



The sky's the limit: Lady Pros start basketball season

New head coach Casey Hallgarth leads the team

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant Union is returning all of last season's Lady Prospector starters this year, including Hailie Wright, Kaylee Wright, Mariah Moulton, Madi McKrola and Trinity Hutchison.

New head coach Casey Hallgarth is leading the team, taking over where previous head coach Mark Mosley left off. Hallgarth's assistant coaches are Kristi Moore and Christal Culley.

"These two coaches have been amazing," he said. "It's been great so far, and we're all jelling."

Hallgarth, a sixth-grade teacher at Humbolt Elemen-



Mariah Moulton



Whitney McClellan



Mariah Wright



Fallon Weaver



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union Prospector Marissa Smith passes the ball to Fallon Weaver with Madi McKrola moving into the center in practice.

tary School, has been a Grant Union assistant varsity coach and was girls junior varsity coach last year, boys junior varsity coach the year before and junior high boys coach the two years previous. He

also spent eight years coaching the Imbler boys basketball team, coaching the Imbler junior varsity boys for one year before that.

There are 20 girls out for basketball, including 11 on

the varsity team, this year.

While Hailie and Kaylee Wright, Moulton, McKrola and Hutchison are back as starters, Hallgarth said he's expecting his entire team to contribute this season.

"One thing we're stressing this year is that there's not one girl that shouldn't be tired," he said. "Our goal as coaches is, even if you're the 11th person on the bench, you will be tired."

Hallgarth said, as the team competed in games last summer, he shared his ideas about basketball.

"They started buying into my philosophy," he said.

That includes being fast getting up and down the floor, playing hard every possession, being a great teammate and having fun.

"Effort is key," he added. "If we have effort on both sides of the ball, we should do great."

So far, the team is off to a positive start, winning their first tournament in Moro last weekend after beating Culver 51-32 and Sherman 90-15.

Hallgarth said he's running a new offense and defense, and said they should be strong

on shooting and driving and speed.

"Our seniors are going to play a pivotal role this season in our success," he said.

Seniors this season are Moulton, Whitney McClellan, Mariah Wright and Fallon Weaver. Hallgarth said he stresses leadership from them, whether they're in the game or watching.

"There's a certain demeanor they need to possess to encourage the younger players," he said.

Moulton said she hopes their success in volleyball — the team won the state championship — will carry over to basketball.

"We play together well, and we've known each other a long time," she said.

Mariah Wright said she thinks this season will be a fun one.

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Dancers enjoy a holiday spotlight

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

It was "beginning to look a lot like Christmas" as 63 dancers in five groups brightened the Grant Union stage Thursday and Friday at the 21st annual Holiday Showcase.

Dancers from ages 4-18, wowed the crowds with a range of dance styles, from lyrical to jazz.

Performing in solos, duets and groups, the youth danced to contemporary and classic Christmas music.

"There was a lot of variety," said showcase coordinator Kattie Piazza, who also coaches the Grant Union Gold varsity dance team. "I'm super proud of the dancers and all their hard work."

Nikki Jones, a Grant Union Gold dancer who also performed a solo to "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," said the showcase was a great experience.

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The Tiny Twisters dance group performs to "It's Beginning to Look A Lot Like Christmas" at the Holiday Showcase, including, from left, Josie Hollowell, Mikaia Houpt, Asher LaDuke and Allison Fansler.



Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union Gold dancers Brianna Majors, left, and Shanniyah Hall perform a duet to "Hallelujah" by Pentatonix at the Holiday Showcase. TOP IMAGE: Grant Union Gold dance team: front row, from left, Leah Comer, Mercedes Locke, Brianna Majors, Shanniyah Hall, Nikki Jones; back row, Reah Mead, Emilie Updegrave, Ali Chobo and Clara Carr.



Contributed photo

Grant County wrestler Trevor Sasser listens to head coach Steve Parsons, center, and assistant coach Tye Parsons after competing at the Nov. 4 Baker Brawl Tournament.

Youth wrestlers and families show dedication

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

A group of dedicated parents, and grandparents, are leading this year's Grant County Youth Wrestling Club.

With 32 youths out for wrestling, Steve Parsons said they have assistance from other parents as well.

"You can't do it without them," he said. "We have parents and coaches, and we try to break them up into a group of four."

He said a couple of the moms have also been helping.

"We're trying to keep it hands-on with all the kids that come out," he said.

Children as young as 4 and as old as 11 have joined the program this year, including three girls. Youth from Monument and Long Creek also join in the practices held in John Day.

Steve Parsons said he and the assistant coaches are all about teaching the fundamentals of the sport.

"We're not trying to make superstars out of any of them," he said, adding they focus on making the sport fun for the kids.

Still, the youths in the program are competitive. Several came home with medals from their first ORWAY (Oregon Wrestling Association for Youth) competitions of the season.

Their first meet of the season was Nov. 4 at the Baker Brawl Wrestling Tournament. They traveled to the Hermiston Invitational on Nov. 11, where 32 teams competed. The wrestlers and their parents travel nearly every week.

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Youth wrestling tournament planned Dec. 9 in John Day

This year, the local youth wrestling club will host its first home tournament in about 15 years. The event is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 9, at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School in John Day.

Long-time wrestling supporter and tournament director Cindy Dougharity-Spencer said she's glad for the chance the club has to host a tournament. She expects as many as 400 youth wrestlers, plus coaches and spectators, at the event.

"We have had a big increase of youth wrestlers over the past few years," she said. "Unfortunately for those families, that means travel for every opportunity for their kids to compete."

She added, "Being able to host a tournament will allow our youth wrestlers to compete at home and provide an opportunity for their friends and families to come out to support them without traveling."

Dougharity-Spencer said they are seeking volunteers to help with the tournament. For more information, contact her at Grant Union at 541-575-1799 ext. 32.



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Grant County wrestler Jerett Waddel pins his opponent with a head and arm at the Nov. 4 Baker Brawl Tournament.