



Grant Union battles for sixth in state

By Angel Carpenter
 Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant Union Prospectors started to rally in set three against Portland Christian, but fell to the Royals 3-0 at the OSAA 2A Volleyball State Championship in the quarterfinal round at Ridgeview High School in Redmond.

The Prospectors went on to beat the Bonanza Antlers with scores of 25-18, 30-32, 25-22, 23-25 and 15-13 in the consolation round. Grant Union then lost a 3-0 battle for fourth place to Union, the Bobcats winning with scores of 25-19, 25-15 and 25-17.

"It's awesome to have such a young team, and it's our first time at the tournament," said Grant Union head coach Ali Abrego. "We made the top eight, and that's what we were aiming to do."

The loss to the Bobcats placed the Prospectors at sixth in state.

In their first game of the day, the Prospectors fell to Portland Christian in the first two sets 25-7 and 25-10, but began staging a comeback in the third set.

The teams went back and forth, then Grant Union went on a scoring run with Taylor Allen, a senior, serving.

Grant Union went up 7-4 when Prospector Abby Lusco, a junior, spiked the ball, then Allen served up an ace.

The Royals made a hard return of Allen's next serve, but Prospector senior Kaytlyn Wells was ready for it with Kenna Combs, a junior, setting the ball for Allen who delivered a powerful kill.

The teams tied again 10-10, then the Royals began pulling away. Prospector sophomore Harli Grove had two kills toward the end of the set, but the Royals won it 25-18.

"Portland Christian is really a great team. They're a lot older than we are, and that really showed," Abrego said.

Abrego said Grove handles pressure well.

"She comes in cool off the bench and causes a few errors for that team and scores a few



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union Prospector Abby Lusco (7) cheers after making a forceful kill in the quarterfinal round on Nov. 8 against the Portland Christian Royals.

points for us — that's really awesome that she has the ability to do that," the coach said. "Taylor's serving accuracy — she's improved a lot — and she's making smarter decisions."

Abrego said the game against Bonanza was "intense to say the least."

"We had one set go 30-32," she said. "It was a long match, two hours and 45 minutes ... which just shows how mentally tough our girls had to be in order to win."

It was the second time in two years that Grant Union beat Bonanza during the state playoff or tournament.

Abrego expressed her appreciation for assistant coach Andrea Combs, and said that while they both will miss the three seniors — Wells, Allen and Baylee



La Grande Observer/Ronald Bond

Grant Union Prospector Abby Lusco (7) pounds the ball with Union Bobcat Ahnica Shoemaker (17) defending.

Combs — they're glad they don't have to say goodbye to nine seniors as they did last year.

"Overall, we brought home a trophy, and I'm very

pleased with that," Abrego said. "I'm thankful for the opportunity to have coached these girls."

Kennedy defeated Central Linn for the cham-



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union Prospector starters prepare to battle the Portland Christian Royals at the beginning of the State Championship quarterfinal round on Nov. 8 in Redmond. Clockwise from front: junior Maddie Spencer (6), sophomore Carson Weaver, senior Kaytlyn Wells, senior Taylor Allen, sophomore Grace Taylor and junior Abby Lusco (7).

pionship title, and Portland Christian placed third, Union fourth and Vernonia fifth. Weston-McEland Christian placed third, Union fourth and Vernonia fifth. Weston-McEland Christian placed third, Union fourth and Vernonia fifth.

Grant Union football team ends season at quarterfinal round

By Angel Carpenter
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The Grant Union Prospector football team faced an uphill challenge in Saturday's OSAA 2A State Championship first round battle against top-seeded Kennedy.

They were unable to climb that mountain, with the Trojans winning 35-6. Kennedy powered ahead with an early 14-point lead, then Grant Union slowed the Mt. Angel team's momentum.

"Our defense was stout," said Grant Union head coach Jason Miller, who is assisted by coaches Andy Lusco and Tucker Wright.

Prospector quarterback Devon Stokes, a junior, connected on a deep pass to senior Mason Gerry for Grant Union's sole touchdown.

"Offensively, turnovers and miscues made it difficult for us to get into a rhythm," Miller said. "Kennedy is a quality team."

Grant Union had a tough early season schedule, coming back from five nonleague losses to place second in Special District 6 with a 3-1 league record.

The Prospectors first faced Kennedy on Oct. 4 in John Day, the Trojans winning 42-14. Kennedy was undefeated in Special District 2, losing only one nonleague game.

"Our early season schedule was tough, and that made us tougher," Miller said. "It would have been nice to have won a few of those early close games, then we would not have been playing the No. 1 seed."

He added, "I am proud of the players this season from our seniors to our freshmen, varsity and JV."



Eagle file photo

Grant Union Prospector Mason Gerry rushes as Taylor Hunt blocks Kennedy's Bruce Beyer (3) and Brady Traeger (12) during the Oct. 4 game in John Day. Grant Union faced the Trojans again in the first round at the OSAA 2A Football State Championship on Saturday in Mt. Angel, Kennedy advancing to the quarterfinal round.

BLUE MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE ALL-LEAGUE

Grant Union football

Defense

Defensive Backs

Justin Hodge, sophomore, first team
 Tanler Fuller, sophomore, second team

Linebackers

Peyton Neault, junior, first team
 Russell Hodge, senior, first team
 Jack Strong, freshman, honorable mention

Defensive Lineman

Drew Lusco, senior, first team
 Frank Douglass, senior, second team

Offense

Receivers

Justin Hodge, first team
 Mason Gerry, senior, second team
 Jordan Hall, junior, second team

Quarterback

Devon Stokes, junior, second team

Running backs

Russell Hodge, first team
 Taylor Hunt, senior, honorable mention

Offensive Line

Drew Lusco, first team
 Peyton Neault, second team

Punter

Russell Hodge, first team

Mountain goat sighted near town



Contributed photo/Tanni Wenger Photography

Professional photographer Tanni Wenger of John Day snapped this photo of a mountain goat wandering on a hill on the west side of Canyon City. She took the photo from Adams Drive, looking to the west.