday, June 19, gave 21 athletes from across the state — and many from Northeastern Oregon — one more opportunity to step on the volleyball court, most for the final time.

“I thought it was really rewarding,” Imbler senior Anika McDonald said. “I don’t think people realize how heartbreaking it can be to leave a sport behind when you graduate high school. You play something from third or fourth grade all the way up to 12th, and then you just leave it. You leave it behind. And that can be really hard sometimes to have it ripped away from you. I’m not playing sports in college, so for me this was my last real volleyball game. I think it’s just a rewarding thing for people who work so hard. I’m thankful I had this opportunity.”

The matches were particularly unique for McDonald’s team in that of the



Of the 11 Northeastern Oregon athletes who played in the Oregon All-Star Volleyball Match Saturday, June 19, 2021, nine were from Union County, and six of those nine — from three schools — were on the same team. From left is Anika McDonald, Erin Coston, Rylee Deal, Anna Green, Ahnica Shoemaker and Presley Justice.

seven athletes on the team — which was coached by Imbler’s Jennifer Teeter — six were from three different schools across Union County, giving that team the most local representation of the three that took part. In addition to McDonald, Erin Coston and Rylee Deal from Imbler were a part of “Team Teeter.” They were joined by La Grande’s Presley Justice and Anna Green, and by Ahnica Shoemaker from Union. Jade McCoy of South Wasco County was the seventh player on the team.

There were 11 athletes from Union and Wallowa counties who took part.

Green said she had played with some of the athletes on her team in club volleyball, but said it was still gratifying to step on the court with them in the all-star match.

“It’s honestly been just

an honor, competing with some of the best girls in the state,” she said. “It’s been really fun, especially being on a team with kids in my area.”

The match was unique in a different facet for Shoemaker, and not only because she donned an Imbler uniform for the game.

That, in fact, may have been a look at what could have been.

“It did feel a little odd (wearing an Imbler uniform) but the special thing was I lived in Imbler for 11 years before I moved to Union,” she said. “It was right before school sports. I got to live in Imbler and almost got to play school sports (there). I may have ended up with Imbler. Today was kind of special because it was kind of going back to my past. That was great.”

Union to host Oregon Junior Amateur golf tournament

Tournament returns to area for first time in 15 years

By **CARLOS FUENTES**
The Observer

UNION — Union will host the Bob Norquist Oregon Junior Amateur tournament from June 28 to July 2 at Buffalo Peak Golf Course.

More than 100 of the best youth golfers in Oregon will be at the tournament, which has not taken place in Eastern Oregon in 15 years, according to Oregon Junior Golf Director Shanda Imlay.

“We cover all of

Oregon, so when we were looking for this year’s location, we tried to think about some of the places we haven’t been to in a while,” Imlay said. “We’re really excited to go out to Eastern Oregon and see the beautiful courses out there.”

The tournament will begin at 7 a.m. on June 28 and finish by 9 p.m. on July 2.

The Oregon Junior Amateur is the most elite youth golf competition in Oregon, and its location changes every year. According to Dana Londin, general manager at Buffalo Peak Golf Course, this will be a good opportunity to showcase golf courses in Eastern Oregon.

“It’s a great golf course, the facilities are great, and the tour has never been to Union,” Londin said. “The event is open to the public, so we encourage people to come out and watch some golf.”

Golfers will range between 8 and 18 years old, and will play within three age divisions. The majority will come from larger cities, such as the Portland metro area, Eugene and Salem.

“It’s a big deal for events like this to come to Union County,” Londin said. “There’s a lot of families, so I think it’s gonna be good to bring some money to the area and support some local businesses.”

ON THE SLATE

Schedule subject to change

TUESDAY, JUNE 22
Prep boys basketball
Class 4A state tournament, Site TBA
La Grande vs. Banks, TBA
Class 1A state tournament, Baker City
Teams and times TBD
Prep girls basketball
Class 4A state tournament, Site TBA
La Grande vs. TBD, TBA
Class 2A state tournament, Eastern Oregon University

Union vs. TBD, Time TBA
Class 1A state tournament, Baker City
Powder Valley vs. TBD, TBA

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23
Prep boys basketball
Class 2A state tournament, Eastern Oregon University
Union vs. TBD, Time TBA
Class 1A state tournament, Baker City
Teams and Times TBD
Prep girls basketball

Class 2A state tournament, Eastern Oregon University
Union vs. TBD, Time TBA
Class 1A state tournament, Baker City
Powder Valley vs. TBD, TBA

THURSDAY, JUNE 24
Prep boys basketball
Class 1A state tournament, Baker City, Teams and Times TBD
Prep girls basketball
Class 1A state tournament, Baker City, Powder Valley vs. TBD, TBA

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