GUHS runners post best times of season

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

LEBANON — With the boys team missing their top runner and the girls' team short two runners, Grant Union's cross country team's athletes put up some of their best times of the season at the Champs Invite on Friday, Sept. 24.

For the boys team, Sonna Smith, Grant Union's cross country coach, told the Eagle that junior Quinn Larson led the team with his best time of the season, finishing 33rd out of 155 runners in the 5K run at the Lebanon meet with a time of 19:29. Max Bailey, who also logged his season's best, finished with a time of 21:14.

The team's two freshmen, Reid Dole and Logan Randleas finished with times of 23:27 and 23:35 respectively, while sophomores Landon Boyd and Skylor Boyd finished with times of 22:42 and 23:24.

Smith said the girls had a great race. She said because the team was two girls short, the squad ran in the junior varsity race, and instead of a 5K, the girls ran a 3K race.

She said Maddie Bailey placed first, with a time of 13:49, beating out 21 other runners. Finishing third for the Pros was Alici Archibald at 14:10. Riley Robertson finished sixth, with a time of 16.0, followed by Paige Weaver with a time 16:12.

Smith said all four girls set personal records at the race.

Contributed photo
Grant Union runner Paige Weaver crosses the finish line on Friday, Sept. 24, at the Champs Invite in Lebanon.

SPORTS SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 29

Grant Union volleyball @ Burns, 6 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCT. 1

Grant Union football @ Riverside, 7 p.m.

Grant Union cross country @ Baker Invite, 4 p.m.

Prairie City football @ Huntington, 2 p.m.

Prairie City volleyball @ Huntington, 4 p.m.

Dayville volleyball @ South Wasco, 5 p.m.

Dayville football @ South Wasco, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCT. 2

Grant Union volleyball vs Enterprise, 2 p.m., 5 p.m.

Blue Mountain Eagle/Steven Mitchell
Tanler Fuller (1) runs the ball for a touchdown in the third quarter Thursday, Sept. 24, against the Irrigon Knights.

Grant Union wins big in home opener

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — After scoring on a fumble in the early going, Grant Union's football team never looked back in a 46-6 shellacking of Irrigon in the squad's first game at home on Thursday, Sept. 23.

The victory was a confidence booster for the Prospectors after a 51-26 loss to Lost River on Sept. 18.

Prospector Sheldon Lenz, a sophomore linebacker and running back who had several big hits and a touchdown, said the win will serve as a motivator as the team moves forward.

"It should be a good season," he said.

For his part, Justin Hodge, Grant Union senior running back and linebacker, said the game was a lot of fun.

"Everybody knew what they were doing, and we all worked as a good team together."

Indeed, the Prospectors came out of the gate hitting on all cylinders.

After a short possession on offense, the Pros defense stopped Irrigon and scored on a fumbled punt by that was picked up by Andrew Hunt within the first few minutes of the first quarter. Grant Union completed a 2-point conversion to go up 8-0.

With less than five minutes left in the period, Hodge scored a touchdown to put the Pros up 14-0.

At the 2½-minute mark, sophomore defensive back Talon VanCleave scored on an interception, and Lenz ran the ball into the Knights' end zone for a 2-point conversion.

Hodge ran back a punt for a touchdown within the first couple of minutes of the second quarter.

Before the end of the first half, Irrigon's Carson Parrish, a junior, scored the Knights' only touchdown on an interception.

The Pros put 18 more points on the board with touchdowns from Hodge, Lenz and senior Tanler Fuller to close out the game.

Jason Miller, Grant Union's football coach, said while the team is a great bunch of kids and he was proud of the win, the Pros still have things to work on in practice before they face Riverside in league play on Friday, Oct. 1.

"We have a lot more games to play and a lot more improvements to make," Miller said.

Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
School mascot Colton Lyman, aka "John Prospector"

Games postponed by COVID, schedule conflicts

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

PRAIRIE CITY — Prairie City High School tentatively postponed its volleyball and football games this past weekend to Oct. 22.

Billy Colson, Prairie City's athletic director, and the principal told the Eagle that the school's Friday, Sept. 24, football game against Joseph was canceled due to scheduling conflicts and COVID-19 concerns on Joseph's end.

Colson added that Prairie City also had to postpone its Friday volleyball game against Elgin due to an FFA event that would have taken most of its team.

Nick Thompson, Prairie City's football coach, told the Eagle that his team is no stranger to cancellations, postponements or game delays.

In addition to COVID cancellations, the team had a nearly three-hour delay before its Sept. 17 game against South Wasco due to a shortage of referees.

According to Thompson, the team has not had to quarantine this season. However, he noted the team lost its entire spring season due to COVID-19.

This season, Thompson said he is trying to remind his players that what they do off the field directly impacts the team on the field — now, more than ever.

He said the analogy he likes to use with the squad is that if they had owned a nice sports car, they would want to use the best fuel to get the best performance out of the vehicle. Their bodies, he said, should be no different.

"I've been trying to get these kids to realize that their body is a machine," he said, "and how they treat them is how they are going to perform."

He said they must be hearing his message because they have not had anyone get sick so far.

In addition to COVID cancellations, Thompson said the league is dealing with a referee shortage, which sometimes makes it challenging to keep players motivated.

"It's been a real challenge trying to keep the kids motivated week to week when you know they're starting to figure out that there may or may not be a game."

He said the team has filled the time with watching film, conditioning in Prairie City's recently renovated gym and doing team-building activities. In many cases, he added, the team has taken the initiative to put together activities themselves.

Last week, Thompson said, the team scheduled a team fishing trip. Earlier this month, he said the crew unloaded the moving truck of a family that recently moved to Prairie City. Thompson said it took six hours to load the truck and less than an hour for the Panthers to unload.

"I'm pretty thankful," Thompson said. "We've got a good group of guys."

Prairie City volleyball team not taking anything for granted

Jordan Bass, Prairie City's volleyball coach, said her team has a collective sense of gratitude for every chance they get to play and practice in the gym together, knowing there is always the possibility of COVID-19 cancellations.

"I think there is this feeling of being happy to be together and not taking any competition or new practice that we get for granted," she said. "Which, maybe before COVID, it was easier to do sometimes."

Volleyball team wins two of three

Blue Mountain Eagle

STANFIELD — The Grant Union Volleyball team won two out of three games last week.

During their weekend road trip to Stanfield on Saturday, Sept. 27, which saw the Lady Pros play two games, the squad dropped their first game to Stanfield 3-1 but came back to blank Weston-McEwen 3-0.

Earlier in the week, on Tuesday, Sept. 22, Grant Union downed Union 3-0.

Ranked third in their division overall, the Lady Pros are 11-6 and 3-1 in league play as of Monday, Sept. 27.

Shanna Northway, Grant Union's volleyball coach, did not immediately respond to the Eagle's request for comment.

Next up:

The Lady Pros hit the road on Wednesday, Sept. 29, to face the Burns Highlanders at Burns High School at 4:30 p.m.

Eagle file photo
Grant Union's volleyball team poses for a photo last month after beating Jordan Valley for the top spot at the Grant Union Invitational Tournament in John Day.

Area youth take part in ODFW pheasant hunt

Blue Mountain Eagle

PRAIRIE CITY — Nearly 50 young people participated in the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife's annual free youth pheasant hunt in Grant County, the agency announced in a press release.

The event took place Sept. 18 and 19 on private lands in the Prairie City area. Despite rainy weather, 48 youth between the ages of 12 and 17 took part in the hunting and shotgun skills clinic, according to ODFW.

John Day resident Jerett Waddel, 12, won a raffle for a shotgun.

The Oregon Bird Hunters Association donated 25 pheasants for the event. The shotgun was donated by Les Schwab Tires and Nydam's Ace Hardware.

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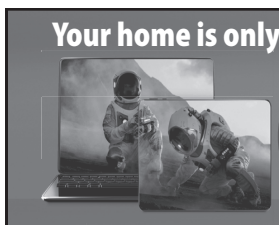

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