

ON THE SLATE

April 13 results

PREP BASEBALL

La Grande 7, Pendleton/Griswold 5

Friday, April 15

(Games completed after print deadline)

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Eastern Oregon at Northwest (2), 2 p.m.

PREP BASEBALL

La Grande at McLoughlin (2), 2 p.m.
Joseph/Enterprise/Wallowa at Pendleton/Griswold JV (2), 3 p.m.

PREP SOFTBALL

Joseph/Enterprise/Wallowa at Vale (2), 1 p.m.
La Grande at McLoughlin (2), 2 p.m.

PREP TRACK & FIELD

Cove at River's Edge, Umatilla, noon
La Grande, Elgin, Imbler, Powder Valley, Union, Enterprise at Buck Track Classic Invite, Pendleton, 2 p.m.

Saturday, April 16

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Eastern Oregon at Northwest (2), 11 a.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S LACROSSE

Multnomah at Eastern Oregon, 1 p.m.

PREP BASEBALL

Union/Cove at Dufur/South Wasco County (2), 11 a.m.

PREP SOFTBALL

Joseph/Enterprise/Wallowa at Grant Union/Prairie City (2), noon
Echo/Stanfield at Union/Cove (2), 2 p.m.

Monday, April 18

PREP BASEBALL

Baker/Powder Valley (JV) at Joseph/Enterprise/Wallowa, 4 p.m.

PREP GIRLS GOLF

La Grande at Baker, TBA

Tuesday, April 19

PREP BASEBALL

Union/Cove at Stanfield/Echo, 4 p.m.

PREP TENNIS

La Grande at McLoughlin, 3 p.m.

Wednesday, April 20

PREP BASEBALL

La Grande at Baker/Powder Valley (2), 2 p.m.

REFLECTING ON 33 YEARS

Mike Crawford recounts highlights of his time on Enterprise sidelines

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Mike Crawford rode a wave of emotions — as one would expect — in the days and weeks following his last game on the sidelines for the Enterprise girls basketball program.

Crawford, who retired at the end of the season after 33 years leading the Enterprise girls basketball program, said last month he needed to shift his focus away from the fact his time on the sidelines is over.

The normal thing for Crawford would be planning next season.

In fact, he said that on Feb. 27 as he was driving the bus back from the Outlaws' hard-fought 65-58 loss to Gervais a day earlier in the first round of the 2A state playoffs — the loss that ended his career at 520-275 — he was formulating lineups in his mind.

"I'm always thinking about lineups and the team. I had completely put together next year's team in my mind," he said.

The final year

His final team, which went 15-11 and was one win away from the state tournament, took some lumps early, but came together to take third in the Blue Mountain Conference, reach the tournament title game, and over the course of the season earn wins over both Union, the eventual state champion, and Stanfield, which took sixth.

The team's pinnacle was on Jan. 15 when it earned a 47-39 home win over the Bobcats.

"We played Union tough. And actually in the Union Tournament, when we played them the final day



Ronald Bond/Wallowa County Chieftain, File
Enterprise girls basketball head coach Mike Crawford watches his team during the second half of a game Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022. The coach retired following the season, his 33rd with the program.

we played — I hadn't seen us come out on day two, in this case day three, and play with some conviction like we're ready to attack. That was day three, and we played to the end," he added of a December matchup, a 45-36 loss in Union. "It was a really good game, and then going into the (league) season, the first time when we played Union at home was the day we beat them. I knew we were good, I knew we were good enough. We were good enough to play with the teams in the final eight."

Outside looking in

Seeing teams Enterprise had beaten make the state tournament, while the Outlaws were stuck at home, is something Crawford has witnessed before, with one example that immediately jumped out being 2017.

"I'm sitting there in the first round, watching the first game, it was Imbler vs. Weston-McEwen.

We played Weston-McEwen twice that year — we were not in the same league — we had beaten them at home by 20 and beat them there by 10," he said. "We had beaten Imbler — we split with Imbler. Here they are in the final eight playing in the first round and we're not there."

Crawford said there are plenty of "what ifs" over the course of 33 years, recalling a blown 12-point fourth-quarter lead in the 1997 state semifinals against Santiam Christian when a timeout could have stalled an SC rally — but Enterprise didn't have one. SC went on to roll in the state championship game, while Enterprise — undefeated before that night — settled for third.

Another was a back-and-forth battle in the 2001 state title game against Sherman, which was a battle in the post he knew would be determined by which

team lost its post player to fouls. Enterprise did, and lost the final, 45-37.

Getting a program going

He said a conversation he has had several times throughout the years is about how to build a program and how long it takes. For Crawford, he said it was about five years to get EHS where he wanted it to be.

But once it's in place, it's hard to slow down. And he believes his eventual predecessor should be able to keep rolling.

"I had a conversation with Jordan (Klebaum-Johnston), the coach at Union, about how you go for 33 years doing the same stuff," he said. "You can say all you want about, 'They know what we do,' but it's obvious to me that they may know what we do, but that doesn't mean they can stop it. We've always been one of the higher scoring teams, one of the more difficult to play — maybe there's something to it. Old school's not necessarily the wrong school."

When asked how he wanted his teams to be defined, he said that was actually a question he asked his players.

"I (would) give them a paper that I want them to fill out. And the last thing that I put on there was if you were somebody not on this team watching this team, what would you want them to think of you? What would you want them to say about you?" he said. "I wanted them to hustle, I wanted them to play tough defense, I wanted them to run offensively. Our offensive game started predominantly off defense, and I think we pretty much did that."

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