



Prospectors win three at Malone Field

Team on five-game league win streak

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant Union/Prairie City Prospectors are on a five-game league winning streak after topping two league opponents in John Day with a 13-4 win over the Pilot Rock/Nixyaawii/Ukiah Rockets April 10, followed by 4-2 and 9-5 wins over the Weston-McEwen TigerScots Friday.

The April 10 game was a nail-biter until the bottom of the sixth, when Grant Union erupted with 8 runs.

"The kids are giving me more gray hairs by the minute," quipped Prospector head coach Doug Sharp. "I wish we could have those big innings earlier in the game."

"Tristan Morris had an incredible game at the plate for us," Sharp said. Morris was 4 for 4 with one RBI.

The coach said the team contributed all the way through the lineup.



Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter
Grant Union Prospector Logan McCluskey (11) gets a hit in the Wednesday, April 10, game against the Pilot Rock Rockets in John Day.

Logan McCluskey was 3 for 5 with three RBIs, Russell Hodge was 3 for 4 with three RBIs and Jacob Vaughan was 3 for 4 with three RBIs. Damion Young, Mason Morris and Roen Langum had one RBI each.

Grant Union's Peyton Neault started on the mound for the Prospectors, pitching for four innings.

Warner Robertson came in for 1 1/3 innings, and Logan McCluskey closed the game

with the final five outs.

"The defense has been solid for us, and the pitchers are starting to pound the strike zone more consistently," Sharp said. "I can't say it enough how pleased I have been with the boys and their work ethic and attitude. I also have to say again that I have a great coaching staff, and the fans have been so supportive."

After the double sweep over Weston-McEwen Fri-



Grant Union Prospector Russell Hodge (7), who scored a run, is ready to give high fives to Tristan Morris (21) in the game against the Pilot Rock Rockets.

day, Sharp said the TigerScots are young and less experienced but still brought strong competition. He said their first pitcher "did a great job."

Robertson started pitching for the Prospectors in game one and gave up a few walks.

"The really nice thing about the kids is that sometimes they start off slow, it seems like, but they never

panic," Sharp said.

McCluskey relieved in the sixth inning.

"Logan has been a great closer for us. He's just coming in, throwing strikes — he's tough," Sharp said. "He's really, really tough."

McCluskey also closed game two, relieving Damion Young, who came in for Mason Morris.

Sharp said he has his athletes write a quote inside their hats to remind them: "When things are not going the best, this is a time when you have to handle adversity."

The coach keeps a little card in his own hat with words from his former college baseball coach.

It reads: "I believe in myself; I believe in my teammates; I believe something good is going to happen; I believe that through hard work, I will achieve success."

Sharp said the most important thing is to believe something good will happen.

"In the second game, we were down 5-1," he said. "We were really not playing well.

We got 3 runs in the fifth inning, and that's when we erupted for 4 more runs in the sixth inning, then we got an insurance run in the seventh."

In the top of the seventh, Neault hit a double, then moved to third on a TigerScots throwing error while Young was at bat.

Young singled, sending Neault home.

"I'm really proud of the kids' effort," Sharp said. "This has been our theme all year. Let's get down, let's keep it close and then, late in the game, let's just wear 'em out, and then we'll finally make our rally."

He added, "It's a stressful way to play a game, but it is a fun way, I guess."

The Prospectors are ranked No. 9 among OSAA's 2A/1A teams. They have an 8-6 overall record, 5-0 in league.

Grant Union was scheduled to face Heppner/Ione past press time Tuesday.

Their next games will be at noon and 2 p.m. Saturday, April 27, hosting Sherman/Arlington/Condon.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter
Hunter education student Kolby Anderton, 10, of Prairie City, has some help from volunteers Chris Labhart, with the shotgun, and Michael Snyder, who launches the clay pigeons.

Hunters ed students test skills during field day

By Angel Carpenter
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The most important points 10-year-old Alexis Anderton of Prairie City said she learned during a recent hunter education course was to "keep your gun pointed in a safe direction, and treat every gun like it's loaded."

Bryan Nelson and Mark Boss taught the class that ended in March, sponsored by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Both have taught the class for several years, along with Deanna Maley, who will instruct the course this summer.

Fifteen students completed the class held at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School and were certified at a field test day March 9 at the law enforcement range located near Prairie City.

Nelson said the youngest student was an 8-year-old, and those taking the class usually are 9-12.

He said teens may also take the class, because anyone under 18 has to pass the course to hunt.

Adults also sometimes enroll to have the training needed to have a concealed carry permit.

Sarah Clark, 12, of John Day said she has plans to

hunt deer this year.

"It was just fun getting out and shooting," she said at the field test day.

Volunteers for the test day included Katy Nelson, who handled registration and certificates; Mike Springer, who oversaw the archery portion; helping with shotgun were Chris Labhart and Michael Snyder; and Oregon State Police fish and game Trooper Chris Brandon helped with the rifles along with Bryan Nelson; and Boss helped kids with loading and shooting a black powder rifle.

Nick Stiner, 11, of Mt. Vernon hit his target about 50 yards away with Boss overseeing.

"I enjoyed shooting the muzzleloader and learned to better shoot with an open sight," he said.

Nelson said the first and No. 1 lesson is having a safe direction for the muzzle.

"Keep your finger off the trigger until you're ready to pull it, and be sure of your target before you shoot — know what's behind it (with) a good back stop to keep it from going where it shouldn't go," Nelson said.

Another hunter education course will be offered in July, usually the week after Independence Day.



Hunter education instructor Bryan Nelson oversees as students put their firearms skills to the test. In back, Oregon State Police Trooper Chris Brandon assists another youth.

Prairie City track and field gears up for successful season

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Prairie City Panther track team, with 17 athletes this season, has already competed in four meets, and they're ready for more.

The team, which includes five seniors, is led by head coach Nate Barber, who said track and field is "for everybody."

"It doesn't matter what their athletic focus is, it'll make them a better overall athlete," he said. "If you're not fast, you can go with distance or throwing — there's no prototypical body type."

Barber has help from assistant coach Kieley Williams, who oversees the long jump and triple jump athletes, and volunteer assistant Garrett Hitz, who helps with pole vault.

There are nine boys and eight girls on this year's team, including senior Levi Burke who placed third at state in the high jump last season — his first season competing in the sport.

Other seniors are Haley Pfefferkorn, Jonathan Lawrence, Lane Williams and Syd Holman.

Pfefferkorn set a personal record in javelin mid-season last year with a mark of 107-0 and was ranked No. 1 at the district meet but, faced with rain, snow and 50 mph winds, did not advance to the state championships.

The senior said she's recovering from an injury that occurred outside of sports this school year, and she plans to take it slow during the first half of the season to avoid any further injury.

She first picked up javelin in sixth grade and started competing as a freshman. She is also in her seventh year competing in shot put and discus.

"This year is definitely the year for me for javelin and discus," she said. "I feel like I have a good chance this year."

Pfefferkorn and her teammate Hailee Wall, a junior, may be challenging each other this season.

Wall set a personal record in javelin with a throw of 102-4 at the Diana Thurmond Invitational in Harper and is currently ranked fifth in District 4 with Pfefferkorn in seventh place.

Prairie City will face 14 opponents in District 4: Adrian, Cove, Crane, Dayville, Elgin, Harper, Huntington, Imbler, Jordan Valley, Joseph, Pine Eagle, Powder Valley, Ukiah and Wallowa.



Angel Carpenter/Blue Mountain Eagle
Prairie City Panther Jake McHatton competes in discus at the April 5 Prairie City Invitational.



Nate Barber

Levi Burke

Lane Williams

Haley Pfefferkorn

Jonathan Lawrence

Syd Holman

PRAIRIE CITY PANTHER TRACK AND FIELD SEASON SCHEDULE

April 20: Pepsi Invitational in Union, 11 a.m.
April 26: Don Walker Invitational in Nyssa, 1 p.m.
April 30: Ranchers Invitational in Crane, 3:30 p.m.
May 3: Grant Union Invitational in John Day, 10 a.m.
May 10: 1A-4A District Meet in Baker City, 10 a.m.
May 17-18: 1A State Championships at Western Oregon University in Monmouth, TBD

Barber said some teams in the district have graduated top athletes, but they'll still have strong competition.

"Crane and Adrian are always tough for boys and girls," Barber said. "Adrian is the most well-rounded team."

Barber said he expects great jumping from Burke and Samantha Workman and a lot of speed from freshman John Titus and Holman, who is new to track.

He said he's also excited about sophomore Tristan McMahan, who has set personal records in both the long jump and triple jump this year, and Lawrence, who has shaved time off his distance running events.

Lawrence signed up for service in the Army, and Barber said he's been training hard at practice.

The senior said his father, uncles and grandparents served in the Army, and he plans on "shipping off" for training in July.

He expects working hard in track practice and meets will only help him prepare for his service.

"The running events will help me out," he said. "All of it will help me — and keep my endurance and stamina up."

He enjoys distance running and competes in the 1,500 and 3,000, as well as the 400 and long jump.

He set a personal record in the 3,000 at Friday's Burns Lions/Oster Track Meet, placing fourth with a mark of 11:06.79. He was in second place among the 1A athletes.

Burke, who was on the basketball team that placed fifth in state along with Holman and Lawrence, has high hopes for the season.

"I'm just trying to continue and keep the momentum going in more than one sport, going into the state level for sports," he said.

He's started off with a spark, setting personal records early in the season.

He bested his mark in the long jump with a 20-02 leap and the 100-meter run with a time of 12.23 at Friday's Burns Lions/Oster Track Meet.

He's optimistic that he and others will make the trip to state this year.

"The more athletes we have on the state level in different sports, the better it would be," he said.

Holman, also known for his success on the basketball court, decided to try track this year.

"I'm new to everything," he said. "I got my eyes opened to a lot of things that I didn't know about this sport. It's a lot different than basketball."

So far, he's competed in the 100, 200, 400 and javelin,

with plans to try high jump.

Barber described Holman as having "elite speed" and said he expects great things from him this season.

The senior placed fourth in both the 100 and the long jump in Harper.

Williams, who's competed in track for the past three years, said he added javelin as a new event this year.

"There are a lot of sore muscles to get through," he said. "I've been working on my technique for it, and I feel that is something I can master."

He said the members of his team take time to teach each other.

"It might be an individual sport, but we help each other out all the time," he said. "I'm looking forward to seeing what the season holds."

Barber said his goals for the team include "pushing PRs (personal records), improving each week and taking as many kids as possible to state."

He's encouraged and believes they have a chance to take at least a handful of athletes to the state championships.

He enjoys seeing the middle school team members continue on to high school competition. Eighth-grader BettyAnn Wilson is one of the 15 middle-school athletes showing a lot of promise.

"She'll hit the ground running as a freshman," he said.

Barber said having a middle school track team is a benefit.

"It helps the overall program, and they're much better athletes," he said.