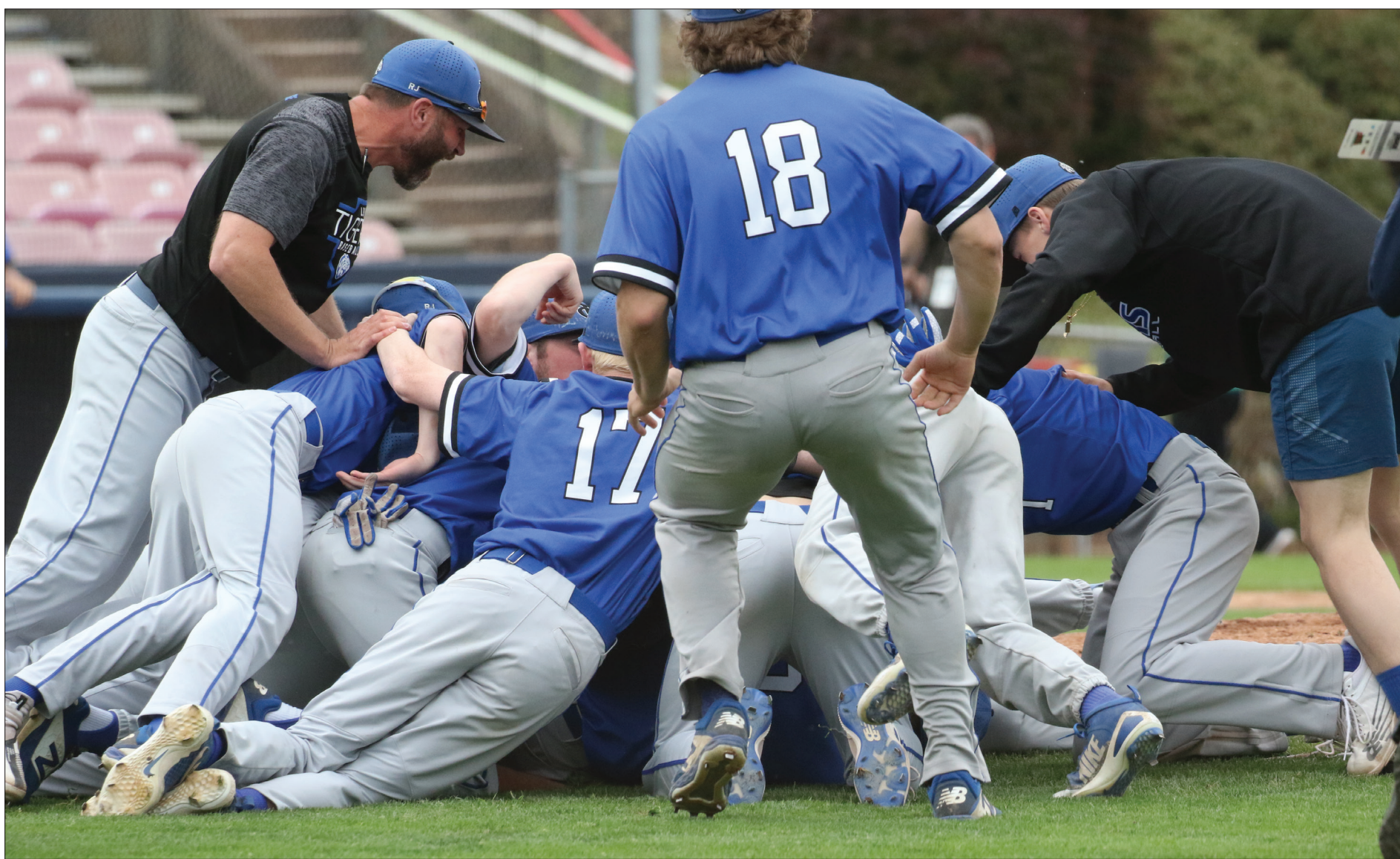


PREP BASEBALL



Suzie Collman/Contributed Photo

La Grande celebrates on the field after winning its second 4A title since 2017, and avenging last year's loss to Hidden Valley in the state championship game. The Tigers crushed the Mustangs 10-1 on Tuesday, June 7, 2022, at Volcanoes Stadium in Keizer.

# Mission accomplished

Tigers avenge 2021 title game defeat, cruise to state title rout of Hidden Valley

By RONALD BOND  
For The Observer

**K**EIZER — The La Grande Tigers are back on top of the Class 4A baseball world.

And they used a punishing offensive attack and a lockdown pitching effort to get there. "It was pretty great, to be honest," Jarett Armstrong said. "It felt like it was deserved in a way because of last year getting so close. It was a big sigh of relief for the whole team to finally get that work in and get the result you wanted."

Nick Bornstedt and Armstrong both had three RBIs, Jace Schow outpitched both of Hidden Valley's aces, and the Tigers (28-1 overall) rolled to a 10-1 victory Tuesday, June 7, at Volcanoes Stadium in Keizer to claim their third OSA state title. La Grande claimed its other state titles in 2007 and 2017.

"Phenomenal. Fantastic team win," head coach Parker McKinley said. "They were ready to go. We knew we needed to get right after their starting pitcher. Kids had some great approaches."

Schow, who also homered in the win, tamed the high-powered Mustang offense, striking out 11 and allowing just one run on six hits. The lone run he surrendered scored on a balk in the second inning.

"That's a really, really good lineup, a strong-hitting lineup that he pitched against," McKinley said. "He pitched beautifully. He executed his pitchers, hit his spots."

Schow, who noted that having the early lead helped drop his stress, said he found success in knowing his defense would make plays behind him. He pounded the strike zone and deftly mixed up his pitches, but mostly



Suzie Collman/Contributed Photo

Derek Begin slides into home to score a run during La Grande's 10-1 victory over Hidden Valley Tuesday, June 7, 2022, in the Class 4A state championship at Volcanoes Stadium in Keizer.

used his fastball and changeup.

"I was trying to get them to put the ball in play and throw strikes," he said. "I was keeping them off balance by throwing my changeup and (making them hit) it to my defense."

The Tigers' offense, meanwhile, scored early and often against Hidden Valley aces Isaac Hill and Nate Vidlak. Hill started, but lasted just five batters, leaving with what McKinley said appeared to be an issue with his throwing arm.

"Isaac, hopefully, was not (out with) anything serious, but his arm was bothering him," the coach said.

Hill walked the first two batters he faced, then after two strikeouts surrendered a two-out, two-run single to Bornstedt for an early 2-0 lead.

"I think that definitely set the tone," Bornstedt said. "It was really kind of what got us going. I feel like it was a spark. The rest of the team rallied behind me after that. A credit to the first two guys that got walked, too, just to be on and be in that situation for me."

The Tigers added single runs in the third and fourth against Vidlak on a Bornstedt RBI single and an Armstrong sacrifice fly in the fourth, then delivered the

See, Champs/Page A8

# Everyone contributes in state title win

By RONALD BOND  
For The Observer

**K**EIZER — A few days before the La Grande Tigers played in the Class 4A baseball state championship against Hidden Valley, head coach Parker McKinley spoke of the depth and completeness of the squad, noting that in the semifinal win against Philomath, seven players accounted for the 10 hits. Everyone, it seemed, was getting involved.

That fact was on display again in the championship game, as six players accounted for, once again, 10 hits in the Tigers' 10-1 victory over the Mustangs on Tuesday, June 7, in Keizer's Volcanoes Stadium.

In the final, Jace



Suzie Collman/Contributed Photo

La Grande head coach Parker McKinley lifts the OSA Class 4A state trophy following the team's 10-1 win over Hidden Valley on Tuesday, June 7, 2022, at Volcanoes Stadium in Keizer.

Schow and Devin Bell accounted for half of the 10 hits, with five others getting into the hit

column to help power the offense.

The big hits that decided the game came

from different spots in the lineup than the No. 2 and No. 3 hitters, though Schow and Bell com-

binated for three more hits and Schow homered. Nick Bornstedt, the No. 5 hitter, went 3-for-4 with three RBIs, and he came through in the clutch early with a two-out, two-run single to give La Grande the lead. He later added an RBI single to help pad the lead.

Later, it was Braden Carson and Jarett Armstrong, the No. 7 and No. 8 batters, accounting for key hits. Armstrong had a fourth-inning sacrifice fly, and in the span of four pitches in the fifth, the two delivered the knockout punches. With the bases loaded, and La Grande already extending its lead to 5-1 on a bases-loaded walk to Cesar Rodriguez, Carson ripped the first pitch he saw into center field for two runs. Three pitches later, Arm-

strong roped a double to right field to drive in two more runs.

"Anyone can get the job done," Armstrong said. "We don't have a top or a bottom of the lineup, I would say. We have good hitters. That fifth inning is evidence of that, that we all are competitive at the plate."

It was also evidence of what McKinley cited last week when he said that at any moment this La Grande team could have any player come up with a big hit, a clutch play on defense or a fantastic effort on the mound.

"At any point in our lineup, we have that potential to make it happen," he said. "It's something that the kids have worked

See, Team/Page A8