

# Big guns return for lone netters

All the top numbers are back for the boys and although things aren't quite as orderly

on the girls side, coach Martha Doherty is looking for big things from both of her

Ione High School tennis teams this season.

The team was working out in three sessions during the week before spring break in preparation for their April 4 season opener at Riverside.

Few changes are seen among the top ranks of the boys team where number one singles player Rick Gilbert returns to the familiar spot he has maintained for the past three years. Also back for another campaign is the number one doubles team of Dennis Stefani and Danny McElligott who combined for a first place finish in District 7-B tournament competition last year.

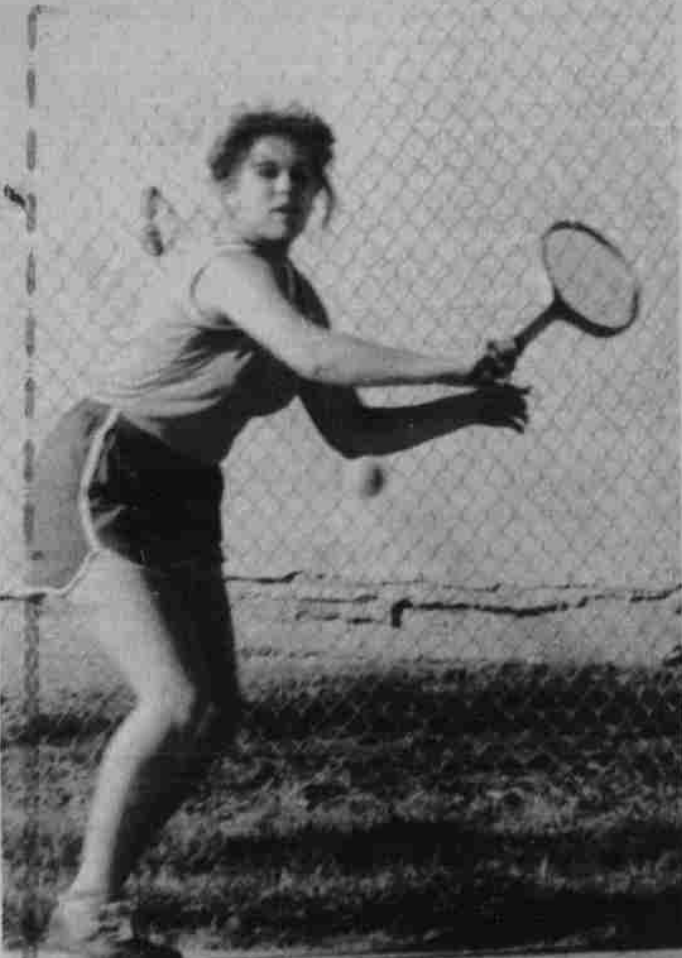
A pair of seniors who have been playing together for four years, Clint Carlson and Stuart Keene, will again fill the number two doubles team slot. Competing for the remaining singles positions are three newcomers to the squad, freshmen Mike Leavitt, Duane Fetsch and Jerry McElligott.

Among the girls, nine letter winners return to the courts this season, but for most of them, their team spots are still up in the air.

One certainty is the number one singles position where Susan Thompson, who finished third in District competition last year, returns. Coach Doherty is still juggling her doubles pairings, with Carol McElligott, Darcy Rea, Natalie Tews, Jan Peterson, Jeanie Peining, Michelle McElligott and Martha McElligott, all in

the running for the three teams. Players vying for the remaining singles spots in-

clude Kim Cofenas, Tammy Tucker, Teena Lindstrom and Janet Hams.



Last year's third place district finisher Susan Thompson again is the top lady Card in singles play.



Rick Gilbert holds down the number one singles spot at Ione for the third consecutive year.

# G T S P O R T S

## Diamond outlook appears bright for Mustangs

Big sticks, an even bigger mound staff and an outfield that would make any coach in the league happy are some of the factors combining to brighten the baseball outlook at Heppner High School this season.

Coach, Dale Holland welcomed 24 players to the diamond, including nine returning lettermen from last year's 8-8 squad. And after surveying the prospects, Holland said, "We're going to be a contender." The Mustangs will soon find out how they stack up against some of the Columbia Basin Conference's best competition when they host a strong Pilot Rock nine in a Tuesday, March 28, doubleheader.

The Mustangs will have to replace only two graduated players from the sophomore-stacked lineup of a year ago. Now the sophs are back as juniors and more underclassmen have turned out to fill in the ranks.

"Last year we were extremely young and even this year we're still an awfully young ball club," Holland said.

Holland said he has one of the biggest pitching staves in

recent years which should help offset the loss of graduated Dave Allstott. Included among the hurlers are Dennis Peck, an all-league selection at third base in 1977; transfer Lionel Wood, Bryan Marlin, Dale Holland, last year's honorable mention league catcher, Ron Young, John Bier and Ron Cole.

All three of last year's big three hitters are back for another campaign, which leads Holland to say, "I anticipate we'll be scoring some runs." Back are Bruce Young (.375), Holland (.362) and Peck (.340).

Patrolling the outfield for the Mustangs this season will be Jim Kenny, Marlin, Wood and Bruce Young, a group which Holland said is capable of covering a lot of ground as well as performing at the plate.

The infield is shaping up with Mike Stookey, Ron Young and Bier competing for the first base slot; Scott Groshens and Rick Cole sharing duties at second, Curtis Sweek and Peck working at short and Scott McEwen and Randy Cole at third. Holland will see time behind the plate along with Peck.

# HHS tracksters hope to improve No. 7 state ranking

An independent rating service ranked the Mustang tracksters the seventh best Class A squad in the state last year and Coach Dale Conklin thinks this year's edition should have Heppner even higher on the list.

As Conklin was putting his team through their paces before spring break, he called the 21-man roster "the best turnout in years". The list includes three seniors, seven juniors, seven sophomores and four freshmen.

Field events should be the strong point for the Mustangs this year as mostly upper-

classmen make up a group which Conklin said has "all kinds of potential".

Marty Smith, the sixth best shot putter in the state last year, returns for his final year in the weight events—shot and discus as well as some javeling tossing. Sophomores Jim Parker and Steve Marlatt should add some depth in those areas.

Leapers abound, including Howard Huddleston and Richard Schmidt competing in the high, triple and long jumps and Bryan Marlin spreading his talent around in the long and triple jumps as well as the sprints and javelin.

"Fantastic" is Conklin's label for his distance running corps which lists juniors Jeff



Heppner High School track coach Dale Conklin directs team members in proper use of starting blocks.

Fortenberry and Scott Sherer and sophomores Dan Nix, Larry Palmer and Todd Sherer.

The sprint events should also see some improvement as seniors Jim Kenny and Sam Myers, juniors Dennis Peck and Marlin, sophomore Mike Jones and freshman Buck

Estes handle most of the duties.

Middle distance runners include junior Dave Piper, who will also run the hurdles, sophomore Alan Fortenberry and freshmen Pat Clark and Brett Sherer. Jim Launer could be specializing in the hurdles although Conklin said

all his freshman are still trying out different events.

The Mustang's schedule gets underway next Thursday, March 30, when the team travels to Pendleton to take on Enterprise and the Pendleton JVs in a three-way meet and then it's on to Salem for the Willamette Relays on April 1.

## Eckman, VanMarter tangle in city final

Undeclared Eckman will take on late-charging VanMarter in this Sunday's championship final of the Heppner City Basketball League. The contest will get underway at 7 p.m. in the Heppner High School gym.

Eckman, the defending city league champion, has cruised through the season by posting 11 wins without a setback and gained a spot in the championship with a 74-63 semi-final win over Watkins.

VanMarter got off to a slow start this season, dropping their first seven games before settling down to put together a string of five late season wins including playoff victories over Galbraith and Summers.

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