

# 'Dedicated to dance'

## Grant Union Gold shines in return to live competition

By STEVEN MITCHELL  
Blue Mountain Eagle

PENDLETON — Grant Union Gold dance team had its best performance of the season at the Pendleton Dance Competition Saturday, Feb. 26, taking home the second-place trophy.

The dance team's lone senior, Emily Finley, said the squad scored nearly 13 points out of a possible 20 at its last competition. In Pendleton, where the school competed against Hermiston, the judges awarded the dancers almost 16 points.

"That just shows how much we've grown," Finley said. "And that's all we really cared about. We didn't really care about getting second. We just cared about growth."

Carli Bremner, Grant Union Gold's head coach, told the Eagle that the team had transitioned from an entirely online format to competing in person this year.

"The girls have really stepped up, and they're doing phenomenal," Bremner said. "They're just thriving in this back-to-normal competitive environment."

With Bremner going on maternity leave in mid-February, assistant coach Jocelynn Smith has been overseeing the team's day-to-day operations.

According to Bremner, that has been another change that the team has responded well to.

"The girls have done so well transitioning," she said. "It's just been a really great year."

Smith echoed Bremner's sentiment regarding the dance team's ability to adapt to changing circumstances, and she said she attributes the squad's improved scoring to good old-fashioned hard work.

She said the team has early morning practices that begin at 6 a.m., and the dancers travel to Eugene and Salem a majority of the time for competitions.

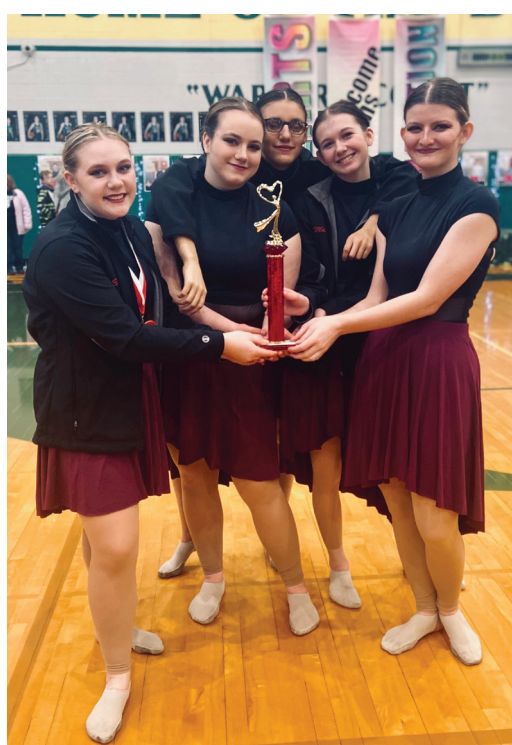
"The girls are really dedicated to dance," Smith said. "And they really love it."

Smith said what she finds impressive about the team is that many of the girls are relatively new to dance, and the team is competing against much larger schools.

"We're not very far away from the 4A schools," Smith said, "which is really exciting."



From left, Grant Union dancers Emily Finley, Emma Schlarbaum, Alyssa Catalani and Hailey Mecham go through the team's routine, "The Bones," on Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, at the Pendleton Dance Competition. Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian



Contributed photo/Jocelynn Smith  
From left, Emily Finley, Hailey Mecham, Emma Schlarbaum, Maddie McManus and Alyssa Catalani pose with their second-place trophy on Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, at the Pendleton Dance Competition.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian  
From left, Grant Union's Maddie McManus, Hailey Mecham and Emily Finley perform on Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, at the Pendleton Dance Competition at Pendleton High School.

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