



# Prairie City boys win district tourney with 56-41 win over Crane

Panthers earn first-round bye in state tournament, will play Saturday

By Steven Mitchell  
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Prairie City Panthers boys basketball team is heading to the state tournament for the third consecutive season after defeating Crane 56-41 in the championship round of the High Desert League Basketball Tournament.

The Panthers, who entered the league tourney in the No. 1 seed, reached the championship game after defeating Adrian 65-50 on Friday.

The Panthers defeated Crane 46-45 in the final seconds of last

year's district championship game and came into Saturday's game expecting to face a team that was hungry and out to avenge last year's loss.

Although Prairie City defeated Crane both times they've faced each other this season, the games have been competitive and hard-fought. This game was no exception.

"We expected it to be a real battle with Crane," said Prairie City junior Jojari Field.

Early on, it looked like it would be another close championship game. Crane shooter Chase Joyce nailed a pair of field goals and a 3-point jumper within first few minutes of the game to fire up the Mustangs' offense.

Joyce would go on to score a

See Panthers, Page B2



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell  
**Prairie City junior Jayden Winegar zips past a Crane defender Saturday in the Panthers' 56-41 district championship win over the Mustangs. Winegar scored 10 points in the contest.**



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell  
**Prairie City fans packed the Grant Union High School gym Saturday for the Panthers' district championship game versus Crane. The Panthers defeated the Mustangs 56-41.**

## Prospectors fall short in district championship game to Pilot Rock

Grant Union will travel to Coquille Saturday for first round of state

By Steven Mitchell  
Blue Mountain Eagle

At the championship round of the Blue Mountain Conference district tournament at the Pendleton Convention Center Saturday, the Pilot Rock Rockets used a 24-6 second quarter to pull away from the league's second-ranked Grant Union Prospectors for good as they rolled to a 68-40 victory to win the tournament title.

The Prospectors, with the superior league record, earned the conference title and a trip to the first round of the 2A state tournament.

Senior Tristan Morris led Grant Union (15-7, 10-2 BMC) with a team-high 14 points and 10 rebounds. Tel Thacker of Pilot Rock (21-4, 8-4 BMC) led all scorers with 18 points.

"We shot the ball nearly 69 to 70 times, and they didn't fall, and sometimes that just happens," Grant Union head coach RC Huerta said. "It was just an outlier of a game, and that is what I told the boys in the locker room after the game."

The Prospectors held an early 3-2 lead, but Rockets senior Payton Thurmond dropped in two back-to-back 3-pointers midway through the first quarter to take over the game at 8-6. Grant Union put together a brief 4-point run for an 11-10 lead with 1:58 left in the quarter, but Thurmond returned with another 3-pointer in the final minute, the Rockets up 13-11.

Thurmond gave the Rockets an even greater



EO Media Group/Kathy Aney  
**Tristan Morris of Grant Union and Pilot Rock's Tel Thacker fight for a rebound during Saturday's Blue Mountain Conference championship game against Pilot Rock at the Pendleton Convention Center.**

distance in the opening minutes of the second quarter, scoring 4 unanswered points for a 17-11 game. Tristan Morris pulled the Prospectors within 5 points at 22-17 with 3:51 left in the half, but the Rockets proceeded to ignite a quarter-closing 15-point run that put the game out of reach for good.

Pilot Rock senior Logan Weinke began the streak with a 3-pointer, and junior Tanner Corwin contributed 6 points to the run. At the half, the Rockets were ahead 37-17.

"We wanted to come out and play our game," said Thacker, a Pilot Rock junior. "We knew we needed to lock down Morris. It was a pretty spread-out game. We played great team defense."



EO Media Group/Kathy Aney  
**Tanner Corwin of Pilot Rock and Grant Union's Mason Gerry fight for a rebound during Saturday's Blue Mountain Conference championship game at the Pendleton Convention Center.**

Thacker helped the Rockets to a 25-point lead at 50-25 with 43 seconds left in quarter three, and Corwin and Weinke combined for 4 points at the line in the fourth quarter for a 31-point, 67-38 advantage. Huerta said his team did

not lose due to a lack of trying. He said Pilot Rock head coach Tyler Zyph did a great job in having his team prepared and ready to play.

"Tyler is a great coach," he said. "His team was prepared, and they played well."

The league recognized Huerta, naming him Blue Mountain Conference "Coach of the Year."

Morris was named first team, all-league "Player of the Year." Junior Devon Stokes was named second team all-league.

Senior Mason Gerry and junior Jordin Hall were all-league honorable mentions.

Next up, Coquille will host the Prospectors in the first round of the 2A state tournament Feb. 29. The boys tip off at 5 p.m.

## Prairie City Girls lose to Crane in district championship game

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Prairie City girls basketball team fell 59-27 against the Crane Mustangs on Saturday at the High Desert League Tournament Championship Game, but the Panthers placed second to advance to the state tournament.

They were scheduled to play Chiloquin Tuesday past press time. Saturday's game started with junior Abbey Pfefferkorn scoring 2 points in the first minute of the game, but the Mustangs quickly followed up with 2 of their own.

For most of the first quarter, the score was close. In the latter half, Mustangs sophomore Kelsie Siegner scored 2 points, which created momentum for Crane to begin building a lead. The first quarter ended with Crane ahead 8-16.

Crane continued their momentum by scoring 17 points in the



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz  
**Panther senior Emily Ennis looks at her options during the last quarter against the Mustangs Saturday.**

second, while limiting the Panthers to 7. Even with Crane's lead growing by the end of the first half, 15-33, the Panthers continued to work together for the second half of the game.

As the last quarter began, Prairie City fought back with freshman Laken McKay scoring a free throw

for a point and then followed up with another 2 points.

Crane finished on top, 59-27.

Prairie City freshman Betty Ann Wilson said it felt good to play in a championship game and be one of two teams out of the league with the opportunity.

"The team has really come a

long way," Wilson said.

Panthers head coach Bo Workman said the team's effort, intensity and intention is a lot better than it was at the beginning of the season.

"They've really come around, and it is not just one player," Workman said. "It is every one of them."



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz  
**Prairie City senior Hailee Wall goes in to block a shot against Crane at the High Desert League Tournament Championship Game on Saturday.**