

Back on the mat

After 2-year hiatus, Grant Union grapplers host home tourney

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, Grant Union High School's wrestling tournament returned for 2022.

Wrestlers from 13 schools competed in the tourney, which took place Friday, Jan. 21. In addition to the host school, competitors came from Adrian, Baker, Burns, Echo, Elgin, Enterprise, Heppner, Imbler, Irrigon, McGloughlin/Weston-McEwen, Maranatha Christian and Union.

Grant Union head wrestling coach Andy Lusco said getting the hometown tourney back meant a lot to his team and the community.

"I believe being at home motivates (the wrestlers) to represent Grant Union and our community to the best of their ability," Lusco said.

Grant Union seniors Sam McCracken and Justin Hodge concurred.

"Without having our home meet as a senior than wrestling, my senior would not have been the same," McCracken said. "This home meet is probably my favorite meet we go to all year."

Hosting the meet can be "nerve-racking," Hodge said.

"With the home crowd," he said, "everybody's watching. So it pushes you harder during the week to practice harder and just be ready for the tournament."

All of that practice paid off Friday. Three Grant Union wrestlers took the top spots in their weight classes.

Hodge, wrestling in the 160 weight bracket, Riddick Hutchison in the 182 weight division and Mallory Lusco in the 235 weight category all took first place in their respective brackets.

McCracken — who wrestled one of the best tournaments of his career, according to Lusco — took third in his 182 weight bracket.

Tanler Fuller, a senior, took third in the 138 weight bracket and went 2-2 in his matches. Lusco said Fuller was wrestling in a difficult weight division and coming off an injury just a couple of weeks ago.

Lusco said Mason Beng



Grant Union senior Justin Hodge, left, grapples with Baker's Ryan Brown Friday, Jan. 21, 2022, during the Grant Union High School Wrestling Tournament in John Day.



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
Prospector grappler Tanler Fuller, a senior, won two out of four matches at the Grant Union High School Wrestling Tournament on Friday, Jan. 21, 2022, after coming back from an injury just a couple of weeks ago.



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
Lady Prospector Delaney Coombs, bottom, and Baker's Sheylin Karolski battle it out on Friday, Jan. 21, 2022, at the Grant Union Wrestling Tournament. Coombs held her own in the match.



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
Prospector grappler Mason Benghe holds his own against Keegin Chitty of Echo on Friday, Jan. 21, 2022, at the Grant Union Wrestling Tournament.

and Tristan Clarry, in the 132 and 138 weight categories, each showed much improvement. Both wrestlers took third in their respective frames.

Lusco said the squad has grown significantly this season on the girls' side.

Mallory Lusco wrestled

well, winning two out of three against Stephanie Romero from Irrigon to take first in her bracket, and Lady Prospector grappler Macy Carter broke through with a big win, pinning Rosita Orozco from Irrigon to take second in her 107 weight category.

Zoey Beam continues to

win consistently, according to Coach Lusco, wrestling up a weight class to find. Beam pinned Abi Toombs to take second in the 125 frame.

June Wolf went 3-1 wrestling up a weight class in the 135 weight division to take third overall.

In the girls' 170 weight

division, Jaydika Anderson took third, while Delany Coombs took fourth overall.

Morgan Majors took fifth in the 135 weight division.

Lusco said he thought every wrestler on his team competed hard and gave their all.

What especially impressed

Lusco was that the wrestlers gave up decisions instead of allowing themselves to be pinned.

"That shows a lot of growth from our wrestlers since the beginning of the season," Lusco said.

Lusco added that getting the home tournament back after losing a year of competition due to COVID-19 was nothing short of amazing.

"We are very appreciative of all the community members and parents who helped with running tables, hospitality room, volunteering as referees, and supervising the event," Lusco said.

"It is always in the back of our minds that the folks in charge of high school athletics could pull the plug at any moment due to COVID," Lusco said. "But we are so thankful to be together with our athletes and see them grow. It is an honor and pleasure to coach these kids. We missed many opportunities to do so over the past couple years, which makes this home tournament even more special."

SPORTS ROUNDUP

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

Jordan Valley was canceled.

Prairie City girls hoops defeats Dayville/Monument
PRAIRIE CITY — After defeating Dayville/Monument 46-14 on Tuesday, Jan. 18, the Prairie City girls basketball team's Friday, Jan. 21, game with

Long Creek collects first win with D/M forfeit

LONG CREEK — The Long Creek boys basketball team picked up their first win of the season on Monday, Jan. 24, after Dayville/Monument forfeited their scheduled game.

Long Creek saw its Friday, Jan. 21, contest against Harper Charter get canceled, while the squad

dropped its Saturday, Jan. 22, away game against Jordan Valley 62-13.

Long Creek is 1-6 overall and 1-4 in league play.

Grant Union girls hoops improve to 4-2 in league play

PILOT ROCK — The Lady Pros basketball team downed Pilot Rock 43-31 on the road Saturday,

Jan. 22, and are now 4-2 in league play.

Grant Union boys basketball falls on road to Pilot Rock

PILOT ROCK — The Grant Union Prospector boys basketball team fell to Pilot Rock 47-37 in their third straight league loss on Saturday, Jan. 21.

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SPORTS SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, JAN. 27

- Prairie City Basketball @ Huntington, girls 6, boys 7:30 p.m.
- Grant Union Wrestling (junior varsity and girls) @ Baker, 5 p.m.
- Long Creek Basketball vs. Crane, 4:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JAN. 28

- Grant Union Basketball @ Heppner, girls 6, boys 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 29

- Grant Union Basketball @ Weston-McEwen, girls 4, boys 5:30 p.m.
- Prairie City Basketball vs. Four Rivers, boys 4:30, girls 6 p.m.
- Long Creek Basketball @ Harper Charter, 4 p.m. (MST)

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