



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Union's Audrey Wells (4) cuts the net as teammates watch. The Union Bobcats defeated the Salem Academy Crusaders 52-38 on Saturday, March 5, 2022, to win the Oregon School Activities Association Class 2A State Basketball Tournament at the Pendleton Convention Center in Pendleton.



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Union's Callie Glenn (22) puts up a shot for the Bobcats. The Union Bobcats defeated the Salem Academy Crusaders 52-38 on Saturday, March 5, 2022, to win the Oregon School Activities Association Class 2A State Basketball Tournament at the Pendleton Convention Center in Pendleton.

NO DOUBT

Union girls claim school's first-ever girls basketball state championship

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

PENDLETON — As the final seconds ticked off the clock Saturday, March 5, the Union girls basketball team secured its place in the history books.

The Bobcats earned the school's first ever girls basketball state championship, defeating Salem Academy 52-38 in front of a packed crowd at the Pendleton Convention Center on Saturday, March 5. Union's core of seniors rose to the occasion, overcoming an early deficit to take top marks in the state.

"I can't even put it into words," Union head coach Jordan Klebaum-Johnston said. "To be the first in history means a lot to me personally. It means even more to me that this group of kids got to experience this moment."

The Bobcats trailed early and had

difficulty running their offense, but a persistent effort spurred a major run that put Union in front for the final three quarters. While Salem Academy led 8-2 midway through the first period, the Bobcats managed to cut the lead to 8-5 at the end of the frame.

"Stick to the game plan," Klebaum-Johnston said. "Keep it cool and don't do too much, don't play outside yourself. We just needed some kids to start hitting some shots to build that confidence."

Union senior Callie Glenn came into the state championship averaging just under 20 points per state playoff game. The Blue Mountain Conference first-team player went scoreless in the first half on Saturday, utilizing a heavy load of defensive attention to find open teammates. Senior Audrey Wells took advantage of a heightened focus on Glenn, scoring seven of her nine points in the first half.

"I have more confidence in that kid than I think she knows," Klebaum-Johnston said of Glenn. "The way that she exudes her confidence, her teammates trust her and it shows. She's able to calm the team down and get everybody on the same page. That says a lot about how much of a competitor she is."

Benefitting from Salem Academy's persistent focus on Glenn was senior Kaylin Nowak, who converted four three-pointers and scored 16 points in the first half to help the Bobcats go on a huge run before the half.

"Kaylin Novak stepped up huge," Klebaum-Johnston said.

After trailing 8-2, Union went on a 23-7 run to completely flip the script and take a 25-15 lead into the locker rooms at halftime. Nowak's open looks from beyond the arc spurred

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CLASS 4A STATE TOURNAMENT

Tigers' season ends with dramatic buzzer beater

La Grande rallies from 15-point fourth-quarter deficit in 58-55 loss

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — In the game of basketball, wins and losses can be determined by just one shot.

This was the case in a round-one 4A state playoff matchup, when La Grande saw its season come to an end at the hands of a heartbreaking buzzer beater, 58-55, by Banks. The Tigers had battled

back from a 15-point deficit in the fourth quarter to tie the game late in regulation, but Banks' Cooper Gobel sealed the game with a three-point basket as time expired.

"Tough one obviously, but at the end of the day you have to tip your hat to a team that plays well," La Grande head coach Mark Carollo said. "I'll stand by my boys. I'm super proud of their efforts. They didn't just throw in the towel, they battled all the way until the end."

The Tigers and Braves met for the first-round playoff contest on Friday, March 4, with La Grande earning the higher seed and hosting the game.

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La Grande falls to Cascade in 1st round

Tigers late rally comes up short in 58-48 loss

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

TURNER — After a hard-fought season, the La Grande Tigers saw their playoff hopes come to an end in the first round of the 4A girls state playoffs.

The Tigers put together a late push in the second half, but a large early deficit ultimately made the difference as Cascade was victorious 58-48 on Friday, March 4, at the matchup at Cascade High School in Turner. La Grande saw its season come to an end with a 13-10 record after earning its spot in the first round after a play-in victory over Valley Catholic last week.

Cascade, whose roster consists of 10

seniors, was led by Ariel Tobiasson. The guard scored 20 points on the night, 16 of which came at the free-throw line.

The Tigers found themselves down early on, as the Cougars built up a 17-11 first-quarter lead. Cascade hit two three-pointers in the first eight minutes of play and saw six points from Meah Carley — the junior finished with 12 points.

La Grande's offense saw increased production in the second quarter, but Cascade managed to extend its lead with efficient free-throw shooting. The Cougars converted 15 out of 20 attempts to outscore the Tigers 19-14 and build a 36-25 lead at halftime.

La Grande put together a valiant comeback effort, winning the second half by a 24-21 margin. Freshman Carlee Strand hit two three-

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