

# Panthers punch their ticket

Teel scores six TDs to lead Prairie City to playoffs

By JUSTIN DAVIS  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Ladies and gentlemen, Cole Teel would like to reintroduce himself to you.

The reigning High Desert League Offensive Player of the Year ran in all but one of Prairie City/Burnt River's touchdowns on Friday, Oct. 28, in the Panthers' gritty 46-41 win over a pass-heavy Echo squad in Prairie City.

Echo struck first in the game, punching the ball in from three yards out to take an 8-0 lead following a converted two-point kick attempt. Echo would get brazen and attempt an inside kick following the touchdown, which they recovered.

The elation was short-lived for the Cougars as a fumble hampered any momentum gained by the surprise outside kick. The Panthers would capitalize via a 72-yard touchdown run by Teel to bring the contest to 8-6 following the missed extra point try.

Another Teel touchdown run, this time from 55 yards out, gave Prairie City/Burnt River their first lead in the game toward the end of the first quarter. The extra point attempt was no good, leaving the score at a 12-8 Prairie City advantage.

The Cougars would reclaim the



Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

**Prairie City/Burnt River's Cole Teel looks for running room during his team's showdown with the Echo Cougars on Friday, Oct. 28, 2022, in Prairie City. Teel and the Panthers won the contest 46-41 and punched their ticket to the 1A state football tournament.**

lead by way of a 3-yard touchdown pass early in the second quarter. A converted extra point play brought Echo's advantage to three at 15-12.

The cougars would have another opportunity to build on their lead following an interception that set their offense up on the 31-yard line. The Panther defense would force a turnover on downs to stay within a field goal.

Both teams then traded turnovers late in the first half, ultimately culminating in the Panthers gaining the advantage with possession inside the 10-yard line. Teel and the Panthers would add one more touchdown with

just over a minute left in the half to take an 18-15 lead into intermission following a missed extra point try.

Echo would draw first blood to open the second half, scoring a short touchdown to retake the lead at 21-18 with just over 7:30 left in the third quarter. The Cougars would maintain that lead until there was just under a minute left in the third quarter.

Teel would once again find paydirt, this time from 80 yards out, to give the Panthers another lead at 25-21 following a converted extra point play. Echo would refuse to go away, however, scoring another short touchdown pass to retake the lead at 28-25 with just

over nine minutes left in the contest.

Another Prairie City/Burnt River touchdown midway through the fourth quarter swung the game back in favor of the Panthers at 32-28 following a converted extra point play. Teel would then attempt to put the game out of reach, scoring another touchdown with 4:35 left in the game to put the Panthers up 39-28.

Echo still didn't want to quit, though, adding another touchdown to pull within four points at 39-35 late in the fourth quarter. Teel would respond one more time, finding the end zone once again with 3:05 left to give the Panthers a 45-36 lead.

Echo stubbornly added another quick touchdown pass to bring the game to 45-41 with 2:52 left to play. The Panther offense was stopped on the subsequent drive, which gave the Cougars possession and a chance to take the lead and perhaps snatch a victory late in the contest.

The Panthers would stop the Cougars on the final possession of the game, however, to secure the 46-41 win and punch their ticket to the state football playoffs for the second year in a row.

"I feel amazing," Teel said after the game. "My legs hurt really bad and I've been cramping the whole time, but other than that..."

He added that he had plenty of help from his teammates.

"It's not just me," he said. "(It was) the whole line just getting every block they possibly could to get me all those touchdowns."

Teel also talked about Echo's uniquely pass-heavy offense in the six man game and what it took to defend that aerial attack. "They've always been more of a passing team and we've usually had a problem with that. We put in a new defense to cover passing, which it did good for the most part," Teel said.

The Panthers will travel to Blachly to take on Triangle Lake Charter School in the opening round of the 1A six man state football tournament on Saturday, Nov. 5. Kickoff for that game is scheduled for 1 p.m.

## SPORTS ROUNDUP

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### Pros fall at home to Weston-McEwen, finish season 2-5

JOHN DAY — The John Day football team fell to Weston-McEwen 54-0 at home on Friday, Oct. 28, to finish the school's inaugural nine-man football season with a 2-5 record along with a 1-5 record in league play. Grant Union's two wins were a pair of back-to-back victories against Lyle/Wishram/Klickitat on Sept. 30 and Riverside on Oct. 7.

The Pros will head into 2023 with a full season of playing nine-man football under their belts as they look to return to the state football playoffs.

### Dayville/Monument drops final game to defending state champions

DAYVILLE — The Dayville/Monument football team finished the 2022 season with a 60-12 loss to defending state champions Wheeler County on Friday, Oct. 28, to finish the 2022 season with a 2-6 record with an identical 2-6 mark in league play. Despite the lopsided loss, the Tigers did improve in 2022 after finishing the 2021 football season without a single win.

The Tigers will look to build on the progress made in the 2022 season and put together a winning season in 2023.

### Grant Union runners charge into district meet

PENDLETON — Grant Union's cross country team headed out to Pendleton to compete in the Special District 3 cross country championships at the Pendleton Community Park on Friday, Oct. 28. The Prospector boys finished

fifth with 129 points at the meet and the girls finished ninth with 245 points on the afternoon.

Grant Union's Brady Dole was the school's lone runner to qualify for the state meet, finishing in ninth place out of 68 runners with a time of 17:18.6. Other top Grant Union finishers included Quinn Larson, who finished 23rd with a time of 18:46.2.

Logan Randleas and Landon Boyd rounded out the top four finishers at the meet for the Pros, coming in 40th and 41st, respectively. Randleas finished with a time of 20:02.1 and Boyd finished with a time of 20:23.1.

Top finisher for the Lady Pro girls was Maddie Bailey, who came in 49th out of 79 runners with a time of 24:11.8. Just behind Bailey was Macy Carter, who finished 62nd with a time of 25:57.8.

Rounding out the top four for the girls were Abbie Justice and Alicia Archibald, who finished 69th and 70th on the afternoon. Justice finished with a time of 27:07.1 and Archibald finished with a time of 27:13.4.

Dole will compete at the state cross country meet on Saturday, Nov. 5, at Lane Community College in Eugene.

### Lady Panther season ends at North Douglas

DRAIN — The Prairie City volleyball team's season ended in the second round of the state playoffs after a 3-0 loss to North Douglas on Saturday, Oct. 29, in Drain. The loss leaves Prairie City with a 23-8 mark on the season, coupled with a 5-2 league record.

Game scores for the match were 25-12, 25-6 and 25-11. The team only had three seniors for the 2022 campaign and should be poised to make another run at the state tournament in 2023.

## GUHS volleyball falls in playoffs

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JOHN DAY — The Grant Union volleyball team hosted the Oakland Oakers in a first-round state playoff matchup on Saturday, Oct. 29, and fell 3-1 despite a gutsy effort from the squad. The loss ends Grant Union's season and leaves them with a 19-10 mark for the 2022 volleyball campaign.

The first game of the match saw Oakland storm out to an 11-4 lead, which forced a timeout by the Lady Pros. Grant Union would regroup following that timeout to draw to within one at 17-16 and force the Oakers into a timeout of their own in an attempt to stifle the Lady Pro run.

The Lady Pros would tie Game 1 at 18 and then again at 20 following a timeout. But Oakland would recover and score three straight to take a 23-20 lead and force another Lady Pro timeout.

This time, the Oakers were unaffected by the timeout and went on to close the game out 25-21 to take a 1-0 lead in the match.

Game 2 started much like the first with Oakland building an early 13-9 lead which led to a Lady Pro timeout. The Oakers would continue to push their lead following the timeout, going up 20-15 and forcing the Lady Pros to call time again.

Once again the Oakers would be undeterred by the timeout, winning Game 2 by the same 25-21 margin they won the first game. The Lady Pros were now down 2-0 and facing the end of their season in Game 3.

The third game started with a 2-2



Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

**Grant Union's Drew Williams serves the ball during her team's match with Oakland in the opening round of the 2A state volleyball tournament on Saturday, Oct. 29, 2022, at Grant Union High School.**

tie before the Lady Pros rattled off five straight points to take a 7-2 lead. That lead would increase to 11-5 and force an Oakland timeout.

The Lady Pros were relentless following the timeout, increasing their lead to 19-9. The Oakers launched a furious comeback attempt, drawing to within five points at 19-14 before a Lady Pro timeout made in an attempt to settle the squad in the face of the Oakland rally.

The Lady Pros dug in following that timeout and pushed their lead to 24-19, prompting the Oakers to call their own timeout. The Lady Pros had already decided that they were the owners of Game 3, however, scoring the decisive point right after

the timeout to win the game 25-19 and cut the Oakland lead in half at 2-1.

The decisive fourth game started tight, with ties at 7 and 12 apiece. Oakland would eventually break the deadlock and go up 14-12 to force a Lady Pro timeout. Oakland would extend that lead to 19-14, which caused the Lady Pros to again stop the action in hopes of keeping their season alive.

The Oakers would outscore the Lady Pros 6-3 following that timeout to win the game 25-17 and the match 3-1.

Grant Union head volleyball coach Mariah Moulton said the match with Oakland was frustrating because the Lady Pros beat themselves. "The girls and I know that we are a better team than what we showed, but we are eager for next year to come out and showcase our potential," Moulton said.

Moulton also spoke to the sudden coaching change the team had to deal with midway through the season and praised the ability of her team to adapt. "Overall, I am proud of how the girls were able to flip the switch and turn their season around when there was a huge change in coaching halfway through," Moulton said.

The future of Grant Union volleyball is bright, according to Moulton, who is looking to build a gritty and dominant culture within the program. "The future of Grant Union volleyball is building a team who is committed, confident, believes in their abilities, is able to push through hardships, and dominates their opponents," she added.

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