

ROCKET SOFTBALL

Coach: Darin Fitzpatrick, 4th year
2014: 18-10, 9-6 Special District 5
Postseason story: The Rockets finished third in district play and defeated Riddle 7-3 in the first round of the state playoffs. Their season ended in the quarterfinals, though, with a 10-0 loss to league foe Weston-McEwen.

Key returners: Bailey Weinke, sr., C; Rebekka Holman, jr., P/OF; Desiree Maddern, jr., OF; Tehya Ostrom, soph., P/UT; Rebekah Roe, soph., SS

Coachspeak: "We return a lot but I have a sophomore and three freshmen that have shown some skill and will get a lot of playing time."



Pilot Rock's Bekah Roe slides into second base. Roe is one of many several returners for the Rockets, who aim for an improved approach this spring.

EO file photo

Rock solid in its numbers

PILOT ROCK — Pilot Rock's girls are hoping recent heartbreaks can fuel an even deeper run in the postseason after returning nearly everybody from last season's trip to the quarterfinals.

A six-inning shut-out loss to nearby Weston-McEwen left a bitter taste in their mouths at the conclusion of the 2014 softball season, and a crushing home loss to Regis in the basketball state playoffs ended their most recent athletic campaign.

"We had a little talk about that," said Rockets coach Darin Fitzpatrick, "and we talked about how our season ended a year ago. We didn't feel like

we played very well in our playoff loss, and I told the girls to remember how you felt last year. And for those on the basketball team to remember how that felt, and let's use that as momentum."

Junior Madison Dave is back with the team after taking a season off, and should boost their chances in a division that has only gotten stronger after sending two teams to the semifinals and producing last season's state champion.

"It's going to be tough," Fitzpatrick said. "We've got us and Union and Athena and we're going to be battling for that No. 1 spot."

2015 Schedule

Mon., March 16	at Riverside	4:30 p.m.
Sat., March 21	at Grant Union (DH)	Noon/2 p.m.
Mon., March 23	vs Knappa (at Boardman)	12:30 p.m.
Mon., March 23	vs Nyssa (at Boardman)	3 p.m.
Tue., March 24	vs Harrisburg (at Boardman)	10 a.m.
Tue., March 24	at Riverside	12:30 p.m.
Fri., March 27	at Union	TBD
Sat., March 28	at Union	TBD
Sat., April 11	vs Weston-McEwen (DH)	11 a.m./1 p.m.
Tue., April 14	at Elgin	4 p.m.
Sat., April 18	vs Union (DH)	11 a.m./1 p.m.
Fri., April 24	at Culver (DH)	2/4 p.m.
Sat., May 2	vs Irrigon (DH)	11 a.m./1 p.m.
Sat., May 9	at Burns (DH)	1/3 p.m.
Sat., May 16	at Heppner (DH)	11 a.m./1 p.m.

2014 Special District 5 Standings

	SD5	OVR.
Weston-McEwen	14-1	25-2
Union	13-2	27-3
Pilot Rock	9-6	18-10
Grant Union	5-10	13-12
Irrigon	2-13	5-18
Heppner	2-13	2-18

MUSTANG SOFTBALL

Coach: Petra Payne, 13th year
2014 season: 2-18, 2-13 Special District 5
Postseason story: The Mustangs missed the playoffs last season after making back-to-back appearances in 2012-13.

Key returners: Meranda Lemmon, soph., P; Onna DeLoach, soph., P; Jessica Kempken, jr., 3B; Caitlyn Bailey, jr., C.

Coachspeak: "We are young and we have two freshmen that will probably start and others that will get to play a lot of innings."



2015 Schedule

Wed., March 25	vs Clatskanie	Noon	Tue., April 14	vs Umatilla	3 p.m.
Wed., March 25	vs Knappa	1:30 p.m.	Sat., April 18	vs Culver (DH)	11 a.m./1 p.m.
Thu., March 26	vs Knappa	10 a.m.	Tue., April 21	at Echo	4 p.m.
Thu., March 26	vs Clatskanie	2 p.m.	Sat., April 25	vs Union (DH)	11 a.m./1 p.m.
Tue., March 31	vs Grant Union (DH)	3/4:30 p.m.	Tue., May 5	vs Umatilla	4 p.m.
Sat., April 4	at Irrigon (DH)	11 a.m./1 p.m.	Sat., May 9	at Weston-McEwen (DH)	11 a.m.
Tue., April 7	vs Enterprise (DH)	3/4:30 p.m.	Sat., May 16	vs Pilot Rock	11 a.m./1 p.m.
Sat., April 11	at Burns (DH)	1/3 p.m.			

Pitch keys rebuild

HEPPNER — The last time the Heppner Mustangs made the state postseason it was on the arm of a dominant pitcher.

If the Mustangs are going to push their way into crowded district playoff picture this year, however, it'll have to be with rock solid defense and lots of run support.

The Mustangs return both starting pitchers from last season's two-win campaign, but Meranda Lemmon and

Onna DeLoach are just sophomores and haven't developed into aces just yet.

"They have a big weight on their shoulders, and they're working hard," said veteran coach Petra Payne, who oversaw the team's title run in 2011. "We have to be able to support our pitchers better because they are working hard, but they are going to give up some runs. We have to score more runs this season."

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