

Grant Union sweeps two on the road to up ante for districts

Top four teams advance to district tournament

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant Union Prospector volleyball team came up big in their road trip to Enterprise Saturday, sweeping both the Enterprise Outlaws and the Pilot Rock Rockets, wrapping up Grant Union's regular conference season.

The wins move Grant Union up from fifth in the Blue Mountain Conference standings to third, as of Monday evening. There were still other teams in the conference with games on Tuesday, Oct. 22, past press time.

The top four teams in the conference will advance to the district tournament.

Grant Union Principal/Athletic Director Ryan Gerry said they expect to know who the Prospectors will face and when, on Wednesday, Oct. 23.

Grant Union defeated Enterprise in close sets: 27-25, 25-22 and 25-19.

"The first set especially was a battle for us," said Prospector head coach Ali Abrego. "There was a point where we were down by 8 points and came back to win it in three."



Grant Union Prospector Kenna Combs (3) drops the ball over the net just past Enterprise Outlaw Zari Bathke.

Abrego said Enterprise has improved since Oct. 5, the first time they faced the Outlaws.

"That was huge for our girls, especially since we've been focusing on being mentally tough for long rallies," she said, adding, "We had several missed serves this weekend, which was abnormal for us. However, we

placed the ball tastefully on offense and learned to use the empty spots on the court to our advantage."

Grant Union had a decisive win over Pilot Rock with scores of 25-13, 25-15 and 25-10.

"We ended the third set playing with all the sophomores," Abrego said. "We focused on subbing everyone in and allow-

ing all athletes to demonstrate their skills and responsibility."

The Prospectors fell in three sets to the undefeated Union Bobcats on Oct. 15 in John Day. The Bobcats won with scores of 25-17, 25-16 and 25-14.

Abrego said her team lost focus on the end goal.

"We came here to put up a fight," she said after the

game with Union. "I don't think it was a team we should have lost to."

She said her team's errors outweighed the positives in the match.

"I would say that Union definitely knows where to place the ball," she said, adding her team had trouble reading the tips and working together to come back from a deficit.

2A BLUE MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE VOLLEYBALL STANDINGS

Union, 11-0 conference, 19-3 overall, ranked No. 2

Stanfield, 7-4, 17-7, No. 10

Grant Union, 7-5, 12-14, No. 12

Weston-McEwen, 6-5, 16-9, No. 7

Heppner, 6-5, 12-14, No. 21

Enterprise, 2-9, 9-14, No. 29

Pilot Rock, 0-11, 2-21, No. 38

*As of Tuesday morning.

Tuesday's loss was a heartbreaker, especially due to senior night.

"The senior class is a fun group. They're really lively," Abrego said.

She said, after having them for two years, it will be hard to see them go at the close of the season.

"They're great kids, and I love being their coach," she said.

Grant Union traveled to Burns to face the Hilanders for a nonconference game Tuesday, Oct. 22, past press time.

Spartan

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The spear throw is the trademark obstacle that embodies the Spartan ethos and spirit, but other obstacles can change from event to event.

At the World Championships, Boyer was challenged with carrying two 80-pound sandbags around the half-pipe (about one-quarter mile), swimming in a cold lake, crossing monkey bars, climbing ropes and crawling under barbed wire, just to name a few.

"There was moaning and groaning carrying those sandbags," Boyer said. "When we had to swim, we had to put our clothes in a bag and take them with us. My hands were so cold that I couldn't get my bag sealed and everything got wet. We were at 9,200 feet at the top of the course. It was minus-17 degrees. It was 32 at the bottom, and the wind was blowing. I went to boot camp in Kentucky in December. This was worse."

Boyer's favorite obstacle along the route is the rope climb.

"I struggled with that in my first race," Boyer said. "I've gotten better at it and I can rest my legs. What I like



EO Media Group/Kathy Aney

Richard Boyer of Pendleton carries a log as part of his Spartan Race workout at his southwest Pendleton home. Boyer attended Long Creek High School.

about the races, is there are advantages for folks who are taller, leaner, shorter, stronger. Us big guys have a tough time with the ape hangers, and small guys with the 400-pound tire. When you run, the less weight the better."

Boyer said he isn't fond of the swim, but Lake Tahoe was the first time he has had to do it. For the most part, the box is his least favorite. It is a new obstacle for 2019.

The box is an 8-foot piece of plywood with a rope. The wall is faced with a slick surface, and has no top edge to grab.



EO Media Group/Kathy Aney

Richard Boyer of Pendleton displays the medal he won in North Lake Tahoe for getting seventh place in the 2019 Spartan World Championships in the 55-59 age group.

"You are scrambling to get foot placement," Boyer said. "I have failed it. When you fail, it is 30 burpees."

Spartan training 101

Boyer and Girdner used to train together when they were on the high school track team in Long Creek.

"We used to run the high-

way to the forest," Boyer said. "That was 1980. Here we are 39 years later competing in these races."

When Boyer first started training, he was 6-foot-2 and 240 pounds. At his first race, he was down to 210 pounds.

"I was still too heavy," he said. "My race weight is now 188."

Boyer, who works at J&J Snack Foods in Weston, has a few obstacles set up at his house. He also goes to La Grande to train with Girdner, who is a little more extreme, and has an array of obstacles to practice on.

"He lives at the base of Mt. Emily, and he runs to the

top three days a week when he is training," Boyer said. "I haven't done that with him. I run the Tollgate Highway. I get in 8 to 10 miles on my lunch hour."

He also runs from his house to the Pilot Rock city limits, which is 13.1 miles.

Last December, Boyer gave himself a challenge — to run 75 miles (that was the easy part) and do 6,000 burpees (200 per day).

"It wasn't too bad, until you skip a day," Boyer said of the burpees.

A family affair

Boyer's wife, Charity, is his biggest cheerleader, but his kids Joshua, 22, and Jenny, 14, have joined the Spartan craze.

"Jenny (an eighth-grader at Sunridge Middle School) has Down syndrome, but she goes through the whole thing," Boyer said. "She enjoys it."

Joshua is a student at Utah State University.

"He has done races the past couple of years," Boyer said. "He did an Ultra Beast in Colorado in August."

Boyer has done a handful of races, including one in Seattle in early September, but said he will take a break until June when he will participate in the race in Payette, Idaho.

SPORTS ROUNDUP

Grant Union football rips Riverside in 54-16 win

The Grant Union Prospector football team claimed a 54-16 league win on the road against the Riverside Pirates in league action.

Grant Union head coach Jason Miller said his team performed well against the Pirates.

"We were up 46 to 0 at the half, then our JV players finished the game," he said.

Next up, Grant Union hosts the Heppner Mustangs at 7 p.m. Friday.

The Mustangs are undefeated this season and ranked No. 3 among OSAA's 2A teams. Grant Union and Heppner are tied with a league record of 2-0 in 2A Special District 6.

"We'll need to continue to improve in order to compete with Heppner," Miller said, adding that bettering their mental toughness will be especially important.

"We would love to have a packed house for this important league game," Miller said.

2A SPECIAL DISTRICT 6 FOOTBALL

Heppner, 2-0 district, 7-0 overall, ranked No. 3

Grant Union, 2-0, 2-5, No. 15

Stanfield, 1-1, 4-2, No. 20

Weston-McEwen, 1-2, 3-3, No. 19

Riverside (3A), 0-3, 0-7, No. 35

Ukiah/Long Creek soccer team shows improvement

The 1A Ukiah/Long Creek Mountain Lions hosted the 3A Nyssa Bulldogs Thursday in Long Creek.

Although Ukiah/Long Creek fell 5-1, the Mountain Lions bettered the outcome compared to their first meeting with Nyssa Sept. 19, when the Bulldogs won 12-0.

"We're focusing on gross improvement and defense," said Ukiah/Long Creek head coach Amos Studtmann. "We moved players around where their skills would be most useful."

Carter Burnette kicked the goal for Long Creek/Ukiah.

"Linus Beck and Philip Lee, playing full back, got a lot of stops and provided good options in the back field for passing, and even for offensive opportunities," Studtmann said. "Our goal keep, Bert Volney, made some difficult blocks, which, with him, we're starting to get used to."

"We put Thomas Kreamier on attack, which is his first game in that position — he did great," the coach said. "His speed and ability to protect the ball allowed several opportunities to shoot, and even the one goal we made started with an attack by Thomas."

Studtmann said his team's chemistry is good, and their improvement shows that no one is giving up.

"I'm really proud of the kids," he said. "I emphasize improvement and going from the 0-12 to 1-5 is an major improvement."

Next up, Ukiah/Long Creek is on the road Friday, facing the 3A Irrigon Knights at 5 p.m.

Ukiah/Long Creek volleyball sweeps Harper

The Ukiah/Long Creek Mountain Lions volleyball team swept the Harper Hornets in Long Creek Saturday with scores of 25-18, 25-21, 25-17.

It was the Mountain Lions' final game of the season.

Head coach Linda Studtmann said, although they got off to a slow start, her players worked together and helping well and everyone came off the bench.

"Our captains, Dorothea Johnson and Jenny Kim, did a good job of leading, encouraging and helping players," Studtmann said. "Lucchese Douglas, a junior, but a first year player, worked hard to learn the game and was a valuable asset to the team."

Studtmann said, win or lose, sports teach athletes life skills.

"That is where we measure our success," she said. "We want to develop players that are better athletes, better friends, better students, and better workers."

Studtmann said she and co-coach Reagan Enriquez saw their young junior varsity team learn, grow and bond together.

Of the nine players they ended with this season, only two had previous experience playing volleyball.

"We have watched their spirits fall and we've watched them pull them-

selves back up again and soar," Studtmann said. "They are stronger in skill, teamwork, discipline, attitude and determination — in that, I think we were successful."

Snowfall challenges Grant Union's cross country team at Idlewild Meet

The Grant Union Prospector varsity cross country team was challenged by the weather, as well as their opponents at Saturday's Idlewild Meet hosted by Burns High School at Idlewild Campground north of Burns.

"Idlewild was cold, snowy and slick," said Grant Union head coach Sonna Smith. "The treacherous footing made for slower times for all runners, except for Madelyn Bailey. She had a season's best."

Bailey, a seventh-grader on Grant Union's middle school team, placed fifth out of 12 with a time of 13:55 in the 3K.

On Thursday, the varsity team competed at the Kyle Burnside Wildhorse Invitational in Pendleton, the layout including two loops on the rolling hills of grass at the golf course.

Setting personal records were Erika Dickens, Katelyn Hughs and Mikiah Kimble.

"Erika Dickens had an outstanding race and reached her season goal of breaking into the 21-minute range," Smith said. "She is primed and ready to go for our home meet and districts, as I am hoping all runners will be as we begin our taper phase for districts."

The Prospectors host the Grant Union Gold Rush on Thursday at Seventh Street Complex.

Times have been adjusted to avoid running out of daylight, the coach said.

Middle school runners start at 4 p.m. with boys and girls running together.

A senior recognition will be held at 4:25 p.m. with the girls varsity starting at 4:30 p.m., followed by boys varsity.

The races start and end at Belshaw Fields at the lower field on the west side of the complex near the John Day Parks and Recreation office.

KYLE BURNSIDE WILDHORSE INVITE RESULTS

GIRLS

Erika Dickens, 24th, 21:38.6

Rylee Browning, 70, 24:04.3

Amelia Hall, 73, 24:11.7

Katelyn Hughes, 82, 25:05.6

Riley Robertson, 98, 28:40.7

Mikiah Kimble, 100, 29:22.8

BOYS

Brady Dole, 59th, 18:49.1

Quinn Larson, 99, 20:15.0

Jesse Randleas, 119, 21:05.9

Max Bailey, 127, 21:59.9

Gage Brandon, 136, 22:42.7

Gavin Lopez, 139, 23:15.0

Donavan Smith, 142, 23:24.4

Idlewild results

GIRLS

Erika Dickens, 9th, 25:59

Katelyn Hughes, 15, 28:12

Riley Robertson, 19, 30:30

Mikiah Kimble, 20, 31:42

BOYS

Brady Dole, 14th, 21:20

Quinn Larson, 22, 22:56

Gage Brandon, 24, 23:15

Gavin Lopez, 36, 25:16

Max Bailey, 39, 25:57

Donavan Smith, 40, 26:50