

# Eagle boys, girls on track for state playoffs

By Steve Tool  
Wallowa County Chieftain

The fabled home court advantage didn't have much effect on the Eagles after a successful three-game road trip in successive games against Cove, Pine Eagle and Elgin.

The trek started Tuesday, Jan. 29, as the Cove Leopards fell prey to both the ladies and boys teams.

The boys came out strong, beating the spots off the Leopards in a 62-34 manhandling. Led by Mason Ferre and his 15-point contribution, the Eagles put on a sparkling shot fest, with several players scoring in double digits and the point spread evenly across the team as a whole.

Coach Olan Fulfer said the team is firing on all cylinders, but Cove played tough.

"They have a couple of dang good athletes including a kid who's leading the league in scoring right now," he said. "They've beaten a lot of good teams."

The coach said the Eagles had lapses, but they were few and far between.

"Hopefully, we can keep our consistency up," he said. We got rid of the hero ball and remembered to share and it made a big difference in this game."

After Ferre's 15, Kade Kilgore followed with 11 in the bucket, including three from behind the paint. Trey Wandschneider and Tyler Homan chipped in with nine points apiece while Chase Murray donated seven points and Hadley Miller pocketed six.

As for Fulfer, he thinks the team's work ethic helped it turn a corner over the last couple of games.

"We're just a whole different team now," he said.

Friday, Feb. 2, saw the squad traveling to Pine Eagle. The Spartans made a game of it for the first half, at times trailing by only two. The second half saw the Sparts robbed of their dignity as they fell, 53-36.

Coach Fulfer said the team played lackadaisically in the first half, but a half-time pep talk quickly set the lads straight, as they came out of the locker room on fire. The Spartans never had a chance. Homan led the scoring with 15, including three shots from behind the paint. Junior Hadley



Courtesy Photo/Jeni Greenshields  
**Joseph Eagles basketball player TJ Grote looks for an open man during a Feb. 2 game against Elgin. The Eagles crushed the Huskies, 57-22.**

Miller had his best scoring of the season, laying 13 in the ring. Fulfer noted Miller performed well at the free throw line as well as the field. Ferre followed with eight points and steady Kilgore scored seven with two shots from the three-point boundary and his usual stellar defense.

"We didn't have Chase Murray for this game because he's sick, and we didn't play as well as we could have, but it ended up as a convincing win," Fulfer said. "We're getting the reputation of a team that doesn't back down, and I'm proud of that."

The following day saw the Eagles traveling westward to teach the Huskies a few new tricks, to the tune of a 57-22 knockout punch. Fulfer said it was the best game of the year for the Eagles.

"We had total consistency, which is what I'm looking for," he said. "Defensively it was our best game of the year. We took great shots and had only seven turnovers."

Ferre put the spurs to his steed for 20 points including three buckets from beyond the paint and went 5 for 5 at the foul line. Homan nabbed 11 points with two buckets from the three zone. Kilgore had six with two from the long range.

"He's so unselfish," Fulfer said. He always works for great shots, and he makes them. We need to get him to shoot more."

The boys are now 7-2 on the season and 14-7 overall.

They next host Wallowa on Friday, Feb. 8.

Despite a slow start, the ladies also scored big against Cove, defanging the Leopards, 57-31. While the offense had problems getting the shot to fall in, Coach Lance Homan said that the defense sparked, forcing more than 40 turnovers with 29 being steals. The ladies caught fire in the second half, burning numerous holes in the Leopard defense for a 31-point third quarter during the cruise to victory.

The always marvelous Sabrina Albee scored well into the double digits with 22 points with Madelyn Nelson hard at it with 17, including 15 in the third quarter. Haley Miller blazed in with 10. The Eagles only turned the ball over 13 times in the contest.

The ladies traveled to Pine Eagle Spartans on Feb. 1, taking their armor and beating their swords into plowshares on the way to a 52-23 victory with awesome Albee scoring 30 points, nine rebounds and seven steals to her credit. Miller had another solid game with 10 points, seven rebounds, and five steals.

Homan said the ladies had better luck offensively although more of the 40-plus turnovers they forced should have converted into points. On the bright side, all the team members got significant minutes on the floor.

"I am proud of how hard our girls worked as a team," Homan said. "They truly are



Courtesy Photo/Jeni Greenshields  
**The JV squad got in on the action as well, turfing the Elgin Huskies, 67-34. Here, Juston Rogers scores two of his 23 points.**

fun to watch and to coach."

Elgin was last in line to fall to the Eagle talons as Joseph buried the Huskies under a 58-30 avalanche led by Albee's triple-double, 20 points, 11 boards and 11 steals from the hapless Huskies. Miller again pulled her share of the weight playing on the inside and scoring 13. Nelson proved her worth with 11 points and seven steals while point guard master Emma Hite contributed six points with six rebounds and four steals. For the third straight game, the Eagles defense forced more than 40 turnovers.

Homan lauded the ladies' performance of late.

"Overall it was a great week of basketball with winning three road games," he said. "Our kids are so

resilient and cohesive and have such a great perspective of things. It's an honor to coach them."

The victory proved the ninth straight for the ladies,

vaulting them into the no. 1 spot in state rankings. They harbor a league record of 9-0 and are 19-2 overall.

The ladies next host Wallowa on Friday, Feb. 8.

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