



**ON TO STATE**

**Prairie City boys overtake Powder Valley**

Prairie City faces Sherman Thursday

By Angel Carpenter  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

The Prairie City Panther boys climbed out of a 9-point hole in the third for a 52-45 victory over the Powder Valley Badgers in Saturday night's round-two state championship playoff in Prairie City.

The Panthers advance to the Thursday through Saturday, March 1-3, 1A OSAA Boys State Championship at Baker High School.

Prairie City, seeded No. 7, will face the No. 2-seeded Sherman Huskies of Moro at 8:15 p.m. on Thursday.

Saturday was a night to remember, ending with the sound of the Prairie City bell, used for Panther playoff wins.

Prairie City heard that bell last year, but this is the first time in 20 years the Prairie City boys have punched a ticket to the state tournament.

This was the third time Prairie City faced Powder Valley, the teams splitting wins in the regular season.



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**Prairie City Panthers are tough on defense as Powder Valley's Hunter Davis attempts to score. Panthers, from left, are Lucas McKinley (22), Syd Holman (23), Dorran Wilson (3) and Levi Burke (21).**

"It's a dogfight every time," said Panther head coach Sam Workman. "That's just how it's going to be — tough games from now on out, and anybody could beat anybody on any given night."

A packed house turned out with a majority of Panther fans in a nearly standing-room only gym.

The teams were tied in

the first quarter, with Dorran Wilson, Lucas McKinley and Syd Holman combining for 10, including two 3-point shots from McKinley.

Prairie City gained a 5-point lead when Levi Burke picked up a loose ball and scored, McKinley adding a 3-pointer to start the second.

Powder Valley's Omar Benites scored three times,

including once off a steal, to help the Badgers push a 21-21 tie.

The Badgers moved ahead 23-22, but in the final seconds, Burke overtook the ball, and Wilson drove in to score for a 24-23 lead going into halftime.

In the third, Panther Jajari Field scored his first points of the night on a breakaway, with Burke and Holman also adding 2. Wilson later went 2-2 at the free-throw line.

Powder Valley tied the score 30-30 and pulled away with a 41-32 point lead.

Some Prairie City fans said they were worried, seeing their team down in the final 8 minutes, but the Panthers pulled it together.

Wilson grabbed a defensive rebound and Burke drove for 2. Then Holman added another 2.

With about 5 minutes left, Wilson scored off his steal, then returned after rebounding to score 2 more.

It was Prairie City 40, Powder Valley 43, and the teams scrambled down on the floor for the ball. The Badgers picked it up, and Wilson stole it back, scoring.

The crowd went wild

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**Grant Union Prospect Kaylee Wright scores on a layup over the Weston-McEwen TigerScots in Friday night's round-one state playoff game in John Day. Grant Union won the game 71-42.**

**Grant Union girls crush TigerScots, advance to state tournament**

Lady Pros face Faith Bible Falcons Thursday

By Angel Carpenter  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant Union Prospect girls took the energy from a 24-10 first quarter and ran with it, claiming a 71-42 victory over the Weston-McEwen TigerScots in Friday's first-round state championship playoff.

The Prospectors advance to the Thursday through Saturday, March 1-3, 2A OSAA Girls State Championship Tournament in Pendleton.

Grant Union will face the Faith Bible Falcons at 3:15 p.m. Thursday at Pendleton High School.

Grant Union head coach Casey Hallgarth said defense and a concerted effort from each of the 12 team members made the difference.

"Our defense is what's carried us all season," Hallgarth said. "We came out ready to go tonight."

Kaylee Wright's tipoff landed in the hands of a TigerScot at the start, but Wright soon had it back in possession and teammate Mariah Wright scored on a layup for the first 2 points of the night.

The TigerScots answered back, then Prospector Whitney McClellan fired one off at the free-throw line.

With about 2 minutes left

in the first, Mariah Wright took the ball back from Weston-McEwen, and Kaylee Wright landed a 3-point shot.

Then Kaylee Wright grabbed a steal, and Mariah Wright scored a 3-pointer.

Prospectors Hailie Wright and Madi McKrola scored 2 each to add to Grant Union's momentum.

Grant Union's Trinity Hutchison was aggressive to the ball all night.

"It might not say it in the stat book, about the hustle points, but she was a spark plug tonight for our whole team," Hallgarth said. "She got on the floor after a ball, and then all of a sudden, we have three or four other girls diving for the ball as well, and fighting for it. In past games we haven't really had that."

Grant Union was ahead 45-24 at the half and outscored the TigerScots 14-9 in the third.

The Prospectors continued their dominance in the final eight minutes with players from the bench helping finish off the 29-point win.

Hallgarth said he felt proud of his team.

"They bought into everything we sold this year, and they've stuck together with it," he said. "For them to come through with the defensive effort tonight, I'm proud because Weston has two really good players who scored most of their points tonight."

TigerScot coach Mike Gusti said they were happy to

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The Grant Union Prospectors celebrate after Saturday's 66-51 win over the Santiam Wolverines.

**Prospector boys win Santiam battle on the way to the championships**

Grant Union faces top seed Thursday

By Angel Carpenter  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

In a fierce round-one state playoff battle, the Grant Union Prospect boys came out victorious 66-51 over the Santiam Wolverines.

The Prospectors, seeded No. 8, now advance to the Thursday through Saturday, March 1-3, OSAA 2A Boys Basketball State Championships in Pendleton where they'll face the No. 1-seeded Western Mennonites at 1:30 p.m. Thursday at the Pendleton Convention Center.

Grant Union, led by head coach Kelsey Wright, and Santiam, led by head coach JD Hill, tied the score several times throughout Saturday's game, with the Prospectors pulling away in the fourth.

"They were ready for this," Wright said. "It was win or die, and they



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**Grant Union Prospect Duane Stokes drives the ball ahead of Santiam Wolverines Colin Thurston (15) and Sean Horning (33) in Saturday's game.**

weren't done playing basketball yet, so they went on and played phenomenal basketball all the way through."

Prospector Cole Deiter sent the tipoff to Zack Deiter to start, and after some back and forth, Santiam landed a 3-point shot.

Cole Deiter soon fired off a 3-pointer for Grant Union.

Prospector Wade Reimers scored 3-5 at the free-throw line in the first quarter, including 1-2 off a technical foul

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**Grant Union Prospect Trinity Hutchison grabs a loose ball from Weston-McEwen in Friday night's state playoff game in John Day.**

**Prairie City receives High Desert all-tournament honors**



High Desert all-tournament honorees for the Prairie City girls are Cassie Hire, first team, left, and Brianna Zwegardt, first team.

Blue Mountain Eagle

The Prairie City girls and boys basketball teams received all-tournament honors at the High Desert District Tournament.

For the boys, senior Dorran Wilson and junior Levi Burke were named to the all-tournament first team. Junior Syd Holman was named to the all-tournament second team.

For the girls, seniors Brianna Zwegardt and Cassie Hire were named to the all-tournament first team.



Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

High Desert all-tournament honorees for the Prairie City boys basketball team are, from left, Syd Holman, second team; Levi Burke, first team; and Dorran Wilson, first team.