

Grant County Lady Tigers, Panthers battle at districts

Day/Mon beats Prairie City in Game One

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Dayville/Monument Lady Tigers clawed their way to a 41-37 victory over the Prairie City Lady Panthers Thursday, Feb. 18, at the 1A-8 High Desert League Tournament held at Grant Union.

The Tigers entered the tournament seeded fourth, and the Panthers were the fifth seed.

Scores were fairly even in the first half, when the Tigers kicked things into high gear.

The first quarter had the Tigers ahead 7-6, then the Panthers outshot the Tigers 14-9 in the second.

Panthers contributing to scoring in the second were Brianna Zwegardt with six points, including a three-pointer and a free throw; Cassie Hire and Lindsay Wall with four points; and Amaya Zwegardt with two.

Tiger players Kendall Hettinga and Kristina Humphreys helped the team with two three-pointers in the third, along with Skylar Powell and Danielle Rhoda adding points to the scoreboard, and the teams were tied, 29-29.

"I think going into the second half, they picked up their intensity, and won one quarter at a time, instead of a lot at once," said Tiger head coach Taylor Schmadeka. "Teamwork was a lot better in the second half. They moved the ball a lot and communicated on defense a lot better."

Scoring went back and fourth in the final period, and

the game was tied 37-37 with a minute and a half left.

Rhoda scored her last two of six points in the quarter off a steal.

Powell added one of two at the free-throw line, putting the Tigers up by three.

Schmadeka said it was "pure hustle from the girls" that kept the ball in their hands. Then Hettinga added another point at the line to end the game.

"I'm so proud of everybody," said Tiger player Hannah Flower. "They really came together when it mattered as a team — I'm just excited."

Panther head coach Penny Black said her team kept good composure through the first half.

A couple key players were lost when they fouled out near the end.

The Panthers' leading scorer was Brianna Zwegardt with 20 points in the game.

next morning to win the consolation game 54-42 against Harper/Huntington.

The Panthers trailed 12-13 in the first quarter, but bounced back for a 26-17 lead going into the half.

Prairie City kept their lead for the remainder of the game.

Harper/Huntington outshot the Panthers 16-14 in the third, and Prairie City closed out the game, scoring 14 to the Hornets' 9.

Black said Harper/Huntington had improved over the season, and knew they would be a challenge.

She said she's enjoyed coaching the Panthers this year.

"No matter what they have fun, and that's important," she said. "I'm looking forward to next season. I preach to them about practicing out of season — we have strong eighth-graders coming up, so they really need to work on their game."

"I felt like, overall, we played hard, especially the first two nights — I'm proud of the girls for sticking with it and keeping with it," he said. "We're losing one senior, so we'll have a lot of returning players, and we'll be good next year."

in their game on Friday against Crane, but took a 25-50 loss.

Schmadeka said the score didn't reflect the effort his team gave.

"They didn't give up," he said, adding that Crane deserved credit as a solid team, playing without two starters who were injured.

"We played really hard; we just ended up making more mistakes that they did," said Tiger player Kendall Hettinga.

The Tigers suffered a 39-68 loss on Saturday to the Jordan Valley Mustangs who took third in the tournament and advanced to the state playoffs.

Schmadeka said he was happy with the season.

He said he would never forget his first year of coaching.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter
Dayville/Monument Tiger Danielle Rhoda scores, breaking the final tie of the game, Prairie City Panther defenders Raven Maloy (11) and Sarah Ennis (20) in the action. The Tigers went on to win the game, 41-37.

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Prairie City girls
Prairie City went on the

Dayville/Monument girls
The Tiger girls were strong

Long Creek/Ukiah teams make strides

Teams learn basketball and improve

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

LONG CREEK — Every year a new string of basketball players join the Long Creek/Ukiah boys and girls teams.

All the players are foreign exchange students this year, with the exception of one player who moved from Alaska; the other players' home countries include Spain, Germany, Brazil, Thailand, China, Taiwan and Japan.

TC Conner coaches the boys, and Ray Martin leads the girls.

Conner has coached high school teams since 2008,

and this is Martin's first year coaching the high school girls, and third year coaching junior high.

Most are new to the sport, and this year was no different, although a couple players on the boys team added experience.

Conner said most of his players had experience in PE classes, but not competition; however, Aaron Yeung and Ben Huang had both experience and passion for the game.

Yeung said, "Basketball is my life."

"We get new kids every year, and we go back to the basics and learn the game," Conner said.

He added, in some of the countries, the boys learned only one skill, such as passing.

Conner turned that around,

and said his goal was to teach each boy to play all aspects of the game, including passing, catching and shooting the ball.

"The hardest part was getting them to understand the competitive team aspect, and speed and motion offense," he said. "Defense just falls into place. They came to understand their roles."

This season the boys team beat the Dayville/Monument and Adrian's junior varsity teams.

"Ben hit a last-second shot that took us into overtime, and we won in overtime — that was an exciting game," Conner said of the contest against Adrian.

They also had a close game against Pilot Rock junior varsity.

"I told them in the last practice it's probably the

funnest team I've coached," Conner said. "They came together as a team, from learning how to dribble and catch, to playing the whole game from the tip to the buzzer."

Ray Martin said a lot of the girls on his team didn't have the opportunity to play sports in their home countries, but if they could stay together, their progress would show up next season.

Unfortunately, the students will return to their home countries at the end of the school year.

"These kids have played with good attitudes," he said. "They always try and love to play no matter what, and they show great improvement every week."

He said he'll remember the girls singing on the bus trips, their motivation to keep trying and their smiles.



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