



Shooting the Breeze: Elk hunting in Oregon

By Dale Valade

For the Blue Mountain Eagle

Elk are magnificent creatures in multiple ways. They are strong, hardy and adapt well to almost any climate, terrain and food source. They move well as individuals or in herds. Primarily prairie denizens in times past, you'll find them in nearly half of the 50 states today.

Historically in Oregon, the elk, wapiti or *Cervus canadensis*, as they are variously known, had seen hard times. Thanks to conservation efforts spearheaded by President Theodore Roosevelt and later organizations like Rocky Mountain Elk

Foundation, population numbers in Oregon and many other Northwest states are at all-time highs.

Elk hunting opportunities abound, especially in Western states, enticing millions of hunters worldwide to travel each fall to engage in the pursuit of these enormous deer species. While out-of-state hunting costs can quickly run exceedingly high for the average Jane and Joe, there are a plenitude of hunts to participate in right here in Oregon. Whether you want to save up preference points and try to get a real wall-hanger or you're after a cow or spike for a freezer full of delectable comestibles,

there are plenty of tags for both.

I got my cow elk this year through the ODFW damage control landowner tag. Each year, elk herds devastate millions of acres of crops and thousands of miles of fence on private land. In answer to this problem, landowners can get special limited damage control permits to issue or sell to recover some of the cost of the damage these elk inflict. These antlerless-only hunts are but another great opportunity for the meat hunter to fill his or her freezer while helping out local farmers and ranchers.

Elk are tough. While any "Oregon legal" weapon will do the job,

some are much better at it than others. As far as rifles go, I will simply say, shoot the biggest gun you can handle. As for most of my big game hunting, I prefer a .30-06, but I've killed elk with smaller as well as larger cartridges. The various 7-mm, .300 and .338 magnum cartridges are popular for good reason. The bigger "punkin' chunkers," .444, .45-70, et. al., also see extensive use. Judge wisely when selecting your rifle and ammo.

Elk hunting is physically demanding. Not only for the scouting, spotting and stalking but for extraction once you do get one on the ground. The country they

inhabit is often steep and rough. You will need to be able to cover some miles. Only the closest circles of friends help each other in the most arduous of pack outs. But like every other frontiersman's foray, the amazing adventures, tough stalks and back-breaking pack outs make the table fare that much more delicious and memorable. Get an elk tag and join in the fun. It's unlike anything else.

Have any requests or suggestions? Write us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com!

Dale Valade is a local country gent with a deep love for hand-loading, hunting and shooting.

Long Creek/Ukiah girls hit the ground running

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Long Creek/Ukiah girls basketball team's season has just begun, and at 4-0 on the season, they're already outpacing last year's record.

The schools are fielding varsity teams this year after two years of having only junior varsity teams.

This change has sparked excitement among the players.

"I like that we have an opportunity to go to state," said team captain sophomore Dorothea Johnson. "We're doing pretty good and working together."

The coaches Amos Studtmann and TC Conner are also thrilled about the step up to varsity.

"They love basketball," Studtmann said. "They're excited to play varsity and want to show that they deserve a chance. They want to get out there and prove themselves."

The Mountain Lions lost starter Faith Burnette and an exchange student to graduation last season.

This year there are 12 on the team: seniors Gladys Johnson and exchange students Karen Quintanilla and Jenny Lee, three juniors, five sophomores and one freshman.

Returning starters are Gladys Johnson, her sister Dorothea Johnson and sophomores Lucchese Douglas and Jenny Kim.

Studtmann said Gladys and Lucchese have been rebounding well, and Dorothea has been working on developing her shooting, dribbling and defense.

"(Dorothea) has a great attitude and is helpful teaching the younger players," the coach said.

Junior Brooke Harrison is another starter who played her freshman year.

"Brooke has been getting a lot of defensive stops and turning them into offensive opportunities," Studtmann said.

Gladys has a positive outlook on the season.

"It's going pretty well, considering we're 3-0 right now," she said, before their last win.

With four wins this season, the team has already matched its win total from last season.

In the High Desert League, Long Creek/Ukiah will face Four Rivers, Jordan Valley, Day-

LONG CREEK/UKIAH GIRLS SCHEDULE

Dec. 21-22: @ Helix Tournament, 2 p.m., TBD

Jan. 3: vs. Crane in Long Creek, 5 p.m.

Jan. 4: vs. Dayville/Monument in Long Creek, 5 p.m.

Jan. 5: @ Prairie City, 2 p.m.

Jan. 11: @ Burnt River, 5 p.m.

Jan. 12: @ Crane, 2 p.m.

Jan. 18: vs. Jordan Valley in Ukiah, 5 p.m.

Jan. 19: vs. Huntington in Ukiah, 2 p.m.

Jan. 22: @ Pilot Rock, 4:30 p.m.

Jan. 25: @ Harper, 6 p.m. MT

Jan. 26: vs. Four Rivers in Ukiah, 2 p.m.

Jan. 29: vs. Pilot Rock in Ukiah, 4:30 p.m.

Feb. 1: @ Adrian, 5 p.m. MT

Feb. 2: vs. Burnt River in Long Creek, 2 p.m.

Feb. 8: vs. Prairie City in Long Creek, 6 p.m.

Feb. 9: @ Dayville/Monument in Monument, 2 p.m.

Feb. 14: High Desert District Tournament in John Day, TBD

* Boys games follow

ville/Monument, Crane, Adrian, Harper, Burnt River, Prairie City and Huntington.

In early-season results, three of their league opponents are in the top 10 in state, including Jordan Valley, Crane and Dayville/Monument.

Studtmann said he expects Jordan Valley and Crane to be strong this year, and Adrian "likes to run a press," he said.

He said sometimes the best players are freshmen.

"All we can hope for is that our work and preparation will be enough," he said.

He added that his goal as a coach is always about growth.

He said he's looking forward to seeing his team hone their skills, work hard and "develop as people through the wins and losses and any injuries that may happen through the season."

"I like to see kids grow," he said.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union Prospecter Madi McKrola is in action in Friday's game against Burns in John Day.

Grant Union girls beat Crane, fall to Burns

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant Union Prospecter girls started last week on a positive note with a 44-43 win over the Crane Mustangs Dec. 11 in their first home game of the season.

Though the Prospecters stayed ahead for most of Friday's game against the Burns Hilanders, Grant Union lost ground in the fourth quarter to fall 52-43.

It was Grant Union's second look at Burns, and they'd hoped for a turn-around from their first meeting Nov. 28 when they lost 58-47.

The Prospecters made it a close game through the third quarter Friday.

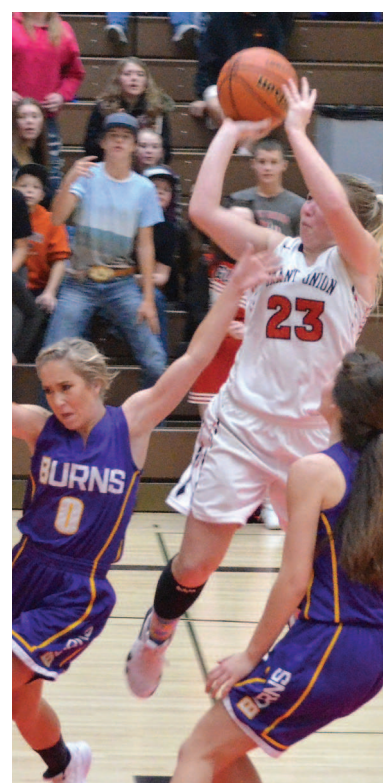
Grant Union was ahead 8-2 in the first quarter, and the teams were tied 19-19 at halftime.

Burns gained ground in the third, outshooting the Prospecters again for a 35-31 lead.

Hilander sophomores Allie Hueckman and Aundraya Ceja combined for 14 points in the fourth to help Burns get the win.

Hueckman led both teams with 23 points in the game.

Several Prospecters scored with senior Kaylee Wright contributing



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union Prospecter junior Kaylee Wright flies up to score in Friday's game against Burns.

a team-high 11 points, followed by seniors Madi McKrola with 10 and

Hailie Wright with 8.

Grant Union head coach Kristi Moore said it was the most physical game they've played this season.

She said her team needs to work on composure and finding the balance between offense and defense.

While it wasn't the outcome they were going for, "they played hard and never gave up," she said.

"We have to continue to work on executing what we do," Moore said.

Grant Union will compete in their first league game of the season on the road Friday against the Heppner Mustangs, the game starting at 7:30 p.m.

This year the Grant Union boys will play all league games first, followed by the girls, and non-league games will start with the Grant Union girls, followed by the boys.

Grant Union stats vs. Burns

Kaylee Wright: 11
Madi McKrola: 10
Hailie Wright: 8
Katlyn Wells: 5
Marissa Smith: 4
Makenna Culley: 3
Alcie Moore: 2

Long Creek/Ukiah hoops boys return as varsity competitors

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Long Creek/Ukiah Mountain Lions boys basketball team had a 12-6 overall record last season as a junior varsity team, and now the Mountain Lions are hoping to exceed that record as a varsity team.

"Last year, we were pretty good," said junior James Kreamier. "This year, I think we can be better, and we're hoping to make a run at districts."

Kreamier is a returning starter, along with his brother, sophomore Thomas Kreamier, and junior Ben Combs. Josh Konig, a junior, is also starting for the team.

Thomas said playing varsity could open up college opportunities, including scholarships.

"I like working with this team," he said. "Everyone is nice to each other. We have our bad days, but everyone is trying to help each other."

He added, "Our coaches are



Contributed photo/Linda Studtmann

Long Creek/Ukiah's Matheo Buchart takes one up to score in practice with Henry Grannis in the action.

amazing."

TC Conner has been coaching for the combined team for five years and the Ukiah side since 2008. Co-coach Amos Studtmann is in his third year coaching with Conner.

Conner said it's a good thing that he and Studtmann have the same philosophy and agree on game plans.

Their biggest focus, Conner said,

is encouraging the boys to play as a team.

He said, with the transition to varsity this season, there isn't time to return to the basics.

"We're throwing a lot at them," he said. "They have to chew it up and process it."

The coaches turn to the more experienced players to help train and encourage their newer teammates.

Because some of the players are exchange students from other countries, hurdles to overcome include language barriers and different styles of play — some were only trained to pass the ball and not shoot in their home countries.

Combs said he enjoys working with them.

"I like that we get new kids every year and get to know new, different cultures," he said, adding some had never touched a basketball. "We have to do a lot of work to get the team where we want to be."

Conner said, along with the training that he and coach Stud-

mann provide, having the more experienced players helping the newer teammates helps with "closing that gap" when they come off the bench during games.

Long Creek/Ukiah will face Prairie City, Dayville/Monument, Burnt River, Crane, Huntington, Jordan Valley, Harper, Adrian and Four Rivers in the 1A High Desert League.

With the Prairie City Panthers at the top of the OSAA rankings, finishing second in state last year, Studtmann said he expects they'll be the toughest team they face this season.

He said some on his team are friends with Panther players.

"Prairie City will give us something to measure ourselves against," Studtmann said.

This year, the Mountain Lions have a team of 11.

Mathéo Buchart, an exchange student from France, is the sole senior, and there are seven juniors, two sophomores and one freshman.

Studtmann said they're focused on good defense, team-first play and rebounding.

Looking at team members' strengths, Studtmann said, "Combs is a strong rebounder and a smart defender with good court vision."

He said James Kreamier and junior starter Tiger Zeng are good with shooting and passing the ball.

"Thomas is a great defender and good rebounder," he said.

The coaches said the team, which is tall but on the lighter side, will have to push and play hard to be competitive.

While reaching the High Desert District Tournament is not a given, Studtmann said, "If they put in the work this year and strengthen their weaknesses, a couple players have a shot at making all league."

He said the chance to participate in the district tournament is exciting for the players as well as the coaches.

"I'm looking forward to a good year," he said.