



Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union Prospecter Madi McKrola slides in at home as Burns Hilander pitcher Hallie Skunkcap wait for the ball. At left Prospecter Macy Strong heads to the dugout after making it home on the play.

## Grant Union softball girls shut out Burns in doubleheader sweep

By Angel Carpenter  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant Union/Prairie City Prospecter softball team was unstoppable in their home opener against their nonleague Burns/Crane Hilander opponents, taking 15-0 and 26-0 wins in Friday's doubleheader.

Burns was at a disadvantage with only nine athletes, and their visit to John Day was their first time taking a field for a game or practice as theirs has been unplayable from winter weather.

Friday's game drew a sizeable crowd of fans for the teams, enjoying 60-degree weather.

Prospecter starting pitcher Macy Strong was in the circle for all five innings of game one, drawing several strikeouts.

Grant Union's onslaught of scoring got underway in the bottom of the first inning.

The bases were loaded with Jordyn Young, Hailie Wright and Taylor Allen at the ready when Madi McKrola hit to deep right field, Young scoring.

Marissa Smith doubled to the center field fence with 3 RBI.

The process started over with Strong, Tiler Voigt and Kori Jo Girvin loading the bases.

The Prospecters scored 11 of their 15 points before Burns came back to bat.

Allen started the pitching for game two, with Jesaka Culley relieving her in the fourth.

The Hilanders were unable to reach first base in the first inning, and Burns pitcher Hallie Skunkcap, only gave up one Grant Union run in the bottom of the first.

Grant Union started their scoring roll in the second.

Strong, Voigt and Girvin had base hits then Prospecter Baylee Combs singled with 2 RBIs, Young reached second scoring 2 and Wright doubled, bringing Young home as well as herself after a Burns' throwing error.

The Prospecters led 15-0 and added 6 more runs in the third and 5 in the fourth.

Next up, Grant Union will hit the road, facing Lost River at the Rocket Invite in Pilot Rock at 5 p.m. Friday, March 22.

The Prospecters will host the Grant Union Spring Break Invite in John Day Monday through Wednesday, March 25-27, facing Clatskanie at 1 p.m. Monday, Nestucca at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Rainier at 3 p.m. Tuesday and Sutherlin at 1 p.m. Wednesday.

## Prospector softball team ready to roll

### Team hosts Grant Union Spring Break Invite March 25-27

By Angel Carpenter  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

This is Zach Williams' second year as the Grant Union/Prairie City Prospecter softball head coach, but he's led most of the varsity team members for nine years, coaching Little League, ASA and high school ball.

The Prospecters are hopeful to improve on last year's season that ended in a state quarterfinals match in John Day with a 22-3 overall record.

Grant Union is dropping from the 3A class to 2A/1A in Special District 6. They'll still face tough competition, however. They faced all the opponents, except one team, last year.

The Prospecters are fielding 12 players, including five seniors. There are five returning starters, including four seniors and one junior. There are several junior varsity swingers with 13 total on the JV squad.

Williams said he's happy with the progress he's seen from his five pitchers.

Senior Macy Strong is the team's anchor and locates her fastball and dropball well with a good change up as well that she is working on locating in any count, the coach said.

Shaine Madden, a junior, was expected to be another strong pitcher but is down with an injury, so junior Taylor Allen has been working to get back in shape for the circle after taking about two years off from pitching, Williams said.

He said both Allen and sophomore Jesaka Culley locate their fastball and change up well and are working on a dropball. Freshmen Harli Grove and Grace Taylor are also in the mix.



### GRANT UNION SOFTBALL SCHEDULE

March 22: @ Lost River at the Rocket Invite in Pilot Rock, 5 p.m.	na, 11 a.m., 1 p.m.
March 25: vs. Clatskanie at the Grant Union Spring Break Invite, 1 p.m.	April 20: @ Pilot Rock/Nixyaawii, 11 a.m., 1 p.m.
March 26: vs. Nestucca at the Grant Union Spring Break Invite, 1 p.m.	April 26: vs. Echo/Stamfield, 1 p.m., 3 p.m.
March 26: @ Rainier at the Grant Union Spring Break Invite, 3 p.m.	April 27: vs. Adrian, 1 p.m., 2:30 p.m.
March 27: vs. Sutherlin at the Grant Union Spring Break Invite, 1 p.m.	May 4: vs. Heppner/lone, 1 p.m., 2:30 p.m.
April 6: @ Union/Cove, 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m.	May 20: State playoffs, first round
April 11: @ Irrigon, 4 p.m.	May 22: State playoffs, second round
April 13: @ Weston-McEwen in Ath-	May 24: State playoffs, quarterfinals
	May 28: State playoffs, semifinals
	May 31: State playoffs, finals

He said they all "work hard at 'owning' their pitches and being able to throw any pitch in any count."

Williams said his offensive lineup should be strong, top to bottom.

"We have speed with pretty good power at the top third of the lineup, good power and hitting for average in the middle third, and power and speed again at the bottom third," he said.

He said they tend to struggle with slower pitching and are working on making timing adjustments.

Grant Union graduated five strong players last year, including pitchers Cody Jo Madden and Mariah Moulton. Moulton was also a strong hitter for the Prospecters along with Brianna Zweggardt.

While they lost a lot, Williams said they had a strong junior varsity filling in the holes.

The Prospecters are preparing

for a tough 2A/1A league.

In District 6, Grant Union will face Adrian (1A), Echo/Stamfield (1A), Heppner/lone (2A), Pilot Rock/Nixyaawii (2A), Union/Cove (2A) and Weston-McEwen (2A).

"Pilot Rock, Union, Heppner and Echo/Stamfield are always good," Williams said. "Just like any other season, I try not to worry much about what the other teams are doing. We just have to take care of what we do."

Grant Union's defense will be a strong point this season, the coach said, adding the bottom line is always the fundamentals and doing the little things right.

Equally important is "knowing the situation on every pitch and never giving up on a play," he said.

He has help from assistant coaches Lance Zweggardt, Amy Hittle, Brandon Culley and Mike Strong.

Williams said their expecta-

tions as coaches are always high.

"We have been talking to them for years, and continue this pre-season, about doing the softball part well but also being great teammates on and off the field," he said. "In my experience, championships aren't always won by the most talented group. You have to be mentally tough and genuinely care about your team to have the kind of chemistry that wins in the postseason."

Seniors this year are Macy Strong, Hailie Wright, Madi McKrola, Marissa Smith and Kori Jo Girvin.

Wright, the catcher and center fielder, said they've been playing together their entire softball careers. She said she's expecting this year's competition to be a challenge.

"I think it's going to be a good year to finish with a second family," she said. "I think we're really strong at communication, and that's really important at this point in the season."

McKrola at short stop said she believes they have the potential to go far.

"I've been playing with these girls for 10 years," she said. "I'm excited that Zach's our coach. He's been with us since Little League."

Girvin, who plays outfield and catcher, said the team works well together.

"I think this will be no different than past years. We're all in it to win it," she said. "I truly believe we're playing for the team, and not a single person is going to play for themselves."

Williams said this year's seniors are a great bunch of girls.

"We've watched them grow up into aggressive, responsible young ladies that love the game and their teammates and want to leave Grant Union with a state championship," he said. "They have and will continue to lead this team throughout this season, and it will be hard to see them go."

## SPORTS ROUNDUP

### Grant Union Gold dance team performs at state

Ten dancers with the 2A Grant Union Gold performed Saturday, March 16, at the OSAA Dance and Drill State Championship at the Portland Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

With a theme of "Breaking Free" the team danced to "Whatever It Takes" by Imagine Dragons.

Grant Union head coach Kattie Piazza said they faced 1A through 4A competition and had the toughest judging of the season.

The Gold dancers finished 10th out of 11 teams with a score of 57.15.

"The girls worked really hard this year," she said.

### Prospector baseball faces tough road competition

The Grant Union/Prairie City Prospecters fell 15-7 to 5A Churchill Lancers junior varsity on Friday in Eugene and 15-8 to 5A Crescent Valley Raiders junior varsity in Corvallis on Saturday.



Contributed photo

The Grant Union Gold dance team poses during competition at the OSAA Dance and Drill State Championships at the Portland Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

Grant Union head coach Doug Sharp said it was a good opportunity for his team to go up against some strong competition.

The Prospecters had to cancel a home tournament last weekend due to snow and puddles making the field unplayable.

Prairie City, Long Creek track athletes compete at first meet of the season in Harper

The Prairie City Panthers

and Long Creek Mountaineers track and field teams competed Friday at the Diana Thurmond Invitational in Harper.

Mountaineers coach Linda Studtmann, assisted by Peter Case, said the meet provided their first opportunity on a field because theirs had been snow-covered.

Several team members were unable to attend the meet, but their newer and seasoned athletes performed well, Studtmann said.

For the girls, sophomore Dorothea Johnson set a personal record and placed third in the long jump, and sophomore Lucchese Douglas took third in shot put and the 400-meter run.

Panther head coach Nate Barber said he was pleased with their outcome in Harper.

He said they have some new faces on the team, and other athletes are trying new events this season.

Hailee Wall, a junior, changed her events to throwing due to a nagging foot injury, Barber said, and Wall discovered a talent for jav-

elin. She placed first in the event out of 12 competitors with a throw of 102-04. Wall also placed seventh in shot put.

Senior Haley Pfefferkorn placed second in javelin, and second in shot put.

For the boys, senior Levi Burke placed first in high jump with a mark of 6-0, first in the 200-meter sprint with a time of 24.96 and second in javelin.

Sophomore Tristan McMahan beat all the competition in both the triple jump (37-07) and long jump (18-04), setting personal records in both events.

Jake McHatton placed seventh in shot put, and Barber said he expects McHatton will improve over the season, especially now that the snow has melted from the team's throwing pit.

The Panthers will host the Prairie City Invitational on Friday, April 5.

All Grant County teams are scheduled to attend, including Prairie City, Dayville, Long Creek, Monument and Grant Union.