



Panther boys claw to second at state

Prairie City has best season in 23 years

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Prairie City Panther boys are celebrating their best finish at the OSAA 1A Basketball State Championships in years, placing second, with the Pacific Pirates taking the championship title Saturday with a 73-50 win.

The Panthers last competed at state 20 years ago, and finished second 23 years ago. Sam Workman, in his first year as Prairie City head coach, said the team had great expectations this season.

“They grew stronger, and maybe they wanted it a little bit more,” he said. “They wanted to see how far they could go, and the younger kids stepped up this year when they needed to.”

On their way to the final game, Prairie City beat Sherman 68-53 in the quarterfinals, followed by a 61-53 defeat of Jordan Valley in the semifinals.

After defeating Jordan Valley, Workman said he told the team in the final minutes to “take care of the ball and intensity — keep it up and play smart.”

Panther Dorran Wilson said beating the Mustangs was great on their way to the championship.

“It was rough around the edges, but we got it done, and I’m proud of these guys,” he said.

It was the third time Prairie City met up with Jordan Valley, having beat them once in the regular sea-



The Prairie City boys basketball team poses with its second-place trophy after the OSAA 1A Boys Basketball State Championships in Baker City Saturday.



Dorran Wilson, left, and Levi Burke celebrate after receiving all-tournament awards after the state tournament where the team placed second.

Contributed photos/Tanni Wenger Photography



EO Media Group/Kathy Aney

Grant Union's Mariah Moulton (25) drives to the basket as Morgan Correa of Heppner defends during Thursday's OSAA 2A girls consolation state tournament game in Pendleton.

Grant Union girls earn fourth place in third trip to state

Lady Pros beat Heppner and Oakland

By Angel Carpenter
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The Grant Union Prospector girls brought home a fourth-place trophy last week, improving on their third consecutive run at the OSAA 2A Basketball State Championship in Pendleton.

Grant Union lost the quarterfinal on Thursday to the Faith Bible Falcons 53-49. The Prospectors then made a strong finish, defeating the Heppner Mustangs 62-46 in the consolation semifinals on Friday and the Oakland Oakers 54-44 on Saturday for fourth place.

“The past couple of years we came out with no hardware, and we were hoping to come out first, but even though we lost our first game, we still played like it was the championship,” said Grant Union senior Mariah Moulton. “Everyone worked hard. I wouldn’t change a thing about the season if I could.”

Prospector head coach Casey Hallgarth said his team battled and played a great tournament.

“It was fun watching some of the girls step up their game and not back down,” he said. “The bench came up big all tournament long.”

Faith Bible's height caught them off guard, Hallgarth said. While their Player of the Game was 5-foot-7, two other key players, twins Sarah and Katie Fajer, were 6-foot-1.

“Once we made the adjustment at halftime and knew what to expect from them, we knew we would come back,” Hallgarth said, adding his team excelled at defense and making adjustments on the fly, including some line-ups they hadn’t used before.

In the end, it came down to a few plays that made the difference in the Falcons’ favor.

Trinity Hutchison started off the scoring for Grant Union with a jump shot off an assist from Mariah Wright.

Hutchison also went 3-4 at the free-throw line in the first quarter, with Kaylee Wright contributing two 3-pointers and 2-2 free throws and Madi McKrola adding 2-2.

Grant Union led 13-11 going into the second, and were neck and neck to halftime. In the third, the Prospectors lost some ground, but came back, trailing 38-37 going into the final 8 minutes.

The teams tied the score twice. Then both had a handful of missed shots.

At 47-47, Faith Bible pulled ahead, by scoring 6-8 at the free-throw line to Grant Union's 2-2.

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Prairie City's Syd Holman drives the ball against a Pacific opponent in the finals at the state tournament Saturday.

son and again at the first-round state playoff.

Preparing for the championship, Workman said the team would have to “go at it like their hair is on fire.”

Panther Syd Holman launched the tipoff to his team against Pacific, with Wilson starting off Prairie City's scoring with a 3-pointer. Holman added a bucket for a 5-0

lead. Then Pacific took action, moving ahead 16-5 before Prairie City would again find the basket.

Wilson added 3 more points from the free-throw line, then scored twice in the final seconds, including a layup off his steal, and Pacific led 25-12 in the first quarter.

Prairie City narrowed Pacific's lead to 7 in the first three minutes of the second quarter, with Panther Lucas McKinley scoring a 3-point shot off an assist from Holman, Jajari Field adding another 3-pointer off an assist from McKinley and Levi Burke scoring off two jump shots, with an assist from Holman.

Pirates Colton Keeler, Justin Hall and Jack Lehnher scored most of Pacific's points in the quarter.

The Pirates outshot the Panthers 24-17 going into halftime, the score 49-29.

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Grant Union boys finish sixth at state

Team graduates five seniors

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant Union Prospector boys placed sixth at the Thursday through Saturday March 1-3 OSAA 2A Basketball State Championship in Pendleton.

The No. 8-seed Prospectors faced an uphill battle against the No.1-seed Western Mennonite Pioneers, losing 60-38 in a physical game in the quarterfinals, before beating the Toledo Boomers, 60-49, in a semifinal consolation round. Grant Union fell 54-45 to the Kennedy Trojans in the fight for fourth place.

The Prospectors came within 2 points of Kennedy in the fourth quarter, but the Trojans pushed through for the 10-point win.

Grant Union head coach Kelsey Wright said the team achieved their goals of earning the league title and district tournament win, and although they came up short of their goal to win state, he's still happy with the team.

“I’ve had a blast with these boys,” he said. “We went into state (seeded) eighth and came out sixth, so I’m extremely proud of these boys.”

In the quarterfinal match, Prospector Zack Deiter started off by blocking Pioneer Keaton Hull's shot.

Kellen Shelley put Grant Union on the scoreboard with a 3-pointer off an assist from Wade Reimers, who also blocked Hull's jump shot.



Grant Union's Duane Stokes drives against Kennedy's Mason Boen in the consolation finals at the state tournament Saturday in Pendleton. Kennedy won, 54-45.

Contributed photo/Tanni Wenger Photography

Grant Union moved ahead 11-9 when Cole Deiter added 1-2 at the free-throw line with a 2-pointer from Shelley and a 3-point shot from Duane Stokes, but that was the last time the Prospectors would have the lead.

Grant Union trailed 15-11 in the first.

In the second quarter, Stokes was roughed up and out for the second half.

Shelley scored a 3-point shot for the Prospectors' only points in the second, Grant Union trailing 36-14.

Shooting was even the rest of

the way, 13-13 in the third and 11-11 in the fourth, but Western Mennonite kept their comfortable lead for the win.

Shelley was named the Player of the Game for Grant Union with 10 points, two steals and three rebounds.

“We played great basketball the first half, and the second half they (Western Mennonite) made adjustments,” Wright said. “They threw us off guard a little bit, and it was a hole we couldn’t dig out of.”

Grant Union came back strong against Toledo.

Reimers, who was named Play-

er of the Game for Grant Union, led both teams in scoring against Toledo with 23, rebounds with 17 and blocks with three. He also had two steals, tying for the top mark with three Toledo players. For Grant Union, Zack Deiter, Stokes and Shelley each scored 10, followed by Cole Deiter with 4, Ty McDaniel with 2 and Cauy Weaver with 1. The team shot 38.8 percent from the field and hit 81 percent from the free-throw line.

Zack Deiter was named Player of the Game in the final game

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Grant Union Gold will present Spring Showcase Friday

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant Union Gold dance team will hold its annual Spring Showcase at 7 p.m. Friday, March 9, at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School's new gym.

A taco feed fundraiser for the team will start at 6 p.m. in the school cafeteria. The taco dinner is \$5 a person, with 6 and under \$3, and the Spring Showcase admission is by donation.

The event is the team's kickoff to OSAA Dance State Championships held Friday and Saturday, March 16-17, in Portland.

In past years, younger dancers from Body, Fitness & Dance joined in the program. However, this year, they will hold a separate event.

Grant Union Gold, with 14 team members, will present three routines as a team, as well as smaller group and solo performances, which the dancers have choreographed themselves. The grand finale will be their presentation of their state routine set to the song “Rise” by Katy Perry.

“The more times we can perform in front of an audience the better, because it increases their comfort level,” said head coach Kattie Piazza. She said performing for

the home crowd is especially rewarding.

“We, as a dance team, feel supported by the community, so anytime we have a chance to give back, we like to take those opportunities, and performing is one of the ways to show that,” she said.

The team will leave Grant Union March 15 for state.

“Being able to share all the hard work and everything we’ve put into the dance with the community is just a great feeling as we head off to our toughest competition of the season,” Piazza said.

Grant Union competed Saturday at the Thurston Dance Competition, taking

second. Marshfield, the only other team competing in the 4A/3A/2A/1A division, took first.

“We improved our scores and had some great feedback from the judges to further prepare us for state,” Piazza said.

At the first round of state competition, the top 50 percent in each division will move on to round two.

“The team continues to improve each time they perform, including how they move together as a team on the floor,” Piazza said. “They continue to improve in how they dance the choreography and their ability to stay in sync.”



The Grant Union Gold dance team sports their costumes for state competition at Saturday's Thurston Dance Competition.

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