

## Prep Football

## Mustangs, TigerScots on course for title clash

East Oregonian

HEPPNER — The Heppner Mustangs turned in another very impressive four quarters for another blowout victory in Columbia Basin Conference play on Friday.

The Mustangs held Irrigon's vaunted offense to 165 yards and ran up a huge lead by halftime before winning 61-14.

• Report scores and stats to (541) 966-0838 or sports@eastoregonian.com

Heppner (8-0, 4-0 CBC) led 41-0 when the two teams headed to the locker rooms, and has outscored the CBC 229-39 this season.

Mustangs coach Greg Grant said the team is doing it the old-fashioned way with solid defense and a strong offensive line, and that continued Friday.

"Defensively we were sound again, and I was pleased again with how the offensive line played. They continue to improve," he said.

Weston Putman led the defense with 10 tackles and five other players recorded at least five. Logan Grieb had two interceptions and Putman had another.

The offensive line paved the way for 424 rushing yards, of which C.J. Kindle took the lion's share with 195 on 12 carries. He had a long of 58 and scored two touchdowns.

Grieb added 86 yards on six carries with a touchdown, Tommy Bredfield had 60 yards on eight carries and two scores, and Kaden Clark and Caden Hedman each scored on the ground.

Clark was 1 for 5 passing for 12 yards.

Irrigon (5-3, 1-3) was led on offense by Austin Rice with 48 yards on 13 rushes, with Adrian Gutierrez adding 31 yards and

two touchdowns on six carries. Fredy Vera still managed to average 4.67 yards a carry, but was limited to 42 total on nine tries.

Heppner will try to wrap up another CBC title when it travels to Weston-McEwen next week for a 7 p.m. game.

Irrigon will finish the regular season at home against Pilot Rock. They'll need a win plus a little help to earn a state playoff berth.

**WESTON-MCEWEN 36, CULVER 6** — At Culver, the TigerScots maintained their collision course with Heppner for the league crown with a road win on Friday. Details were not reported.

The TigerScots (6-2, 3-1) have won three in a row and have allowed just 18 points total since opening the CBC season with a 19-14 loss to Stanfield.

The TigerScots host Heppner in the regular season finale next Friday at 7 p.m.

**STANFIELD 62, PILOT ROCK 6** — At Pilot Rock, the Tigers bounced back from their first loss of the season in big way on Friday, and did it without their top offensive weapon.

Thyler Monkus twisted his ankle at the end of a 24-yard run on Stanfield's first offensive play and didn't return.

Coach Davy Salas said he'll be back next week, though.

"We didn't feel the need to risk it," he said. "He was limping around pretty good, but it was more of a just a cautionary thing."

In his absence quarterback Dylan Grogan went off for 114 yards on 15 carries and reached the end zone three times. He

also passed for two touchdowns going 2-of-4 for 54 yards.

Makiah Blankenship added 110 yards on 12 carries with two touchdowns, Justin Shelby chipped in two touchdowns on three carries for 56 yards, and Justin Keeney ran nine times for 32 yards and a score for Stanfield (7-1, 3-1).

"I was a little worried about the hangover from last week," Salas said of the Tigers' lopsided loss to Heppner. "But the kids responded well."

Pilot Rock (0-7, 0-4) was led on defense by Braydon Postma with 12 tackles and Chris Weinke added nine.

Seniors Gunner McCall and Patrick Roe connected for the Rockets' only touchdown in their last home game with McCall throwing a 55-yard pass to Roe.

Stanfield finishes the regular season by hosting Culver at 7 p.m. next Friday.

The Rockets wrap up their season at Irrigon at 7 p.m.

**UMATILLA 35, RIVERSIDE 24** — At Boardman, the Vikings stormed into Friday's rivalry match-up and the Pirates were never able to climb out of the hole they dug with four first-half turnovers.

The Pirates finished with 440 yards of offense, but trailed 35-12 at the half and were too inconsistent to come back.

"(Umatilla was) fired up and ready to go and we just let the flood gates open," Riverside (2-5, 0-2) coach Dave Boor said.

Felipe Olvera led Riverside with 151 total yards and Ricardo Mendoza rushed for 73 yards on 14 carries.

Umatilla (5-3, 1-1) statistics were not available at press time.

The Vikings can secure a playoff berth in next week's season final against Vale at 7 p.m. Riverside closes out the

season at Nyssa at 7 p.m. (MT).

**DUFUR 50, IONE 14** — At Ione, the Cardinals (2-5, 1-4 SD4) got quarterback Jason Juarez back from his shoulder injury, but it wasn't enough against a stout Rangers (6-2, 3-2) defense.

Ione coach Stan Weiper said the Cardinals were looking to mount a comeback and pulled within 36-14 in the fourth with plenty of time to play, but their next drive ended near the end zone on a fumble that Dufur scooped up and returned for a touchdown.

Dufur quarterback Derek Frakes also had a couple big plays, scrambling for a long touchdown and then finding a receiver at the back of the end zone on fourth down.

Juarez scored one of Ione's touchdowns on an 11-yard run and Alessandro Panozzo had the other with an onside kickoff return, his third of the season.

Ione was also without starting running Henry Padberg (knee) for the second straight week, and won't get him back for next week's season finale against South Wasco at 7 p.m. in Ione.

**PINE EAGLE 54, ECHO 6** — At Pine Eagle, the Cougars (2-6, 0-4) limped into the offseason with a lopsided loss in Friday's Special District 1 finale.

No details were reported. Echo lost its last five games of the season.

**BAKER 60, MAC-HI 0** — At Milton-Freewater, the Bulldogs (4-4, 2-1) wrapped up second place in the Greater Oregon League in Friday's regular season finale. Details were not reported.

Mac-Hi (0-8, 0-3) finished fourth and out of playoff contention.

## MILTON-FREEWATER

## Pioneers

## punch ticket to state meet

## La Grande, Ontario win team titles at GOL district finals

East Oregonian

BAKER CITY — Mac-Hi senior Elise Griffith punched her ticket to a second-straight Class 4A cross country state championships on Friday with a third-place finish at the Greater Oregon League championships.

Griffith crossed the finish line in 22 minutes, 28.92 seconds among a fanned-out top five.

La Grande junior Heather Keniry won in a time of 21:03.84, and her sophomore teammate Kendra Blake was second in 22:02.32.

La Grande junior Sierra Smith finished 15 seconds behind Griffith in fourth (22:43.88) and Ontario sophomore Alioz Mason rounded out the top five in 22:52.99.

Griffith will be joined at state by her Pioneer teammates who ran for a second-place team finish behind Ontario.

La Grande won the boys' team title with 25 points with Ontario second with 35, but Ontario senior Collin Ball took the individual title in 17:47.62. La Grande senior Dean Ricker was second in 17:48.25.

Mac-Hi junior Kaleb Marsh was the top Pioneer in 13th (20:27.59).

Only the top two teams and top five individual advance to the state meet on Saturday, Oct. 31 at Lane Community College in Eugene.

## GOL District Championships

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Girls' Teams</b>   |    |
| 1. Ontario  | 31 |
| 2. Mac-Hi   | 37 |
| <b>Boys' Teams</b>  |    |
| 1. La Grande  | 25 |
| 2. Ontario  | 33 |
| 3. Mac-Hi   | 81 |
| <b>MAC-HI PIONEERS</b> — (Girls) 3. Elise Griffith, 22:28.92; 10. Brianna Hernandez, 24:23.37; 12. Autumn Cousineau, 25:17.54; 15. Laura Romero, 27:13.47; 17. Mindy Harmon, 28:10.93. (Boys) 13. Kaleb Marsh, 20:27.59; 14. Deazen Zerba, 20:59.84; 18. Collin Green, 21:40.8; 19. Isael Ibarra, 22:59.64; 20. Rigo Ponce, 23:07.48; 21. Evan Kain, 26:06.43; 22. Sam Miller, 26:54.83 |    |

## DISTRICT 5: Vikings finish painfully short of first team state berth

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title with a time of 16 minutes flat.

Not long into the 5,000-meter race, Cardenas and Scott had shaken even the most determined from a field of 117 runners and made it a two-horse race.

When the pair crossed the footbridge over McKay Creek and began a set of loops around the softball fields, Scott was still nestled in snugly on Cardenas' left hip.

"I was starting out slower, it was like an easy race today. I was trying to relax," said Cardenas, the defending state champ in 3A/2A/1A.

Cardenas took it to a higher gear as they completed the first loop, however, and by the time the course led them back across the footbridge for the home stretch he was at least 50 meters ahead and going strong.

"I was trying to push it just a little bit as the race went on," Cardenas said, "and when we got across the bridge again to push it even more and finish strong."

"I've kind of been trying to analyze how he runs races since the start of the year," said Scott, who ran a 16:24.64. "I thought maybe it was that he just went out at a fast pace and holds it there, but he kind of starts out easy and then increases his speed. I think I stayed with him closer than I did at Wildhorse (last

week), so I'm improving. If I have another good week of training I should be up there with him at state."

Scott could have cruised in for an easy second as he led Union's Alex Graffunder by a good 75 meters, but he could be seen checking his wristwatch as he headed for the finish line.

"I try not to check toward the start because then that's all I'm thinking about, but when I'm off in no-man's land I want to make sure I'm still on pace, which I was," he said. "Right after the second mile is where I started to slow down a little bit so I had to kick it up a little bit there."

There's only one more chance for Scott to catch Cardenas during his high school career, but his intense pursuit doesn't fuel feelings of animosity. In fact, it's just the opposite.

"We've known each other quite a long time and we're pretty good friends," Scott said. "He's a man of few words but he's a great guy and a great guy to run with."

They'll have to serve as de facto teammates one last time at the 3A/2A/1A state meet at Lane Community College in Eugene on Saturday, Oct. 31.

Cardenas' Vikings finished in third place, just seven points from the program's first-ever state berth.

Vikings freshman Zayne Troeger and senior

Armando Mendoza each ran personal bests to be the next highest local finishers in eighth (17:42.01) and ninth (17:45.32), respectively, but only the top five individuals received at-large berths.

"We had a lot of good come out of it as far as people improving, and we did get better," said Umatilla coach Josh Ego. "This sport, all it takes is one or two guys to have an off day and you get nipped like we did by seven points for us. But my outlook on this, this is a great learning experience for what cross country is. Every man counts, everybody counts. If each one of our guys would have passed two more guys we would have got it. Sometimes understanding that takes a race like today."

"I'm pretty proud of how all the guys ran today," Cardenas said. "I think they all ran personal bests. You know we gave our everything but we ended up coming short by seven points. Our district is the hardest district to get out of and get to state."

He said it'll be a small consolation having Scott at the starting line in Eugene.

"It's always nice because in the past I've been on a team with him going to nationals and it's like a brotherhood with me and him," Cardenas said. "It's just nice to have him there."

Also advancing to the state meet from the boys

finals as a wild card was Burns junior Daniel Letham in fifth place.

Weston-McEwen and Stanfield tied for fifth in the team points with 170, and the Tigers were paced by junior Carlos Flores in 12th (17:54.01) and freshman Elias Esquivel in 14th (18:00). It was a disappointing finish for the junior, who had state aspirations.

"Carlos is a little disappointed, he probably could have run a better race, but he just had one of those days," Jensen said. "It just wasn't working for him. Not a bad race, but just not a typical Carlos race. He had a side ache and some issues with his ankle."

"For Elias that's a huge improvement. We were looking for him to break 18 minutes, and he did."

Vale was fourth with 132 points, Nyssa was second with 87 and Union was the runaway champion with 35, placing four in the top 10.

Union's girls won their team title by nearly as many points, scoring 29 to Enterprise's 64. Nyssa was third with 86, and was led by individual champion Delia Deleon with her time of 19:24.1.

Rounding out the girls' top five were Union's Elly Wells (19:42.46), Enterprise's Dawn Mist Movich-Fields (19:44.25), Union's Alisa Fox (19:51.7) and Enterprise's Isabelle Tinglestad

(20:05.59).

The highest placing local was Umatilla senior Aleesha Watson in ninth with a new personal record of 20:57.98. Weston-McEwen freshman Katie Vescio was 20th (22:00.75), and Stanfield freshman Chelsy Lemmon was 22nd (22:20.83) to lead their squads with PRs.

Although none of the local teams advanced a girl to state, Jensen said it was a fast race that was a great way to finish the season.

"My girls were absolutely impressive today, they just ran their hearts out," he said. "They all PR'd and they all PR'd in a big way. We're looking toward the future and I challenged them today. I said, 'Hey, make that future start today and see what happens.'"

|                                       |          |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>District 5 Championships</b>       |          |
| <b>Girls Teams</b>                    |          |
| 1. Union                              | 29       |
| 2. Enterprise                         | 64       |
| 3. Nyssa                              | 86       |
| 4. Burns                              | 100      |
| 5. Culver                             | 105      |
| 6. Umatilla                           | 142      |
| <b>Boys Teams</b>                     |          |
| 1. Union                              | 35       |
| 2. Nyssa                              | 87       |
| 3. Umatilla                           | 94       |
| 4. Vale                               | 132      |
| 5. Weston-McEwen                      | 170      |
| 6. Stanfield                          | 170      |
| 7. Burns                              | 198      |
| 8. Heppner                            | 213      |
| 9. Enterprise                         | 219      |
| 10. Elgin                             | 245      |
| 11. Helix                             | 248      |
| 12. Grant Union                       | 270      |
| <b>Girls' Top 5</b>                   |          |
| 1. Delia Deleon (11), Nyssa           | 19:24.10 |
| 2. Elly Wells (12), Union             | 19:42.46 |
| 3. Dawn Mist Movich-Fields (12), Ent. | 19:44.25 |
| 4. Alisa Fox (9), Union               | 19:51.7  |
| 5. Isabelle Tinglestad (11), Ent.     | 20:05.59 |

**Boys' Top 5**

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Fabian Cardenas (12), Um.   | 16:00.42 |
| 2. Hayden Scott (11), WVM      | 16:21.64 |
| 3. Alex Graffunder (10), Union | 16:54.45 |
| 4. Jeremy Baxter (10), Union   | 17:05.71 |
| 5. Daniel Letham (11), Burns   | 17:14.85 |

**UMATILLA VIKINGS** — (Girls) 9. Aleesha Watson, 20:57.98; 45. Katelyn Lorence, 25:19.49; 52. Sonia Lermus-Cisneros, 26:06.63; 56. Fernanda Hernandez, 26:44.58; 65. Cameron Sipe, 30:08.51. (Boys) 1. Fabian Cardenas, 16:00.42; 8. Zayne Troeger, 17:42.01; 9. Armando Mendoza, 17:45.32; 37. Salvador Alvarez, 19:07.13; 44. Trey Dohman, 19:33.89; 49. Bradley Bensen, 19:41.81; 75. Aiden Ibarra, 21:25.01; 89. Tony Contreras, 22:08.07; 95. Austin Menzes, 22:42.81; 111. Noah Shorter, 24:58.08; 116. Dylan Hodge, 29:13.13

**WESTON-MCEWENTIGERS** — (Girls) 20. Katie Vescio, 22:00.75; 41. Adrienne Olson, 24:22.03. (Boys) 2. Hayden Scott, 16:24.64; 29. Tanner Sater, 18:45.29; 48. Lawson Denny, 19:41.03; 55. Gavin Smith, 19:56.24; 56. Kellen Fairchild, 20:03.65; 73. Khai Robertson, 21:20.61; 76. Martin Wenzel, 21:34.28; 97. Kamryn Dalrymple, 22:52.02

**STANFIELD TIGERS** — (Girls) 22. Chelsy Lemmon, 22:20.83; 25. Anna Lemmon, 22:33.38; 26. Bailey Watson, 22:36.67; 30. Jennifer Garcia, 22:48.34. (Boys) 12. Carlos Flores, 17:54.01; 14. Elias Esquivel, 18:00.01; 19. Uber Hernandez, 18:20.99; 61. Hugo Hernandez, 20:29.02; 85. Cody Griffin, 22:02.7; 90. Tony Flores, 22:09.73; 107. Fernando Ramirez, 24:27.32

**HELIX GRIZZLIES** — (Girls) 42. Meacalla Espey, 24:44.79; 66. Kyla Roberts, 30:23.38. (Boys) 40. Gavin Newton, 19:15.46; 41. Bradley Cope, 19:17.41; 64. Allan Holden, 20:48.18; 65. Caiden Marks, 20:51.07; 67. Colton Reynolds, 21:03.33; 77. Cody Dunn, 21:35.18186; Justin Williams, 22:03.33; 91. Jacob Sprenger, 22:12.72; 112. Erik Jones, 25:55.84

**HEPPNER MUSTANGS** — (Boys) 11. Hunter Nichols, 17:51.51; 21. Trent Smith, 18:52.76; 47. Skyler Palmer, 19:39.42; 60. Hayden Qualls, 20:17.4; 93. Gibson McCurry, 22:19.52; 104. Reno Ferguson, 23:31.71; 105. Jimmy Adams, 23:33.77

**NIXYAVALI GOLDEN EAGLES** — (Boys) 46. Lennox Lewis, 19:38.41

**CONDON/WHEELER KNIGHTS** — (Girls) 50. Amy Weddle, 25:48.80; 55. Kaela Reser, 26:35.24; 61. Sydney Bettencourt, 27:23.48. (Boys) 94. Dima Anglin, 22:20.1.

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## ENTRUP: Coaches agree District 5 too large, too competitive for scant representation

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podium that end up taking the worst self-inflicted beatings, and as I watched the 3A/2A/1A District 5 Championships on a gorgeous fall afternoon in Pendleton I couldn't help but think it's a shame most of those young athletes wouldn't get a chance to do that one more time this season.

It's not that I like seeing the kids suffer, it's just obvious how much this means to them.

Take the Umatilla boys team for example. The Vikings were shooting for the program's first-ever team berth at state on Friday and came out literally putting their best foot forward. Nearly every member of the varsity team ran a personal record time, and three finished inside the top 10. It was a great effort that

earned the boys third place with 94 points — just seven behind second-place Nyssa. To me that's a team that should be considered among the upper tier in the state.

Yet, due to the OSAA's limited number of available state qualifications, the Vikings will have to wait for that first state berth.

Only the top two teams get to race at the state meet from District 5, historically one of the most competitive among Oregon's small schools. That's just not right. Districts 1-3 get to send their top three teams to state this year, so what gives? I'm not the only one wondering.

"I don't know all of the politics behind how that stuff is decided," said Umatilla coach Josh Ego. "We are one of the larger districts with only two teams allowed. I don't know who makes that decision. It seems from our

perspective, considering we often have three or four teams that would be top 10 contenders (at state) that would sway things."

Extending the cutoff to three teams for Districts 4-6 would add at most 21 more runners to the state field which already tops out at 100 plus. A mere drop in the pan if you ask me.

Furthermore, in today's Class 5A Columbia River Conference championships in The Dalles — a four-team race — the top seven individuals will get to advance to state. Consider just the top five placers from the 17-team District 5. got to advance and then try to explain to me how that makes sense.

Sure Class 5A has one less district than 3A/2A/1A, but I think I've already established that the more the merrier when it comes to

this brutal sport, and if the OSAA is going to force the bottom three classifications to compete against each other the least it could do is make a few more state berths available.

Even extending the cutoff to seven at Friday's race in Pendleton would have only added one more girl and no boys to the state mix thanks to Union's dominance of the top 10. But Vale junior Brooke Kaen probably would have appreciated it all the same after finishing sixth overall with a time of 20:28.16.

And it's not like I'm advocating making the state meet an open. Top seven is still pretty exclusive company in a field of 68, which is how many girls entered Friday.

I know the OSAA has its reasons for setting the state limits where they

are — my hunch is money, or lack thereof plays a big part since teams that travel for the postseason receive some reimbursements for the costs — but to be honest I didn't really have time to contact them for their input when writing this article so for now those reasons remain a mystery. Whatever they are, like most OSAA policies I'm sure they will be revisited at season's end and hopefully the powers that be will be feeling generous when they are.

It seems like a slightly expanded state field would be an idea most could get behind. I know there'd be no grumbling from the coaches.

"We need to split our conference up because it's too big, it's got too many great teams and even when we were smaller we were the toughest district in the state," Stanfield coach Eric Jensen

said. "Now we're like twice as strong and twice as big. We've got 12 full teams on the boys' side and we only get to qualify two for state? We need to go to OSAA and say, 'This is nuts, we need to qualify more teams or you need to split us into two districts.'"

"It seems to me it would make sense that you want to get the best teams there (at state)," Ego said, "and every year if you've got three or four teams that could be in the top 10, and only two of those teams are going, it seems kind of silly."

I can think of another adjective to describe it, but it's probably a word I could only get away with printing during the week of Round-Up.

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