

PANTHERS PUNCH THEIR TICKET

Prairie City basketball teams move on to state tournament after third-place finish at districts

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
Prairie City junior Betty Ann Wilson celebrates after the Panthers beat Adrian to clinch a state playoff berth on Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022. Wilson scored 28 and was named Player of the Game.

JOHAN DAY — The Prairie City boys and girls basketball teams are heading into the postseason after their respective third-place finishes at the High Desert League District Basketball Tournament over the weekend.

Held at Grant Union High School, the district tournament featured six girls squads and six boys squads from the 12-team High Desert League, with the top three teams in each bracket moving on to the state tourney.

In addition to Prairie City, the other participants were Crane, Jordan Valley, Adrian, Huntington and Four Rivers.

On the boys side, Crane took first place,

defeating Adrian 76-62 on Saturday, Feb. 19. Crane's girls earned the top spot, besting Jordan Valley 44-31 earlier in the day.

The three-day tournament, which has a 15-year history in Grant County, returned after a one-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing some much-needed economic activity to the area. Hotels, restaurants and coffee shops saw a significant uptick in business with hundreds of out-of-town guests from the games.

Tournament co-director Billy Colson noted that visiting teams, coaches and fans stay in local motels, eat in local restaurants, and spend money at local stores and gas stations, bringing

money into the Grant County economy from outside the area.

Colson calculates that the event brings roughly 350 to 400 visitors to the county. His estimate is based on a traveling team bringing around 30 players and coaches per school plus a comparable number of supporters traveling with each group.

Tammy Bremner, manager of the Grant County Chamber of Commerce, said hotels and restaurants rely on sporting events for supplemental income during the winter.

"It's a nice little shot in the arm for the businesses this time of year," she said. "Especially because this usually is their slow time."

Prairie City basketball survives and advances

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHAN DAY — The Prairie City Panthers aren't done playing just yet.

Both the boys and girls basketball teams are heading into the postseason after both squads finished third in the 1A-8 High Desert League's season-ending district tournament, held Thursday, Feb. 17, through Saturday, Feb. 19, at Grant Union High School.

Crane swept both brackets of the tournament in Saturday's championship games. The girls bested Jordan Valley 44-31, and the boys defeated Adrian 76-62.

The top three finishers from each side of the tournament advance to state, so while the Prairie City squads fell short of a district title, both will move on to postseason play.

Prairie City girls

After knocking off Four Rivers 38-15 in the first game of the competition on Thursday, Feb. 17, the Lady Panthers fell to Jordan Valley 51-31 on Friday, Feb. 18.

But they came back in Saturday's consolation game, defeating Adrian 55-40 to lock up a state playoff berth.

Betty Ann Wilson scored 28 points

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Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
Prairie City's Laken McKay, second from right, dives for a loose ball Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022, during the High Desert League tourney.

"(SATURDAY'S GAME) WAS PROBABLY OUR BEST GAME OF THE SEASON, IN MY OPINION,"

Betty Ann Wilson



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
Prairie City's Tucker Wright (left) and Marcus Judd celebrate the Panthers' state playoff berth on Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022, after knocking off Jordan Valley at the High Desert League District Basketball Tournament at Grant Union.

GU boy grapplers 5th at district meet

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

ADRIAN — Two Grant Union wrestlers are heading to the state tournament next weekend.

Justin Hodge and Rylan Cox took first and second in their respective weight classes over the weekend at the Oregon School Activities Association 2A/1A Special District 4 Wrestling Tournament on Friday, Feb. 18.

The Prospectors took fifth overall in the contest.

The Pros competed against wrestlers from 12 schools. Grant Union's grapplers, as a team, had 112.5 points.

Hodge took first in the 152 weight bracket, while Ryan Coombs took eighth. Sam McCracken took sixth in the 160 weight bracket.

Alex Finley took fourth in his 170 weight division, while Zack Ostberg took fifth in his 220 weight division. Cox took second in the 285 weight bracket, while Rolando Moreno took fourth. Tanler Fuller took fifth in the 138 weight division.



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle, File
Prospector grappler Justin Hodge wrestles Jan. 21, 2022, at the Grant Union Tournament. Hodge took first in his weight division at the OSAA 2A/1A Special District 4 Wrestling Tournament on Friday, Feb. 18, and will wrestle at the state tournament this weekend in Culver.

SPORTS SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 23

Prairie City Girls Basketball @ Rogue Valley, 4 p.m., Medford

THURSDAY, FEB. 24

Grant Union Girls Wrestling @ State Wrestling Tournament, 9 a.m., Culver

SATURDAY, FEB. 26

Grant Union Boys Wrestling @ State Wrestling Tournament, 9 a.m., Culver

Grant Union Dance Team @ Pendleton Dance Competition, 10 a.m., Pendleton High School

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