



Mustangs run away from Prospectors in first match of season

Lady Pros beat Stanfield, 3-0

By Rudy Diaz
 Blue Mountain Eagle

Volleyball kicked off the sports season at Grant Union with a match between the Prospectors and Crane Mustangs March 3 in John Day.

The Mustangs won with scores of 25-15, 25-16 and 25-12.

In the first set, Grant Union served to start the game, and junior Paige Gerry spiked the ball for the first point of the season.

The set started close, as both teams rallied and remained within a point within each other, but Crane gained momentum with the score at 5-3. The Prospectors worked to narrow the lead, but Crane's defense held their ground and ended the set on top by 10.

The Mustangs carried the momentum into the second set, building an 18-8 lead. Grant Union began to build their own momentum as the team scored 4 points in a row with senior Abby Lusco serving.

However, Crane stopped the momentum after blocking and digging several spikes launched by the Prospectors and won the set 25-16.

Grant Union head coach Shanna Northway said Crane is a solid team and the Prospectors were aware they would need to battle for every point



Grant Union junior Carson Weaver jumps in for a spike against Crane as their defenders prepare to block the attempt on March 3.

against the Mustangs.

"We did that every now and then, but we've got to do that more than every now and then," Northway said.

The final set was evenly matched, but at 7-7, an out of bounds hit by the Prospectors gave the momentum to Crane who led the rest of the set.

Northway said they were excited to have people back in the gym after the long break from sports.

"It was good to get back on the court," Northway said. "It's good to be back and have some normalcy in our lives."

Northway said the game against Crane helped the team identify where improvements could be made. Blocks, tip coverage and serving were some of the areas they plan to improve as they develop their practice plan.

The difficulty this season will be preparing for the next game on a shortened schedule.

"It's going to be tough to make a lot of adjustments in practices because with the shortened season it's going to be game, game, game, game," Northway said. "In a typi-

cal year you usually get two to three practices before you meet your next opponent."

She said it will be a challenge, but the team has great leaders.

Lady Pros top Stanfield in three sets

The team got their groove back in their 3-0 victory Saturday over Stanfield.

"They played much better on Saturday than they did against Crane," Northway said Monday.

Northway said the team served



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz
 Grant Union junior Laurny Pettyjohn returns the ball to Crane as freshman Savannah Hodge, right, watches in a game against The Mustangs March 3 at Grant Union.

stronger, hit their spots and passed really well. She said this helped because Stanfield could not get their offense going.

She said junior Carson Weaver has been an all-around solid player and a "vocal leader" who stays "really engaged" whether she is in the game or on the bench.

Northway said senior Maddie Spencer has also played well and been a team leader.

Their next game is against Burns Thursday, March 11, with junior varsity starting at 5 p.m. at Grant Union.

Tigers defensive dominance delivers decisive win over Rattlers

Dayville/Monument travels to Joseph Friday

By Steven Mitchell
 Blue Mountain Eagle

The Dayville/Monument Tigers dominated on defense Friday in their first game of a shortened spring season, as they defeated the Mitchell/Wheeler/Spray Rattlers 33-0.

Kyle Hand, the Tigers' head coach, said while his team played stellar defense, the offense was "embarrassing."

"We'll be working on it in practice on Monday," he said.

Hand said the team missed blocks and could not execute plays. He said the outcome would have been much different had the Tigers' defense not stepped up.

The Tigers' defense held the Rattlers to roughly 60 yards.

"When you hold any team in any football game to 60 yards, there's a good chance you're going to end up winning," he said.

Hand said the five returning seniors this season also helped. The Rattlers, with one returning senior and a roster of mostly freshmen, faced a more experienced team.

Hand said the offensive woes were understandable, given that the team had just three weeks to practice before Friday's game.

"We haven't talked football since March, when all of this (COVID-19) started happening," he said. "We're just getting football back on the mind again."

It was mostly seniors who scored the Tigers' touchdowns. Senior JT Hand put the Tigers on the board while Donovan Schafer, a senior, scored a 2-point conversion.

Senior Mark Thomas caught a Hail Mary pass that put the Tigers on the Rattlers' 20-yard line, then a couple of downs later ran the ball to the end zone on a handoff.

Thomas got into the act on the defensive end when he ran back



Senior Mark Thomas (22) evades a tackle Friday during the second half of the Tigers 33-0 win over the Rattlers at Monument Field.

a Rattler fumble for a 20-yard touchdown.

JT Hand said the team will need to "focus" and "execute" much better than they did Friday as they prepare for their game against Joseph next week.

He said, for him and the other seniors, just getting the opportunity to play together meant a lot.

"We're so thankful to be able to have a season," he said. "A lot of us, to be honest, were not counting on it. So to be able to be out here today means everything."

Next up, Joseph will host the Tigers at 4 p.m. Friday, March 12, at the Joseph Charter School.



Mark Thomas, a senior



DJ Howell, a senior



The Eagle
 Steven Mitchell

Monument/Dayville senior Mark Thomas intercepts a pass Friday over Mitchell/Spray/Wheeler freshman Carson Conlee.

SPORTS ROUNDUP

Last week, with spring around the corner, Grant County's high school athletes kicked off their fall seasons after a year and a half layoff.

With shortened seasons, strict guidelines and short practice windows, high school sports programs across the county were in full swing over the weekend.

Heppner blanks Prospectors in season opener

Grant Union head football coach Jason Miller said in a Monday email that he was, for the most part, proud of the team's effort in their 35-0 loss to Heppner.

Miller said "lack of experience" played a big role in Friday's loss.

"We definitely need to improve

our blocking and tackling," Miller said. "The good news is that the players are eager to improve."

Grant Union will host McLoughlin (1-0) in a non-league play at 4 p.m. Friday.

Redsides rout Panthers in league action

The Prairie City Panthers football team fell to South Wasco County 55-6 Friday at their home opener.

First-year head coach Nick Thompson said the team, a majority of them freshmen, played a good first half.

Thompson said the "well-coached" Redsides forced turnovers on defense early in the second half that led to a deficit they

could not recover from.

He said freshman Wes Voigt, in his first varsity game, made plays on both sides of the ball.

Thompson said on offense Voigt was the team's quarterback for most of the game. He said on defense, Voigt's pass deflections and "big tackles" as a safety kept the Panthers physically.

Thompson, a teacher for Prairie City School District, said he was proud of everyone on his team. He said South Wasco, in addition to being the more experienced team, also outmatched the Panthers physically.

"When you combine size, speed and knowledge, it's pretty hard to come out and produce a win against a team like that," he said. "What

better test than to play arguably one of the better teams that we're going to face all year right out of the gate."

Grant Union cross country competes in Heppner

The Grant Union Prospectors cross country teams competed in their first competition of the year at the Heppner Ice Breaker Meet in Heppner March 3.

Senior Sisay Hurty from Stanfield/Echo led the boys 5,000 meter open with a time of 17:19.5.

For Grant Union, sophomore Brady Dole was the top finisher in sixth with a time of 20:11.4. Sophomore Quinn Larson was 10th at 20:53.4, sophomore Max Bailey was 16th at 22:27.7, freshman

Skylor Boyd was 20th at 23:28.8, freshman Landon Boyd was 21st at 23:51.3, senior Jesse Randleas was 23rd at 24:10.6 and junior Cole Ashley was 25th at 28:07.8.

Junior Kallyn Wilkins from Condon led the girls 5,000 meter open with a time of 22:27.3.

For Grant Union, junior Katelyn Hughes was the top finisher in seventh with a time of 27:18.0. Freshman Abbie Justice placed ninth at 28:15.7, freshman Alicia Archibald placed 10th at 28:39.0, junior Riley Robertson placed 13th at 30:31.8 and junior Audrey Walker placed 15th at 31:25.7.

The teams next compete March 11 at the Stanfield Fun Country meet in Stanfield, with the time to be announced.