

LEOPARDS: 'Everyone is super competitive and pushing each other'

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has played organized high school basketball, so I will be leaning on her quite a bit," Wright said.

Baird was a standout player for the Cove volleyball team while Garlitz is signed to play soccer at the University of North Dakota. Neither has played basketball since middle school.

Early practices have all been about the basics.

"We are starting at ground zero," Wright said. "Form shooting, form passing, footwork, pivot. We are starting at the beginning, but it is amazing how fast they are picking it up."

Wright credits the team's collective intelligence and competitiveness for making practice beneficial each day. Her only goal for the team before it tipped off the season Dec. 3 at the Union tournament was to have the Leopards in the best shape possible. They plan to run and use an up-tempo style to their favor. What the Leopards lack in experience they make up for with athleticism and aggressiveness.

"This is a team made up of mostly guards, so we are not big but very quick," Wright said. "Everyone is super competitive and pushing each other."

How aggressive are the Leopards? Aggressive enough that Wright actually broke her thumb during practice. She doesn't want to temper the aggressiveness too much, but Wright knows they have to do it without fouling.

In past seasons there may have been a quicker hook if a player missed a couple of shots. That will not be the case under Wright. She knows her team will not be locked-in shooters, but that doesn't mean she doesn't want them putting the ball up.

"If you are open, no matter where, you have a green light," Wright said. "We are going to shoot a lot."

Wright is hoping her players buy into the program, enjoy the style and tempo and start building larger numbers in the future.

The Leopards did not have a season last year, but Wright was able to take a handful of girls to Idaho over the course of two weekends for a pair of scrimmages.

"It was a great experience for the girls just to get in the gym and play against someone else," Wright said. "It was helpful for me too because this is my first time as a varsity coach."

Local 1A football standouts earn all-league honors

Powder Valley leads with 11 nominations after runner-up finish at state

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — Coming off a strong showing as a whole, Union County's 1A football teams earned a plethora of all-league nominations in the 1A Special District 2 East and West divisions. The season was highlighted by three schools from Union County and Enterprise from Wallowa County qualifying for the 1A state tournament.

The Powder Valley Badgers led the way in nominations after a 8-1 regular season that saw the team finish 5-1 in league play. The Badgers finished the season ranked No. 2 in the OSAA 1A rankings and earned District 2 East first-team nominations at 11 different positions.

Leading the way was senior quarterback Reece Dixon earning first-team honors under center. The Badgers received first-team nominations from senior running back Clay Martin, junior offensive lineman Logan Proffitt, junior center Colt Cobb, senior wideout Kaden Krieger, junior defensive end Casey Vaughn, junior defensive



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Powder Valley's Reece Dixon (7) looks for his receiver at Baker High School on Saturday, Nov. 27, 2021. The Badgers lost to the Adrian Antelopes 46-38 in the OSAA 1A State Championship game in a heartbreaking finale that saw Adrian come back in the fourth quarter to take the title. Dixon was one of 11 first-team all-league nominations on Powder Valley's roster.

lineman Cade Ling, senior linebacker Case Olson and junior defensive back Cole Martin. On special teams, Olson was named first-team kicker and freshman Tucker Martin earned first-team punt returner.

For Elgin, a 3-4 regular season and first-round playoff exit was highlighted by all-league honors at eight positions in the east division. Senior Blake Jenkins was the lone first-team honoree at the defensive end position. The Huskies saw six second-team nominations and two players earning honorable mention.

Elgin's second-team nominations were junior running back Bruce Morehead, junior linebacker Joe

Lathrop, sophomore linebacker Ty McLaughlin, Lathrop at punter and Morehead at punt return. Senior center Blake Jenkins and senior defensive lineman Reece McConnell both earned honorable mention.

In the 1A Special District 2 West division, Imbler tallied five first-team honorees, two second-team nominations and one honorable mention. The team went 4-4 in the regular season and earned a spot in the state playoff bracket.

First-team honorees for the Panthers were sophomore center Justin Frost, junior kicker Noah Insko, junior defensive lineman Payden Bowles, sopho-

more defensive end Jeremiah Martin and sophomore defensive back Dallin Rasmussen.

On the second team for Imber were senior running back Krager Muilenburg and sophomore linebacker Isaih Trujillo. Senior quarterback Carter Crooks earned honorable mention.

In the east division, Wallowa earned four second-team nominations and two honorable mentions. Second-team honorees were sophomore offensive lineman Ty Hunt-Prince, sophomore wide receiver Lucas Hulse, Hunt-Prince at defensive line and senior Jesse Duncan at linebacker. Junior quarterback Lute Ramsden and sophomore punter Jose Mendez both earned honorable mention.

The Union Bobcats saw one player earn first-team honors, one player be selected to the second team and four players take honorable mentions. Junior linebacker Zak Morton led the way with the team's lone first-team honors. Sophomore Tee Ledbetter was named to the second team at wide receiver.

Honorable mentions were senior running back Quin Morton, junior center Nick Baxter, junior defensive back Bo Ledbetter and Tee Ledbetter at punt returner.

Cove senior linebacker Bryce English earned honorable mention in the east division for the Leopards.

ON THE SLATE

SATURDAY, DEC. 4

COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL
Eastern Oregon at Oregon Tech, 5 p.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
Eastern Oregon at Oregon Tech, 3 p.m.

COLLEGE MEN'S WRESTLING
Eastern Oregon at Battle of the Rockies, Great Falls, Montana, TBA

COLLEGE WOMEN'S WRESTLING
Eastern Oregon at Patriot Duals, Williamsburg, Kentucky, 7 a.m.

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL
Enterprise vs. Crane, Prairie City High School, 1:30 p.m.
Wallowa at Jordan Valley, 2:30 p.m.
South Wasco County at Joseph, 1:30 p.m.
Powder Valley at Dufur, 4:30 p.m.

Union Lions Tournament, Union High School
Union/Echo loser vs. Cove/Adrian loser, 2:30 p.m.
Union/Echo winner vs. Cove/Adrian winner, 5:30 p.m.

Elgin Lions Tournament, Elgin High School
Elgin-La Grande JV loser vs. Grant Union-Baker JV loser, 1:30 p.m.
Elgin-La Grande JV winner vs. Grant Union-Baker JV winner, 5 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL
Enterprise vs. Crane, Prairie City, noon
Wallowa at Jordan Valley, 1 p.m.
South Wasco County at Joseph, noon
Powder Valley at Dufur, 3 p.m.

Union Lions Tournament, Union High School
Union-Echo loser vs. Cove-Adrian loser, 1 p.m.
Union-Echo winner vs. Cove-Adrian winner, 4 p.m.

Elgin Lions Tournament, Elgin High School
Elgin-La Grande JV loser vs. Grant Union-Baker JV loser, noon
Elgin-La Grande JV winner vs. Grant Union-Baker JV winner, 3:30 p.m.

MONDAY, DEC. 6

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL
La Grande at Vale, 6 p.m.

TUESDAY, DEC. 7

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL
Enterprise at Elgin, 7:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL
Enterprise at Elgin, 5 p.m.
Burns at La Grande, 5 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 8

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL
Nyssa at La Grande, 6:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 9

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL
Elgin at Four Rivers, 6:30 p.m.
Calvin Hiatt Memorial Basketball Tournament, North Powder
Union vs. Prairie City, Powder Valley Middle School, 5:30 p.m.
Echo vs. Powder Valley, Powder Valley High School, 5:30 p.m.
Joseph vs. Adrian, Powder Valley Middle School, 8:30 p.m.
Imbler vs. Jordan Valley, Powder Valley High School, 8:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL
Elgin at Four Rivers, 5 p.m.
Calvin Hiatt Memorial Basketball Tournament, North Powder
Echo vs. Powder Valley, Powder Valley High School, 4 p.m.
Union vs. Prairie City, Powder Valley Middle School, 4 p.m.
Joseph vs. Adrian, Powder Valley Middle School, 7 p.m.
Imbler vs. Jordan Valley, Powder Valley Middle School, 8:30 p.m.

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