

SPORTS
SCHEDULE**Wednesday,
Sept. 7****Prairie City volleyball
@ Grant Union JV
in John Day, 5 p.m.,
beginning with JV****Friday, Sept. 9****Prairie City/Burnt River
football @ Pine Eagle
in Halfway, 1 p.m.****Prairie City volleyball @
Pine Eagle in Halfway, 2
p.m., beginning with JV****Grant Union football
@ Heppner, 7 p.m.****Saturday,
Sept. 10****Grant Union volleyball
@ Canby Tournament,
8 a.m. (location TBA)****Grant Union, Monu-
ment cross country @
Catherine Creek Meet
near Union, 12:30 p.m.****Monday,
Sept. 12****Dayville/Monument
football vs. Grant Union
JV in Dayville, 4 p.m.****Tuesday,
Sept. 13****Dayville/Monument vol-
leyball @ Grant Union
JV in John Day, 5 p.m.,
beginning with JV**Cinnabar Mountain Playdays
rodeo spurs on competitionYear-end banquet
set for Oct. 23By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Cinnabar Mountain Playdays rodeo season ended with an Aug. 20-21 double-header at the Grant County Fairgrounds in John Day.

Didgette McCracken, who serves as one of the Playdays board of directors, said the rodeo events require dedication from the participants, as well as their families.

"It's not just one of those things where you buy some tennis shoes and drop them off for practice," she said. "The family has to be pretty committed."

She said the sponsors, volunteers and families play a big role in the success of the program for the youth.

"The Playdays have great families and support for the kids," she said. "All three of those things make for a great organization. It's a positive summer activity for kids."

Youth ages 2-17 compete in several events, including pole bending, figure eight, dummy roping, flag race, barrel racing and goat tying.

Ten-year-old Rowdy Israel of Dayville has participated in the Playdays since she was 6, and this year competed with her registered paint horse Peanut.

"I liked the last rodeo, because it was really fun," she said. "I got to finish the season with some good runs."

Israel, who competes in the junior division, said her favorite event is barrel racing.

"Your horse goes really fast, and it's fun to compete in," she



Contributed photo/Laura Hopper

Tate Waddel competes in a track event with his mom, Simmie, and brother Jarrett helping him on leadline at the Aug. 21 Cinnabar Mountain Playdays rodeo.

said. "You have to be really one on one with your horse, so you don't knock a barrel over because that's 5 seconds added on your time."

Chloe Martin, 16, of Mt. Vernon competes with her horse Carlos in the senior division.

She said the rodeos are competitive, and that spurs her on to ride faster.

"It's a lot of really good practice to (help) if you want to compete in college," she said. "As

you're learning, you're getting faster and faster."

She said her most memorable moment was gathering with the girls who helped her learn goat tying for the first time.

"I thought it was incredible," she said. "I loved the whole experience."

The Cinnabar Mountain Playdays year-end banquet will be at 1 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 23, at the Mt. Vernon Community Center.

Grant County
sports roundupBy Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

On the road last week, the Grant Union volleyball team picked up second place at Friday's Heppner Invitational Tournament.

In their five matches, the Prospectors went 4-1, beating Wallowa (25-6, 25-6), Weston-McEwen (26-24, 25-21), Enterprise (25-19, 25-10) and Heppner (25-15, 25-14) and taking a loss to Imbler (25-23, 18-25, 12-15).

"Imbler is one of the favorites to do well at the state tournament this year, and it will be a tough battle each time we play them," said Grant Union head coach Shae Speth. "It was nice to get a preseason look at them before league starts."

Grant Union played with energy in the first set, and Speth said although they made costly errors for the loss, they feel good about

how they match up with Imbler.

The Prairie City/Burnt River football team competed in their first game of the season on Thursday, taking a 30-6 loss to Spray/Mitchell/Wheeler County in Spray.

Prairie City/Burnt River head coach Darrel McKrola said the first half went well, and they trailed by only two points, 8-6.

Then a couple of his key players, including one of his linemen, went down with injuries, opening up holes in their defense, McKrola said.

"It was a good warm up for the season," he added. "We were able to get all our guys in the game."

The Monument/Dayville volleyball team competed at Saturday's Dufur Jamboree Match, where they picked up two wins.

They toppled Lyle, Washington, 25-11, and edged out Siletz Valley, 25-20.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union Prospector Zack Deiter (3) reaches for the ball as Weston-McEwen's Brett Speed (23) moves in.

PROS

Continued from Page A10

Midway through the third quarter, Prospector Cameron Hallgarth pushed through for the conversion points.

Prospector lineman Dillon Maley, who had a sack in the second quarter, said the game was "excellent."

"We all played really hard and worked together," he said. "I'm just excited for this team, to see how we do against Heppner next week."

Grant Union faces Heppner on the road Friday at 7 p.m. Miller said the Mustangs are always a tough opponent.

"We're going to keep working and see what we get," he said.

for a first down close to the goal line.

In the fourth, Grant Union scored on the first play, and Prospector Cameron Hallgarth pushed through for the conversion points.

Prospector lineman Dillon Maley, who had a sack in the second quarter, said the game was "excellent."

"We all played really hard and worked together," he said. "I'm just excited for this team, to see how we do against Heppner next week."

Grant Union faces Heppner on the road Friday at 7 p.m. Miller said the Mustangs are always a tough opponent.

"We're going to keep working and see what we get," he said.

GU

Continued from Page A10

3A/2A/1A Special District 5; Grant Union is 2A. The opponents include Union, which won first last year, followed by Burns, Nyssa and Vale.

"We are always inundated," Smith said. "Our league has lots of the top cross-country runners in the state."

One quality of a successful cross-country runner is "tenacity — both mental and physical," Smith said.

"You have to be able to push through discomfort, and you see the most improvements," she said. "We don't compare ourselves to others, but our best last effort."

Smith knows what it takes, as she completed college with a scholarship in cross country, on the road to becoming a teacher.

Grant Union cross country leaders include two runners on the boys team, senior Trejan Speth and sophomore Tanner Elliott.

Speth has been running long distance races since he was in sixth grade.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union Cross Country seniors include, from left, Reitta Wyllie, Trejan Speth and Ginni Frazier.

Elliott has also competed since middle school, and competed in summer 5K races, including the Gold Rush Run in Canyon City and the Brothers Run in John Day, where he finished first.

"They add a lot of leadership for the team," she said. "Trejan has taken the role of team captain."

Speth said he's happy they

have a full team for his senior year.

"We've all had to run individually in previous years," he said. "We plan to finish strong and compete to the best of our abilities, even though we have some stiff competition."

The Burns-Idlewild Meet, held at a campground near Burns, is a favorite course for

Speth, and he said that type of setting makes the sport enjoyable. The team will compete at that course on Oct. 15.

"I like how you're running through the forest," he said. "It's not on a track, but on dirt and rock."

The two other seniors this year, Reitta Wyllie and Ginni Frazier, are running cross country for the first time, but both have distance running experience.

"We're a great group of runners, and we have high expectations for ourselves," Wyllie said.

She said she likes keeping fit with running and several years ago placed first in the Gold Rush Run 5K, in the youth division.

Frazier ran distance races in track, previously.

"I think we're all pretty dedicated, and we all work hard and will do our best," she said.

Saturday was the team's first meet at the Runners Soul XC Fest in Hermiston, and they'll see many of their district opponents at Friday's 40th Annual Catherine Creek Scamper near Union.

TOURNEY

Continued from Page A10

we've finished in quite a few years," he said.

Prairie City lost their quarter-final match against Joseph, with scores of 11-25 and 18-25.

The Panthers played for third place against Jordan Valley,

winning 2-1 with scores of: 28-26, 20-25 and 15-11.

In the tournament, Panther junior Brianna Zwegardt served at 95 percent on 65 attempts, and senior MaKenzie Jones was at 93 percent on 27 serves. Of Cassie Hire's 56 serves, 46 percent were aces.

Coach Zwegardt said the team focused on communica-

tion and aggressive play to the ball in practice last week.

He said the seniors were instrumental in their success at the tournament by keeping the team focused on their goals.

"Our main focus this week in practice was communication and aggressive play to the ball," he said. "The girls are working with communication and trust,

so they can play aggressively to the ball with confidence."

Senior MaKenzie Jones said the team played well together.

"In the beginning, we communicated really well and celebrated what needed to be celebrated, and made it really fun," she said.

The Joseph Eagles won the championship game with Adrian finishing second. Other teams

competing included Harper/Huntington and Union.

Earlier last week, the Panthers beat Mitchell/Spray/Wheeler 3-0 with scores of 25-12, 25-15 and 25-10.

In the game, Brianna Zwegardt and Jones were 100 percent on serving.

Brianna had six aces, Jones had five and Cassie Hire had

seven aces with just one miss.

Prairie City will face Grant Union junior varsity on Wednesday with the Panther junior varsity playing first at 5 p.m. and varsity following at about 6 p.m.

On Friday, the Panthers are on the road to Halfway to face Pine Eagle with junior varsity play at 2 p.m., followed by varsity at about 3 p.m.

TIGERS

Continued from Page A10

Walker, with five years experience; and Dinorha Vidrio Landin, who is new to the sport.

Schmadeka, who is in her second year leading the team, said their main team goal is having the seasoned players to guide the less experienced ones to help the team prepare for the next couple years.

She sees several girls contributing as leaders.

Hettinga, an outside hitter, was selected for an All-League honorable-mention last year in the High Desert League.

Schmadeka said she expects Hettinga will contribute greatly to the team with her experience

and leadership.

"She is our strongest hitter and does a great job attacking the ball from the front and back rows," she said. "She will contribute a lot this year in leadership, aggressiveness, passion for the game and a strong force all the way around the court."

Walker is taking the defensive specialist role again this year.

"She is still working hard as libero and passing well," the coach said.

Schmadeka commented on a few more key players.

"Faythe Schafer is working hard as our main setter and working on jump serve," she said.

She expects Kyla Emerson to again be strong on offense.

"She is working to improve her hitting this year and being one of our stronger hitters this year," she said.

Danielle Rhoda is doing well this season, she added, "learning offense and working at hitting."

Denali Twehues is stepping in as a setter, and Bailey Thomas has shown improvement in passing skills, she said.

"Bailey is a good leader, and she's inspirational to everybody," Schmadeka said.

Last October, the Tigers beat the Prairie City Panthers in close sets at the 1A District Tournament, but were unable to advance to the state playoffs after taking losses to Crane and Jordan Valley.

Schmadeka expects this year to be another tough battle.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Monument/Dayville Tiger seniors, from left, are Dinorha Vidrio-Landin, Kendall Hettinga and Ravyn Walker.

The Tigers will face High Desert League opponents Pra-

irie City, Adrian, Crane, Jordan Valley, Burnt River, Harper/Hun-

tington, Long Creek and Ukiah.

Schmadeka said she expects Adrian, Crane and Prairie City to be their toughest competitors this season.

The Tigers took in one league win to start the season after beating Prairie City 2-1 at the Aug. 27 Grant Union Tournament in the consolation bracket with scores of 25-17, 13-25 and 15-9.

They had a close loss to 2A Heppner, 25-21 and 26-24, in the consolation games.

Earlier in the tournament, Monument/Dayville beat league opponent Jordan Valley 25-24 in a pool play game.

"There are a lot of strong teams this year," Schmadeka said. "It will be important to play strong and be in control and play our tempo."