

Prospectors fall to Knappa in home opening football game



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter
On a Grant Union punt return, Tanler Fuller (20, in back) lateraled to Justin Hodge (3) who rushed 70-plus yards.

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant Union Prospector’s battle against the Knappa Loggers was fierce under the Friday night lights, but the Loggers came away with a 24-14 win.

Prospector senior Russell Hodge made the first touchdown of the game in the first quarter, rushing to the corner, and junior Devon Stokes’ quarterback keeper put Grant Union up 8-0.

Knappa’s Kanai Phillip,

a senior, had a touchdown return on the Loggers’ next possession, but the 2-point conversion was no good.

On a punt return in the second quarter, Prospector sophomore Tanler Fuller lateraled to sophomore Justin Hodge with junior Jordan Hall blocking as Hodge raced 70-plus yards for the touchdown.

Hall also intercepted Logger quarterback junior Devin Hoover’s pass to senior Eli Takalo in the end zone on Knappa’s next drive.

Knappa led 18-14 at

the half, and the Loggers scored again in the fourth.

There was only 17 seconds left in the game when Knappa offensive lineman Isaac Goozee, a junior, went down injured. Paramedics drove him to the hospital, and announcer Levi Manittas said the young man would have the prayers of many.

Grant Union head coach Jason Miller said, although penalties and simple mistakes slowed them down, there were still a lot of positives.

“We have a lot of things to build on,” he said.

He said special teams needs some improvement, and although the defense settled in well in the second half, they also have things to work on.

“We’ve just got to be sure we don’t have those back-breakers, those simple things, missing a tackle here or there or not getting a quarterback on a rush, but overall I’m pleased with the guys,” he said.

Grant Union will face the Monroe Dragons at 6 p.m. Friday on the road.



Contributed photo/Tanni Wenger Photography
Dayville/Monument Tigers Miranda Cook (11) and Denali Twehues (5) go up for a block against the Enterprise Outlaws at the Saturday, Aug. 31, Grant Union Tournament held in Prairie City.

Local spikers see league competitors at Grant Union Tournament

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The 2A Grant Union volleyball team took second at their home tournament, falling to the Weston-McEwen TigerScots in the Prospectors’ first competition of the season Aug. 31.

The tournament was an opportunity for Grant Union and two other local teams, the 1A Prairie City Panthers and 1A Dayville/Monument Tigers, to battle early with some of the opponents they’ll face later this season.

The Prospectors are in the Blue Mountain Confer-

ence, and the Panthers and Tigers are in the High Desert League.

Also joining the competition from Blue Mountain were the 2A Heppner Mustangs and 2A Enterprise Outlaws, all competing in the nonconference/nonleague matches at Prairie City School as Grant Union’s gym undergoes floor work.

After pool play, the Prospectors were seeded No. 1 in the bracket and fell 2-1 to the TigerScots.

Weston-McEwen came away with a 25-11 win in the first set, then Grant Union fought back 25-22 to take the second.

Weston-McEwen overcame in the third with a score of 15-9.

“Standouts from this weekend were Taylor Allen and Kaytlyn Wells,” said Grant Union head coach Ali Abrego. “Both played awesome and led the team with kills.”

Abrego said the team will be working on court awareness and blocking for their upcoming games, including Saturday’s Heppner Tournament.

The Dayville/Monument Tigers had a 2-1 win over Enterprise with scores of 20-25, 25-22 and 15-12.

Tiger head coach Treila Osborne said her girls showed great teamwork.

“Being invited to that tournament with 2A schools was an honor, and our Lady Tigers worked very hard,” she said. “Having a win over Enterprise was a great achievement and boosted our confidence.”

Osborne said her team never gave up and played “one rally at a time.”

“We had great hits and very consistent serving all day,” she said.

The Prairie City Panthers fell to Weston-McEwen 2-0. The TigerScots won the first set 25-20, then the Panthers pushed back to within 2 points in the second set but lost 31-29.

Prairie City also tied Enterprise 1-1 in their next match, with the Out-

laws winning the first set 25-18 and the Panthers turning the tables to win 25-19 in the second.

“The team had a slow start to the day, but improved throughout the tournament,” said Prairie City head coach Jordan Bass. “It was exciting to see the girls split with Enterprise. They worked hard to win that second set, and it was well deserved.”

She said Weston-McEwen was competitive.

“It was great to see this team battle to a 29-31 loss in the second set,” Bass said. “It didn’t go our way, but those matches take a lot of mental toughness. It was good to highlight some things to work on this week before our Prairie City Invitational on (Sept. 7).”

Heppner had a 0-2 loss to Weston-McEwen and a 2-0 win over Enterprise at the tournament.

Grant Union hosted the 4A La Grande Tigers on Tuesday, La Grande taking a 3-1 win in the match played at the Humbolt Elementary School gym in Canyon City.

While Grant Union is young after losing nine seniors to graduation, Abrego said her team has a lot of talent and determination.

The Prospectors will host the 3A Burns Hilanders at the Humbolt Elementary gym in Canyon City for a home game at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 12.

Grant Union cross country team builds on strengths

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Some like the challenge of hills, some enjoy running on grass and others love mud bogs, but whatever courses Grant Union Prospector cross country runners prefer, they play to their strengths.

Head coach Sonna Smith has nine boys and nine girls on this year’s roster. This season and last are the biggest teams Smith has seen since she started coaching in 1995.

Eight of the nine boys are returning runners with four returners for the girls.

“The boys team has lots of experience coming in,” Smith said. “All have at least two years of experience.”

Gage Brandon and Donovan Smith are two seniors on the boys team.

Brandon was a top runner for the Prospector boys last season, and freshman Brady Dole was first in the timed trial Smith held at the start of practices.



GRANT UNION CROSS COUNTRY SCHEDULE

- Sept. 13: 43rd Annual Catherine Creek Scamper, near Union at Catherine Creek Campground, 1 p.m.
- Sept. 20: The Footrace to Valhalla in Umatilla, TBD
- Sept. 27: Baker Invite at Baker City Golf Course, TBD
- Oct. 3: Mustang Invitational at Thompson Ranch in Heppner, TBD
- Oct. 11: Tiger Invite at La Grande Country Club, TBD
- Oct. 17: Kyle Burnside Wildhorse Invite at Wildhorse Golf Course in Pendleton, TBD
- Oct. 19: Idlewild Invite at Burns High School, TBD
- Oct. 24: Grant Union Gold Rush, John Day, TBD
- Nov. 1: 3A/2A/1A Special District 3 at Pendleton Community Park, TBD

sometimes there is snow.

Grant Union will hold a meet this year, the Grant Union Gold Rush on Thursday, Oct. 24, at the Seventh Street Complex, hosting eight 5A-2A teams.

The Prospector boys and girls are both in District 3, but the boys are in a 2A/1A group with 12 other teams, and the girls race with the 3A-1A class with 20 other teams.

The top two teams at the district meet will advance to state, and the top five individual runners also go to state.

On the girls side last year, Enterprise and Burns advanced to state, with Burns beating out Union, which typically has a strong team.

Smith said Union and Enterprise will be top contenders for the boys.

To meet the challenges of each race, the coach pushes her athletes.

“We work on increasing their endurance to run hard,” she said. “We ran hills the last two weeks, then intervals.”

After running a couple laps at practice, Smith sent the high school runners out for a 4-mile run and middle school runners for a 30-minute run.

“Some athletes are better on hills, others on grass,” she said. “They learn their strengths and learn to apply them in racing conditions that favor them.”

Brandon was a top runner for the Prospector boys last season, and freshman Brady Dole was first in the timed trial Smith held at the start of practices.

Brandon, who’s competed in cross country since eighth grade, said this year’s freshmen are “extremely good.”

“This year is looking to be better than previous years, and next year is looking promising as well,” Brandon said.

Freshman Max Bailey finished eighth out of 38 participants at last year’s Footrace to Valhalla in Umatilla on the 1.5-mile course with a time of 9:15.8. His fellow classmates were right behind him, including Quinn Larson in ninth with 9:29.2 and Brady Dole in 10th with 9:29.9. Grant Hall, who is an eighth-grader this year on the middle school team, finished fourth in the same race with a time of 8:59.7.

The varsity teams race in 5K events, 3.1 miles.

There are several untried underclassman on the team, Smith said, and their first races of the season will give them a better idea of how the runners line up.

“Time will tell,” she said.

For the girls, Smith said seniors Erika Dickens and Rylee Browning are expected to battle for first and second for the team. Other senior girls are Tiler Voigt and manager Sammi Buckhaults.

Freshman Amelia Hall could also be a top runner for the girls team. She ran a 2,500-meter middle school race last year as an eighth-grader at Runners Soul placing 19th out of 89 participants.

Donavan Smith, a senior on the boys team, said he enjoys the team, which is like a family.

“I enjoy the difficulty and the accomplishment of finishing a race,” he said.

Dickens said the team is excited for the new year and all the new faces and for everyone to meet their goals. She enjoys running through mud pits and water during races.

“It adds excitement and makes you forget the difficulties,” she said.

Buckhaults said you have to be careful — “You might lose your shoes or glasses in the mud.”

Coach Smith said the Idlewild Meet held at a campground north of Burns is a favorite.

She said the course is completely in the forest, and

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