



Taylor Parsons (65), 9, wrestles Aiden Perkins of Pendleton at Saturday's Grant County Wrestling Invitational. Refereeing the match is Grant Union senior Collin Harvey.



Contributed photo/Linda Studtmann
 Ukiah/Long Creek's Rafael Gumerato (23), a senior, dribbles up the court, his teammate sophomore James Kreamier (12), at left, Dec. 2 against Mitchell/Spray.

Ukiah/Long Creek boys prepare for basketball battles

By Angel Carpenter
 Blue Mountain Eagle

The 1A Ukiah/Long Creek Mountain Lions junior varsity boys basketball team is 11 strong this season.

With one game behind them, the Mountain Lions are ready for more action.

"I like the team," said senior Rafael Gumerato, an exchange student from Brazil. "We have good players, and even the newer players are improving fast and learning the game quick."

Gumerato is the sole senior on the team. He and one of the other five exchange students on the team have experience with the sport.

The three returning players, all sophomores, are James Kreamier, Quinton Orr and Ben Combs. There are also two freshmen with experience. Kreamier said the players

are still figuring out how to read each other in the game, but he's encouraged.

"You can pass it to any of the players, and they're not too scared to shoot," he said. "I'm really looking forward to playing more games, getting more chemistry and winning."

The team is led by co-coaches Amos Studtmann and TC Conner. This is Studtmann's second year coaching and Conner's 11th.

Ukiah/Long Creek had its first test of the season on Dec. 2, when the team lost a 45-40 contest to Mitchell/Spray on the road in Mitchell.

"I believe the kids know they didn't play to their potential," Studtmann said. "They're going to play in the future with more confidence on offense and energy on defense. We have several good shooters,

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Grant County Wrestling Club hosts youth meet

170 wrestlers flock to mats at Grant Union

By Angel Carpenter
 Blue Mountain Eagle

Emotions ran high as youth wrestlers from 19 teams showed intensity and skill on the mats in John Day Saturday at the Grant County Wrestling Invitational and ORWAY (Oregon Wrestling Association for Youth) Tournament.

There were 170 wrestlers in all competing, and the parking lot was at full capacity at Grant Union Junior/Senior High School for the day-long event.

Six of the 19 teams came from La Grande, Elgin, Baker, Hermiston, Pendleton and Wallowa County.

"It's been a really nice turnout," said meet coordinator Cindy Dougharity-Spencer. "We've had great support from the community. It's awesome."

She said junior high and high school athletes were referees for the matches with help from former wrestlers, parents and grandparents.

"The kids have had the opportunity to wrestle in front of friends and family," she said.

This was the first time in 15 years or more that Grant County has hosted a youth wrestling tournament. Athletes from ages 4-14 competed.

Grant County's Taylor Parsons, 9, had an especially good day of wrestling, winning by decision against an athlete he'd lost to in two past tournaments.

"Our kids did really well today," said head coach Steve Parsons.

He highlighted Taylor as well as Mason Bengé for their performances.

"Taylor wrestled smart



Grant County's Kaden Wright (75), 11, left, is in action at the Grant County Wrestling Invitational at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School in John Day.



Grant County's Arianna Young (109), 14, right, wrestles at Saturday's home invitational.

and listened, and Mason Bengé did a good job listening," he said. "When they get out there, we can tell them how to adjust and if they are truly listening, we as a team can succeed."

Bengé, 10, wrestled at 88 pounds. "It's my favorite sport,"

he said. "I've been doing it since I was 5. We have good teams and good coaches."

Kaden Wright, 11, had a rough day of wrestling, but said the home meet was fun.

"Wrestling makes me stronger, and I've made new friends," he said. Athletes from ages 4-8

wrestled in the morning with ages 9-14 taking on opponents in the afternoon.

Coach Parsons said the fact their team brought 34 wrestlers to compete is a testament to their organization.

The team includes wrestlers from John Day, Prairie City, Monument, Long Creek, Dayville, Mt. Vernon and Canyon City.

Parsons said having the youth group allows them to build the program, strengthening the junior high and high school teams. He said he has received positive feedback from parents.

"I've had moms say, 'My child is doing better. Their behavior is better.'"

Next up, the Grant County team will compete in Irrigon Saturday for the ORWAY regionals, and top-placers will advance to the finals in Redmond.

Ukiah/Long Creek girls hoops team aims for growth

Coach looks for confidence and dedication

By Angel Carpenter
 Blue Mountain Eagle

The 1A Ukiah/Long Creek Mountain Lion junior varsity girls basketball team is small but showing strength as the team gains experience.

Returning members on the team of seven are juniors Gladys Johnson and Tesla Crown.

"They give us some leadership for our small team," said coach Amos Studtmann.

Studtmann, in his second year coaching the team, is co-coach with TC Conner, who is in his 11th year coaching.

Johnson's younger sister Dortha, a freshman, has junior high basketball experience.

"Dortha is setting an example for all the kids with effort, energy and dedication," Studtmann said, adding their other freshman player Jenny Kim also brings experience.

The coach said the three exchange students on the team, all juniors, have no previous basketball experience, but are picking up the game quickly.

Gladys said she's enjoying getting to know her teammates better.

"I'm looking forward to



Contributed photo/Linda Studtmann
 Ukiah/Long Creek's Ximena Millan, a junior, dribbles up the court in the Dec. 2 game against Mitchell/Spray.

playing more games and having more fun in the games," she said.

Dortha said she's been impressed at how hard her teammates work in practice. She said if she sees them down, she likes to pick them up.

"I help them back up, and they have more confidence," she said, adding she likes to see them growing and showing more confidence.

"I'm excited about the season because I think we might be able to win the games because the girls talk to each other," she said. "It helps that we played volleyball together."

All the girls on the team except one played volleyball.

In their first basketball

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SPORTS ROUNDUP

Tiger girls win at Wallowa Lions Tourney, boys lose two

Monument/Dayville Tiger coach Taylor Schmadeka said tough defense, capitalizing on steals and having fun added up to winning at the Dec. 8-9 Wallowa Lions Tournament.

The Tigers overpowered the Lions 60-49 in Friday's girls basketball match. Kyla Emerson led Monument/Dayville with 21 points.

Schmadeka said both Emerson and Danielle Rhoda

made key points and rebounds when they were needed most. Emerson and Faythe Schafer each had nine steals.

"We played solid on both ends of the floor and capitalized on our steals, turning them into fast-break points," Schmadeka said.

He said his team played well together the following night when they faced La Grande's junior varsity team, the Tigers winning 44-34.

Rhoda led the Tigers with 17 points and 13 rebounds against La Grande.

Monument/Dayville sophomores Denali Twehues and

Aubrey Bowlus played good defense, Schmadeka said, forcing La Grande to take difficult shots, shutting down their scoring opportunities.

"Overall, I was very pleased with how the girls played again this weekend," Schmadeka said. "We are improving more and more every game, and the girls are also having a fun time playing, which translates into better performance on the court."

The Tiger boys, with a young team this season, lost two contests. They fell to Wallowa 51-16 and La Grande junior varsity 69-14.

"They're going to be constantly learning and improving," said Monument/Dayville head coach Jeff Schafer.

He said improvement and learning the pace of high school basketball is most important to him.

The team will continue working on taking care of the ball, rebounding and shooting as they prepare for this week's games, Schafer said, adding the team is coachable.

"They're wonderful kids," he said.

The Tigers were set to face South Wasco, the girls team ranked No. 1 for OSAA

teams, on Tuesday past press time. They'll next travel to Union Dec. 21-23 for the Bobcats Tournament.

Grant Union wrestlers battle at Calhoun Classic

Grant Union junior varsity wrestler Damion Young (138) competed for third place on Saturday at Nyssa's Calhoun Classic.

"The Calhoun is a tough meet," said Grant Union head coach Andy Lusco. "Our guys wrestled hard and improved."

The competition included schools from Ontario, Fruitland, Idaho, which won the tournament, and other Idaho schools, including Caldwell, Middleton, New Plymouth, Emmett, Kuna, Nampa and others.

Lusco said Young, who went 4-1, had a good day and is wrestling well.

"Amazing improvement over last year," Lusco said.

He highlighted five other junior varsity wrestlers.

Eli Sheedy (113), who went 3-2 on the day, is also showing

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