

BOYS

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The roster of 23 includes two seniors, including returning starter Jacob Vaughan and returning varsity player Tanner Elliott. There are also four juniors, eight sophomores and nine freshmen. Eleven players make up the varsity team.

The coach said he expects Vaughan, who's been on the team for four years, to contribute greatly to the group.

"He knows how we like the game, and he's going to help everyone else out," Wright said. "He's going to step up and be a leader."



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter
Grant Union Prospectors Tristan Morris is on his way up to score with pressure from Warner Robertson, left, and Duane Stokes, right.

He said Elliott and junior Warner Robertson are quick to the ball and will bring a lot of energy and excitement to the game.

"They love to get on the

floor for loose balls, sacrificing their body," Wright said.

He said sophomore Devon Stokes will likely be one of his starters.

"He has a great IQ for basketball and shoots the ball extremely well," the coach said.

He said junior Mason Gerry and sophomore Peyton Neault will be their "big guys," and they'll look to them for big defensive plays and rebounding.

New to the team, junior Tristan Morris and freshman Mason Morris, who are brothers, are expected to bring a lot to the team. The pair transferred to Grant Union from Pendleton this school year, and both are great athletes, Wright said.

In addition to both brothers playing basketball and baseball in Pendleton, last summer Mason Morris qualified for the National Junior Olympics after placing first in the triple jump and second in the long jump at a regional meet, working with Grant Union head track and field coach Sonna Smith.

Grant Union is in the Blue Mountain Conference this season and will face Enterprise, Heppner, Pilot Rock, Stanfield, Union and Weston-McEwen.

Wright said he expects Heppner, which has tall players and talented shooting guards, will be a tough opponent.

"I think that's probably going to be the team to look for,

and Union has talented freshmen returning," he said.

He noted that Enterprise, Pilot Rock and Stanfield have lost players.

Grant Union is in their third week of practice, and the players and coaches are optimistic for the season.

"As long as we play together and work as a team, we'll do pretty good this year," Vaughan said. He said he's hopeful for another run at state.

"We have a lot of young talented kids this year, and we should be all right," he said.

Elliott said their success will depend a lot on mental attitude.

"I think this team has a great work ethic, and if we play

smart, I think we can do some pretty great things this year," he said.

Coach Wright said he believes they'll be "extremely competitive."

"There's a lot of heart and guys who love the game of basketball," he said.

He said their No. 1 goal is to return to win league and the district title.

"The way to get there is hard work and dedication, and playing together," he said. "I believe we have an amazing, talented group of guys."

Grant Union will host the Crane Mustangs for the Prospectors' first home game at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11.

GIRLS

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Five seniors, who all saw time on the court during the state championship, are leading out for the Prospectors, including Kaylee Wright, Hailie Wright, Madi McKrola, Marissa Smith and Alcie Moore.

Rounding out the roster are five juniors, two sophomores and 11 freshmen.

Trinity Hutchison, who was a varsity starter last year, has joined the girls wrestling team for her senior year.

Three other varsity players graduated, including Mariah Moulton, Mariah Wright and Whitney McClellan.

Kaylee Wright, who racked up 72 total points at last season's state tournament, said that with the skills the returning varsity players are bringing this year she feels

confident they'll go far.

Hailie Wright, Kaylee's sister, who earned all-state honorable mention last season, said she hopes the team moves forward with last year's theme of going "90 mph."

"I'm happy all us seniors can lead the team in a positive way this year," she said.

Alcie Moore said the team is close and plays with great intensity and energy, and

McKrola said the bench is strong.

"I'm excited because our basketball fans are always spirited, and it's nice having them around, supporting you and cheering you on," Alcie Moore said.

Smith said the team is working hard and giving 100 percent.

"We have the potential to go far as long as we keep the tempo high," she said.

Grant Union will face Enterprise and Union again this year, this time in the Blue Mountain Conference. Other league opponents include Heppner, Pilot Rock, Stanfield and Weston-McEwen.

Coach Moore said they matched up with Union and Enterprise in tournaments and games over the summer.

"They were both very strong," she said, adding those were the only two teams from

the league they faced.

Last season, Grant Union beat Heppner at the semifinal consolation round at state.

Moore said she's expecting a competitive league this season. She said they'll take it game by game and focus on being the best team they can be.

"We're going to move fast ... with a high-intensity defense that leads to, hopefully, a bunch of layups," she said.

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4. Only one entry per person permitted - but all members of the family may enter provided they use the blank entry. Must be 10 years old to enter. Entries must be brought to the Blue Mountain Eagle in John Day no later than 5 p.m. FRIDAY. Or you can mail your entry to: Football Editor, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR, 97845 but make sure it is postmarked no later than Friday and received by the Blue Mountain Eagle by noon Monday. OR you can fax your original entry to (541) 575-1244, Attn: Football Editor.
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