

Return of the Shootout

Grant Union, Prairie City bring back 2-day basketball tournament

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

After a long hiatus, Grant Union and Prairie City high schools resurrected the 13 Mile Shootout Basketball Tournament on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 17 and 18, with boys and girls squads from four schools competing in Prairie City and John Day.

The tournament, whose name signifies the distance between the two towns, began in the 1970s and has been played on and off since then.

RC Huerta, the Grant Union Prospectors boys head coach, remembers visiting his grandpa in Prairie City when he was a kid and watching the tournament in the mid-1990s.

"It was pretty cool," Huerta said. "They (Grant Union) would come over here one night, and then they (Prairie City) would head over another night. So it was a lot of fun."

Roughly three years ago, Huerta and Prairie City boys and girls basketball coach Bo Workman began talking about reviving the tournament. However, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed those plans by about two years.

"It's just fun," Workman said. "We can get some games in, and we don't have to travel."

Huerta said Grant County has always been known as a destination for out-of-area teams that want to come and play.

"Whether it's baseball, softball or basketball, or anything, they like to come over here," Huerta said.

Prairie City boys

This year's team that came over to play was Faith Bible Christian School from Hillsboro. The Falcons won both the boys and girls brackets of the tournament Saturday.

The Falcon boys beat Prairie City 81-39 in the final after defeating Grant Union 61-56.

Workman said that was what he expected to see. Faith Bible, he said, is an outstanding team.

However, he added, his Panthers improved. They did not turn the ball over and played hard the whole way.

"It was a fun tournament," Workman said. "And we had fun, and we'll do it again next year."

Prairie City junior Eli Wright agreed with Workman's sentiment. "We were expecting it," he said.

However, he added that all things considered, the Panthers played well against a stacked Faith Bible team.

Junior Cole Teel and sophomore Wes Voigt combined for 20 points, while senior John Titus scored nine.

Panther senior Marcus Judd said Saturday's loss was what the team needed to get them back on track for



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant Union senior Kate Hughes drives past Faith Bible's Emily Waagmeester Friday, Dec. 17, during the two-day 13 Mile Shootout.

their Dec. 28 game against Pine Eagle, especially after nearly losing their Friday game to Joseph. In that contest, the Panthers edged the Eagles 61-58.

Grant Union boys

The Prospectors, who lost their first game to Faith Bible 61-56, faced Joseph in the consolation round Saturday at the Grant Union High School gym. The Pros were plagued by turnovers and fouls out of the gate and lost the game 61-35.

Nonetheless, the Prospectors held their heads high after Friday's close loss against Faith Bible.

Sophomore Sheldon Lenz, who Huerta said has stepped up as the team's leader, said the Pros came out fired up in the first half of Friday's game against Faith Bible. He said they did the same in the second half as well. "That's what we got to do all year," he said.

Grant Union girls

The Grant Union girls won their consolation game against the Lady Panthers 42-17 after losing in the tournament's first round 52-31 to Faith Bible.

Overall, Lady Pros head coach Jason Miller said the team was better with the basketball in their hands Friday, as the team has had turnover issues in the past.

He said while the games at the tournament influence the team's ranking to a certain extent, overall the competition's purpose was to prepare the team for league play.

Prairie City girls

After a narrow 40-36 loss to Joseph, the Prairie City girls team lost to



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
Prairie City senior Marcus Judd steps up to the free-throw line Saturday, Dec. 18, during the Panthers game against Faith Bible at the 13 Mile Shootout at Grant Union High School in John Day. Prairie City took second at the tourney.

Grant Union 42-17 in the second round.

With captain and top scorer Betty Ann Wilson sidelined with an injury, the team was at a disadvantage, according to Workman.

However, as in the team's season opener, the Lady Panthers are learning to play with or without Wilson.

For her part, Wilson said the freshmen still have a lot to learn, but they're stepping up every single game.

Wilson said while she is out, freshman Gracie Voigt is handling her position well.



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

Prairie City's Eli Wright, a junior, goes up for a shot Saturday, Dec. 18, over a Faith Bible defender during the 13 Mile Shootout Basketball Tournament the Panthers co-hosted with Grant Union High School.

SPORTS ROUNDUP

The Dayville/Monument Lady Tigers basketball team fell to South Wasco County 60-24 Tuesday, Dec. 14, at home, while Dayville/Monument's boys team dropped their game 83-18. The Eagle was unable to get in touch with either girls basketball coach Andy Wilburn or boys basketball coach Mike Davis.

Griswold downs Long Creek boys

Long Creek's boys basketball team lost to Griswold 53-10 at the Helix Basketball Tournament on Friday, Dec. 17.

Grant Union wrestlers place at Classic

Grant Union senior Justin Hodge placed first in his 170 pound weight division Tuesday, Dec. 14, at the Elgin Memorial Classic wrestling meet.

Meanwhile, Cashton Wheeler placed third in his 132 B weight division, and Rylan Cox finished third in his 285 pound weight division.

For the girls, Zooney Beam and Mallory Lusco both placed first, while June Wolf, Macy Carter and Jaydika Anderson all placed third. Majors Morgan placed fourth.

SPORTS SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 29

6:30 p.m., girls 8 p.m.

Grant Union Basketball @ Burns, boys 11 a.m., girls 12:30 p.m., Baker Invitational, Baker City High School
Prairie City Basketball @ Nixyaawii, boys

THURSDAY, DEC. 30

Grant Union Basketball vs. Pilot Rock, girls 6 p.m., boys 7:30 p.m.

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