

# Prospectors aim for league title

Five seniors return, six freshmen join program

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant Union's boys basketball head coach Kelsy Wright said they take every practice as a game.

"We have some pretty intense practices, and everybody is always battling for a spot," he said. "We have a lot of great athletes."

He hopes that intensity and talent carries over to their games.

Wright said his group of five seniors have played basketball together since elementary school.

"They've worked hard the last four years I've coached them, and they deserve everyone's support," he said.

"We've got good chemistry," he said, adding their younger players can compete, and they play well with the seniors.

The seniors are Zack Deiter, Ty McDaniel, Duane Stokes, Cauy Weaver and Wade Reimers.

"We're excited to have everyone back and healthy and ready to play," Deiter said.

McDaniel said he's also looking forward to the season.

"I'm glad to play my last year of basketball with the same guys we had in sixth grade," he said.

Stokes added, "I'm really optimistic about this year, and I'm excited about what we can do."

Weaver said they should compete well in league.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union's Cauy Weaver races up the court with a pack of Prospectors in their Nov. 29 practice. From left, Zack Deiter (back), Devon Stokes (foreground), Jordan Hall, Weaver, Warner Robertson and Jacob Vaughan.



Wade Reimers



Zack Deiter



Cauy Weaver



Ty McDaniel



Duane Stokes

"We competed really well with them last year," Wright said.

He said strong players to watch for on his team include seniors and sophomores Cole Deiter and Kellen Shelley.

He said Weaver was a "work horse" who gives 100 percent, even if he's tired, and said Zack Deiter was a great teammate and leader who likes to make sure his teammates are taken care of right.

"Duane is probably our biggest playmaker and leading scorer," Wright said, adding Stokes also sets up great shots for his teammates.

The coach said Reimers is also expected to be a "huge asset" to the team, and said McDaniel is one of their better outside shooters and a great defender with extremely fast hands.

Wright said Cole Deiter did well last year as a freshman.

"He hardly turns the ball over and always makes great decisions with the basketball," he said.

Wright said he's also looking for great things from several other players, and, bottom line, the team needs to be good in the classroom, be healthy, stay positive and work hard every day.

"We'll reach our goals by the end," he said, adding, "I enjoy coaching the kids to make them better, not just on the basketball court, but giving them a good work ethic, helping them to go on to whatever they decide to do in their career."

## Grant Union boys basketball schedule

- Dec. 8-9: @ Enterprise Winter Classic, TBD
- Dec. 12: vs. Burns in John Day at 7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 15: vs. Weston-McEwen in John Day at 7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 16: @ Heppner at 5:30 p.m.
- Dec. 21-23: @ Nyssa Basketball Tournament at 3:30 p.m./TBD
- Jan. 4: @ Weston-McEwen at 7:30 p.m.
- Jan. 6: @ Lakeview at 5:30 p.m.
- Jan. 9: junior varsity vs. Dayville varsity, 6:30 p.m.
- Jan. 12: vs. Elgin at 7:30 p.m.
- Jan. 13: @ Union at 5:30 p.m.
- Jan. 16: @ Burns at 7:30 p.m.
- Jan. 19: @ Imbler at 7:30 p.m.
- Jan. 20: @ Baker, TBD
- Jan. 26: vs. Enterprise at 7:30 p.m.
- Jan. 27: @ Elgin at 5:30 p.m.
- Jan. 30: junior varsity @ Dayville varsity at 6:30 p.m.
- Feb. 2: vs. Union at 7:30 p.m.
- Feb. 3: vs. Imbler at 5:30 p.m.
- Feb. 6: vs. Crane at 7:30 p.m. (senior night)
- Feb. 8: vs. Jordan Valley at 7 p.m.
- Feb. 10: @ Enterprise at 5:30 p.m.
- Feb. 16: District Playoffs at La Grande High School
- Feb. 17: District Playoffs at La Grande High School
- Feb. 23: First Round State Playoffs
- March 1-3: State Championships in Pendleton

Reimers said he's glad to see the numbers of freshmen on the team, and the hustle they bring to the court.

"I think we have a pretty good shot to make it farther than we have in the past," he said. "Our first goal is to win league, then see where the road takes us."

Three juniors, six sophomores and six freshmen round out the team.

This is Wright's second

year coaching the boys varsity team, and he has a total of 10 years of coaching experience.

His assistant coaches are Brandon Culley and Kelly Stokes, who also leads the junior varsity team, and Justin Larson leads the junior high team.

Wright said that with the team he has this year, they are aiming to win the league championship. The Pros-

pector boys haven't won a league title since 1990.

"We're aiming for that," he said. "We should be very competitive in our league this year, and we're definitely aiming for the Final 8, to state."

In the Wapiti league, Wright expects Enterprise to be their biggest challenge as they have almost everyone back on their team from last year.

## DANCE

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"It's always fun to have the little kids performing, so they can experience the world of dance," she said.

Coach Jennifer Hughes and her assistant Ashleigh Romero led the Dancing Divas (Level 3), a group of 17 dancers in third through fifth grades.

They also coached the sixth- through eighth-grade junior high team, called the Divas Divine.

"We're seeing a lot of talent from these girls," Hughes said. "When they reach high school, it will be amazing."

Other groups included the Tiny Twisters (Level 1), age 4 through kindergarten, coached by Autumn Holland and assistant Tasha Lundbom, and the Twinkle Toes (Level 2) group of first- and second-graders, coached by Trista DeRosier and assistants Caroline Colson and Tasha Lundbom.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

The Grant Union Gold dance team performs at Friday's 21st annual Holiday Showcase.

More than 400 audience members attended the showcase.

The event is the main fundraiser for the Gold dancers to help pay for their costumes and travel expenses.

"I'm super blessed with the turnout we've had," Piazza said. "I want to thank all the high school dance team parents for all their help with tickets, tables and baked goods."

She said she was pleased with her team's performances.

"This team has so much talent and drive," she said. "I think they're going to have a great year."

## PROS

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"We have a team that clicks and our practices are full of energy," she said.

Weaver said the team is fast and they get along well. McClellan agreed.

"Everyone's really encouraging," she said. "I think my last year is going to be my best year."

Grant Union will face Elgin, Imbler, Enterprise and Union in the 2A Wapiti League.

He expects Enterprise and Union to be the most competitive, but added, "Nothing's a given, but if we play good basketball day in and day out, we should be in good shape this year."

He said "90 mph" is their current theme.

"We'll hit our stride at districts, so we can make a run into the post season, but we need all our girls playing top-notch basketball," he said. "Our expectations are high here because of what Mark Mosley has done for the program. He set the bar, and now I'm coming in with some new coaches."

He added, "Our expectations are high, and if we play at the level that we're capable of, the sky's the limit."

## Grant Union girls basketball schedule

- Dec. 8-9: @ Enterprise Winter Classic, TBA
- Dec. 12: vs. Burns in John Day at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 15: vs. Weston-McEwen in John Day at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 16: @ Heppner at 4 p.m.
- Dec. 21-23: @ Nyssa Basketball Tournament at 2 p.m./TBD
- Jan. 4: @ Weston-McEwen at 6 p.m.
- Jan. 6: @ Lakeview at 4 p.m.
- Jan. 9: junior varsity vs. Dayville varsity, 5 p.m.
- Jan. 12: vs. Elgin at 6 p.m.
- Jan. 13: @ Union at 4 p.m.
- Jan. 16: @ Burns at 6 p.m.
- Jan. 19: @ Imbler at 6 p.m.
- Jan. 20: @ Baker, TBD
- Jan. 26: vs. Enterprise at 6 p.m.
- Jan. 27: @ Elgin at 4 p.m.
- Jan. 30: junior varsity @ Dayville varsity at 5 p.m.
- Feb. 2: vs. Union at 6 p.m.
- Feb. 3: vs. Imbler at 4 p.m.
- Feb. 6: vs. Crane at 6 p.m. (senior night)
- Feb. 8: vs. Jordan Valley at 5:30 p.m.
- Feb. 10: @ Enterprise at 4 p.m.
- Feb. 16: District Playoffs at La Grande High School
- Feb. 17: District Playoffs at La Grande High School
- Feb. 24: First Round State Playoffs
- March 1-3: State Championships in Pendleton

## SPORTS SCHEDULE

### Friday, Dec. 8

Grant Union basketball @ Enterprise Winter Classic in Enterprise, girls and boys, TBD

Grant Union wrestling @ Calhoun Classic in Nyssa at 3 p.m.

Prairie City basketball @ Lone at Condon Christmas Tournament, girls at 3 p.m., boys at 4:30 p.m.

Monument/Dayville basketball @ Wallowa at the Wallowa Lions Tournament, girls at 6 p.m., boys at 7:30 p.m.

### Saturday, Dec. 9

Grant Union basketball @ Enterprise Winter Classic in Enterprise, boys and girls, TBD

Grant Union wrestling @ Calhoun Classic in Nyssa, TBD

Monument/Dayville basketball @ La Grande JV at the Wallowa Lions Tournament, girls at 1 p.m., boys at 2:30 p.m.

Prairie City basketball @ Condon/Wheeler at Condon Christmas Tournament, girls at 2 p.m., boys at 3:30 p.m.

### Tuesday, Dec. 12

Grant Union basketball vs. Burns in John Day, girls at 6 p.m., boys at 7:30 p.m.



Contributed photo

Grant County youth wrestlers Colter Handley (facing) and Owen Parsons square off at the Nov. 11 Hermiston Invitational.

## YOUTH

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end through December.

"That's three to four days a week of practice and tournaments on Saturdays," Steve Parsons said. "For the parents, it's a huge commitment for time and dollars — lots of travel."

Five or six of the youths will likely continue on to state USA wrestling tournaments after the regular season.

Steve Parsons said what the youths learn in their wrestling program carries on through junior high and varsity.

"That's the reason we try to teach them the basics, so as they move forward they're more experienced," he said. "You can win 90 percent of your matches with the basics. They need to know the basics and do it."

### Baker Brawl

First place: Mason Bengé, Taylor Parsons, Jerrett Waddel and Owen Parsons  
Second place: Rowdy Wilson, Zeke Rookstool, Jeritt Gast, Maveryk Bartlett and Beau VanCleave  
Third place: Halle Parsons, Jase Whatley, Hunter Wright and Kaden Wright  
Also participating: Charley Knowles, Jack Knowles, Tristan Clarry, Colter Handley, Natalee Clarry, Cody Knowles, Brogan Lundbom, Cooper Ross, Blake Sandor, Samuel Stout and Trevor Sasser  
Hermiston Invitational  
First: Mason Bengé, Owen Parsons, Beau VanCleave and Jase Whatley  
Second: Taylor Parsons  
Also participating: Zeke Rookstool, Natalee Clarry, Tristan Clarry, Brogan Lundbom, Halle Parsons, Kaden Wright, Colter Handley, Trevor Sasser, Mitchell McKrola and Arionna Young

*the corner's*  
**HOT SHOT**  
OF THE WEEK

**EMILIE UPDEGRAVE**  
School: Grant Union  
Grade: 10  
Parent: Karen Hinton  
Sport: Dance  
What I like best about my sport: "You're always so free to express your emotions."  
Coach's Comment: "Emilie gives it her all, all the time, and faces challenges head on with a positive attitude. She also consistently improves."  
-Coach Kattie Piazza

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