



Grant Union golfers end season in Pendleton

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant Union Prospector boys and girls golfers faced eight teams at the May 6-7 district tournament in Pendleton but did not come away with the qualifying marks needed to extend their season to state.

"We played hard but could not get rid of the big numbers," said Grant Union head coach Ron Lundbom.

He said most of his golfers had a tough time getting back on track after scoring big on two or three holes.

The Grant Union boys competed with 3A/2A/1A teams in Special District 3, and the girls battled 4A/3A/2A/1A teams in Special District 4 at Pendleton Country Club.

The boys team was just one stroke back after play on day one.

Heppner was leading with a score of 341, followed by Burns 387, Enterprise 416 and Grant Union 417. However, Grant Union fell further behind on day two to stay in fourth place.

"We usually play better than the field on day two, and for the boys, that was not the case," Lundbom said. "We had a chance, but it wasn't to be."

Sophomore Devon Stokes was consistent on day one and two of the tournament, scoring 92 both days for a two-day total of 184 for eighth place as an individual.

"It wasn't my best, but it definitely wasn't my worst," he said. "It was a good experience. Not the outcome we wished, but next year, it's my goal to make it as an individual and as a team to state."

For the other Grant Union boys, senior Garrett Lenz scored 186 for ninth place, freshman Maverick Miller had 220, sophomore Parker Manitsas 256 and sophomore Logan Namitz 277.

Winner for the boys individuals was Kellen Grant of Heppner with 161, followed by Boone Harrod of Enterprise with 169 and Reno Ferguson of Heppner with 169.

The Heppner boys won the event with a two-day total of 687, followed by Burns 765, Enterprise 823 and Grant Union 846.

On the girls side, Heppner won with 389, followed by La Grande 405, Baker 476, Nixyaawii 511 and Grant Union 538.

Individually, Tori Suto of Wallowa scored a two-day total of 155, followed by Nicole Propheter of Heppner 169 and Sasha Keown of Heppner 183.

Grant Union junior Kaytlyn Wells scored 212 for 11th place. Also for Grant Union, junior Emily Springer scored 275, junior Maddy Day 277 and freshman Billy Radinovich 279.

"I improved a few strokes the second day of golfing," Wells said. "I'm really excited for next year already. I'm glad Ron was our coach, and I'm happy to have the people on my team that would help me."

She said she would remember all the fun trips the team had together.

"We all got along really well," she said.

The top three teams compete at state, along with the top five individuals.

Boys will compete at Emerald Valley in Creswell and the girls at Eagle Ridge in Redmond.

"We all had fun," Lundbom said. "We will be back next year."



Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union/Prairie City Prospector Mason Morris slides into third base in the Wednesday, May 8, game against Heppner/Ione at Malone Field in John Day.

Prospector baseball team advances to state playoffs

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant Union/Prairie City Prospector baseball team is advancing to the first round of the state playoffs after finishing with a 14-0 record in Special District 7.

Grant Union/Prairie City will host the first round Monday, May 20, at Malone Field in John Day.

Prospector head coach Doug Sharp said they'll know more about the time and opponent Thursday, May 16.

Sharp said the boys are excited about winning league and moving on to state competition.

"Once we were confident that was going to happen, then we wanted to finish league undefeated," he said. "It's nice that we reached both of those goals."

He said their next goal is hanging on as the sixth seed to play at home on Wednesday, May 22.

"After that, we just need to focus one game at a time," he said. "You never know what can happen. Baseball is a crazy sport, where if a pitcher is on, then he can be very difficult to beat."

Grant Union/Prairie City had a three-game sweep last week in John Day, shutting down the Heppner/Ione Mustangs 12-2 May 8 and following up Saturday with 35-3 and 42-2 wins over Stanfield/Echo. All were won in five innings.

Several of the Prospectors' younger players had a chance to play on Saturday.

"I sure appreciated the boys, that they continued to play hard but with a lot of respect," Sharp said.

Warner Robertson, a junior, started at the



Grant Union/Prairie City Prospector Warner Robertson pitches in the Wednesday, May 8, game against Heppner/Ione at Malone Field in John Day.

mound May 8, and to keep his pitch count down, junior Tristan Morris came in three-quarters of the way through the second inning. Freshman Mason Morris closed the game.

A couple well-placed hits in the top of the first inning helped the Mustangs score two runs, but the Prospectors held them off from there.

Grant Union/Prairie City had a double play in the top of the second inning when Robertson caught a Mustang batter's ball off a bounce, throwing to first baseman Roen Langum for the first out. Then a runner was tagged out between third and home plate.

Prospector center fielder Cole Deiter caught flyballs for outs in the second and fourth innings.

Grant Union/Prairie City was ahead 9-2 going into the bottom of the fourth.

Facing Mustang pitcher Tyler Carter, a senior, Mason Morris singled, and pinch runner Parker

Neault, a freshman, came in. Damion Young, a junior, then hit to left center, sending Neault home.

Junior Taylor Hunt was out at first, but advanced Young to third. Then Tristan Morris doubled, and Young scored a run.

While sophomore Logan McCluskey was up to bat, Tristan stole third. Then McCluskey sent his teammate home on a triple.

Mason Morris pitched a complete fifth, throwing two strikeouts in the inning, and the Prospectors took the 10-run victory.

The Prospectors shook hands with many of the spectators afterward, thanking them for attending the game.

Mustang head coach Tim Wilkins said his team made little mistakes in the game.

"They're a good team," he said of Grant Union/Prairie City. "I think they're the best team we played all year."

As the Prospectors continue to prepare for the path ahead, Sharp said his team will focus on their own preparation.

He said he appreciates his team's unselfish attitude.

"Of course, they want to get a hit every time up or field every ball that comes their way, but if they do make a mistake, they don't let that get them down," he said. "They stay very positive. They just keep competing."

He added, "It's one of the reasons why we don't ever panic when we get down."

The Eagle will post details about the upcoming state playoff game on our website, myeaglenews.com, and at our Blue Mountain Eagle Facebook page as soon as information becomes available.

18 Grant Union track and field athletes advance to state

By Angel Carpenter
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The Grant Union Prospectors will fill more school bus seats on the road to this year's OSAA 2A State Track and Field Championships May 17-18 at Western Oregon University in Monmouth.

The girls team, winning Friday's 2A Special District 5 Championships in John Day, is taking 11 athletes to compete in 23 events at state. The Grant Union girls, which had 182 points, were followed by Enterprise with 134 and Stanfield-Echo with 85.5.

The boys team took third and will take seven boys to battle in 10 events. Heppner won on the boys side with 137, followed by Enterprise with 121 and Grant Union with 110.

Other teams competing were Weston-McEwen, Union, Culver and Pilot Rock.

Grant Union head coach Sonna Smith said she was impressed with her athletes' performances at the district meet.

"This is the largest group we have taken to state in 12 years," she said — that's the year the boys team won the state championship. "Both our boys and girls teams had an outstanding day. We ended up claiming four wildcard spots and three spots by reaching state qualifying marks on top of the first and second placings that automatically go to state."

The top two athletes in each event qualify for state, and several others qualify with top marks or times, even though they may have placed third or fourth. Smith said the athletes from District 5 were strong competitors.

"We have several events from our league that are sending four



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Racing in the 800-meter run are, from left, Tanner Elliott of Grant Union (fourth place), Hunter Nichols of Heppner (first place) and Matthew Sheehy of Union (second place).

deep to state — girls long jump, girls 4x400, girls 100-meter — and more events that went three deep from our district," Smith said.

Another thrill for Grant Union is having four girls qualify for state in four events each, including seniors Kaylee Wright, Trinity Hutchison, Sydney Brockway and junior Sierra Cates.

Wright placed first in all her events, including the 100, javelin, high jump and the 4x100 with teammates Cates, Hutchison and Carson Weaver. The relay team set a personal record with 50.68, shaving .59 off their previous time.

Other girls headed to state are freshmen Kate Hughes and Abby Lusco, sophomore Erika Dickens and juniors Shanniyah Hall and Rylee Browning.

Lusco placed second in discus to qualify for state. She was 2 feet shy of qualifying in shot put.

"I hope to put that behind me and focus on next weekend," Lusco said.

The 4x400 team with Cates, Weaver, Hall and Hughes had a personal best with a time of 4:25.48, shaving over a second off their time.

Four Prospector boys will compete in two events each, including

freshmen Mason Morris and Justin Hodge, sophomore Jordan Hall and junior Drew Lusco.

Drew Lusco had personal bests in shot put and discus. He threw over 4 feet farther in shot put with a mark of 46-10.75 for second place, and increased his discus throw by 6 feet. Hodge also set a personal record in the 100.

Other boys headed to state are senior Tanner Elliott and juniors Quaid Brandon and Mason Gerry.

Brandon, along with Jordan Hall, Morris and Hodge, set a personal record in the 4x100.

Amidst the excitement of the competition and victories was a somber feeling for many from the loss of dedicated long jump and triple jump coach John Houk who passed away on May 5.

Smith wrote a tribute to Houk that was read by Grant Union teacher and football coach Jason Miller.

A memorial table was set up at the event to honor Houk and Les Guttu.

Guttu, who died April 17, was a Grant Union shot put and discus coach from 1992-2008.

Visitors could flip through scrapbooks filled with photos and news clippings of their life and track and field successes.

When Houk became the Grant Union track and field head coach in 1989, he didn't have an assistant to oversee the long jump and triple jump events, so he took it upon himself to learn techniques from other coaches and attended clinics.

Through the years he was known for shaping many athletes into champions.

While his main focus was Grant Union athletes, he was also generous with his knowledge providing assistance to jumpers from other teams.

"John Houk hired me in 1993 to

be the distance coach," Smith said. "In 1995, he turned the program over to me as the head coach. He was my mentor and my friend and taught me what it is to be a coach to all, not just the few."

Houk and his wife, Mary, who were living in Toledo, Washington, retired from teaching for Grant School District several years ago, but the couple returned yearly in late winter to spring so he could continue coaching the Prospectors.

"Mary Houk showed me the meaning of true unselfishness and dedication, by following her husband to John Day to live out of a motel room for three months out of the year, so her husband could pursue his great love of working with jumpers," Smith said. "They both will have a place in my heart, forever."

Hutchison, who placed first in the triple jump with a mark of 32-09 and second in the long jump with 16-05 on Friday, said this was one of their first meets without Houk.

"It was definitely a rough day," she said. "All of us did the best we could to live up to what we could do when he was here. We plan to do the same at state next week."

Houk would surely be proud to know three of his horizontal jump athletes are advancing to state, and two more also made it to the podium.

Brockway will jump at state after placing second in the triple jump with a leap of 32-03.00 and third in the long jump with 15-10.50. Brockway also qualified for state in the 100 hurdles, placing first, and pole vault, finishing in second.

On the boys side, Morris placed first in the triple jump with a mark of 41-03.50. Mason Gerry and Jordan Hall also made it to the podium at the district meet in jumping events.