

Mustangs stopped short of win by Vikings

By Ashley Conklin
Fireworks filled the air like a Fourth of July celebration last Saturday night when the Heppner boys basketball team met the Umatilla Vikings in Columbia Basin Conference action, but it was an old nemesis that contributed to an 81-79 defeat for the Mustangs.

The Vikings jumped out to a 25-16 first period lead behind a strong inside attack featuring 6' 3" Mike Blevins and a devastating press led by lightning-quick guard Cruz Garcia that spelled the downfall for Heppner.

The Mustangs had 21 turnovers for the game but the majority of those came in the first quarter as Heppner was forced to play catchup ball the rest of the way.

"We just made a few turnovers against their press early in the game," Heppner coach Mike Royer said, "and that hurt us."

Not making matters any easier was the fact that Umatilla made 12 of 17 first period field goals for 71 percent.

Blevins worked his way for 10 points in the first period while Gar-

cia fed the big man with passes off Heppner turnovers as a result of the press while Russell Richards roamed the baseline for six more points.

Heppner guard Duane Ball had six points in the period as Heppner tried to hang on.

In the second quarter though, it was the Mustangs who got their running game going, and Bryan Padberg and Wayne Wilgers worked inside and bombed away from the outside to bring Heppner within 41-38 at the halftime stop.

Padberg and Wilgers netted eight points apiece in the quarter while Richards was again slicing through the Mustang defense for six more points.

Just when it seemed the Mustangs would pull ahead after their strong second quarter, the Vikings quickly put a halt to that notion.

Carey Wells, who had hit for seven points in the first half from the perimeter, started to light things up for the Vikings again with six points in the third period and Richards added another six as Umatilla took a 58-49 lead after a 17-11 advantage in the quarter.

The never-say-die Mustangs came back in the fourth period to take the game right down to the wire.

Richards and company kept the fires burning early in the period and were up 64-53 before Heppner came back with its press.

Dick Devin, who had been quiet for most of the night, and Ball scored six and four points respectively during a 10-0 Heppner run that pulled the Mustangs to within 64-63.

But the Vikings added a 7-1 spurt of their own to go back quickly to a seemingly comfortable 71-64 lead.

Heppner once again came back and pulled to within 77-74 as the game was up for grabs in the closing minutes.

Heppner scored to make it 80-79 but Garcia went to the line to shoot two free throws on an intentional foul with Umatilla also retaining possession as a result of the foul.

Garcia hit 1 of 2, but the Vikings turned the ball over and the Mustangs had a chance to tie with nine seconds remaining.

Heppner came down and missed but Umatilla turned the ball over, so the Mustangs had one last chance but failed to connect on two shots inside the key area as the Vikings held on in the cliffhanger.

Richards pumped in a game-high 28 points as Blevins added 19 and Wells 15 for Umatilla. Garcia, whose ball handling and passing was a key for the Vikings also contributed nine points.

Wilgers, who was held in check throughout most of the game, finished with 17 points to lead Heppner along with Ball who had a career-high 17. Gene Garrett, who played a super second half off the Mustang bench responded with a career-high 16 points as Padberg added 14 more, but only 2 in the second half.

Heppner pulled down 40 rebounds against the taller Vikings with Wilgers leading the way with 10.

Trent Harrison had seven points and seven rebounds before fouling out while Devin added eight points

and five boards, as did Garrett.

The Mustangs dished off 21 assists with Padberg handing out a career-high nine to lead the way. Ball and Garrett each passed off four more while Padberg had seven steals and six rebounds.

Heppner made 77 percent of its free throws compared to 58 percent for the Vikings but Umatilla won the game at the free throw line, making 15 of 26 shots compared to 13-17 for the Mustangs as both teams made 33 field goals.

Heppner, now 1-2 in league play after the loss at Umatilla, must now face Eastern Division leader Pilot Rock on the road Friday at approximately 8 p.m. and then Stanfield on the road Saturday at approximately 6:15 p.m.

The Rockets, the surprise of the league thus far, are led by 6' 1" senior Jamie McCall and 6' 1" junior Eric Miller and the play of junior guard Rick Rasmussen.

Saturday Heppner will be looking for the same strong performance they received two weeks ago when they humbled Stanfield 60-51.

The Tigers, led by 6' 6 1/2" junior Tony Brown and junior guard Dusty Grogan, have been struggling as of late, including a 63-51 loss to Umatilla last Friday night.

	1	2	3	4	F
Heppner	16	22	15	30	79
Umatilla	25	14	17	23	81

	PTS	REB	AST	STL	BLK	FT	3PT
W. Garcia	8	15	2	1	1	10	2
Harrison	7	12	7	3	1	8	0
Padberg	14	10	14	4	0	9	7
Ball	6	7	17	2	0	4	1
Devin	2	4	8	4	1	1	0
Wilgers	17	10	8	1	1	8	0
Garcia	15	12	14	2	1	10	1
Wells	15	8	2	0	0	8	0
Richards	28	8	8	0	0	11	2
TOTALS	80	40	79	21	6	33	21

Umatilla: Garcia 2, H.A.R. Richards 2, G.R. Wells 2, D.E. Devin 1, T.C. Harrison 1, A.L. Padberg 2, C.J. Ball 1, S.J. Devin 1, S.H. Devin 1.

Heppner: Ball 1, Harrison 1, Total Rebs: Heppner 40, Umatilla 34.

Cougars clip Cardinals wings



Photo by Wayne Harris.

Ione Cardinal boys went down against the Echo Cougars, 44-71, at Ione Friday, Jan. 16. It was without a doubt the Cardinals' worst effort of the season, according to coach Del LaRue. "We were not sharp offensively or defensively. We even had trouble catching the ball."

The Cardinals only had four points to Echo's 16 in the first quarter and

Ione also found Dustin Padberg with three fouls in the same period. Kevin Ball and Tim Beeson were high scorers for Ione with nine and eight points respectively. Beeson led his team going to the boards for nine.

	1	2	3	4	F
Ione	16	20	18	17	71
Echo	4	15	12	13	44

	PTS	REB	AST	STL	BLK	
Wes 2	2	6	Beeson 1	2	3	8
Ball 4	1	4	9	2	0	2
W. Ball 1	3	5	Ballard 1	0	0	2
D. Beeson 1	0	2	0	0	0	2

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JV Mustangs bow to Vikings

By Ashley Conklin
Umatilla's junior varsity boys basketball team used a strong overall game to defeat the Heppner Mustangs 56-39 last Saturday afternoon. The Mustangs dropped to 1-5 with the loss.

The Vikings had strong inside games from Mike Nelson who led all scorers with 18 points, Tim Patterson who pumped in 12, and Matt Thompson who tallied 8.

Russell Britt again led Heppner with 10 points while Dan Struthers

added six. Britt also had eight steals and four rebounds, Will Martin had five steals as well. Derek Hoefft played a solid defensive game for the Mustangs with a season-high 11 rebounds, 4 blocked shots, and 3 steals.

Thompson scored all eight of his points in the first period and Nelson added six more as Umatilla ran out to a 16-3 lead.

With six points from Britt in the second quarter, the Mustangs took charge of the quarter by a 10-8 count

to trail 24-13 at halftime.

Nelson and Patterson worked around the basket in the third period to score six points apiece and increase the Vikings' lead to 36-23.

Trailing in the fourth quarter, Heppner was forced to foul and Umatilla reaped the benefits by making 10 of 11 shots in the quarter to win 56-39. Nelson was particularly effective from the free throw line by sinking 6 of 9 free opportunities in the game.

For the game Umatilla converted 14 of 17 free throws for 82 percent while Heppner was 9 of 15 for 60

percent.

The Mustangs will be on the road twice this weekend when they travel to Pilot Rock for a game starting at approximately 4:45 p.m. on Friday and then will travel to Stanfield on Saturday when the tip off will be approximately 2:45 p.m.

	1	2	3	4	F
Heppner	14	20	10	15	59
Umatilla	16	20	18	16	70

	PTS	REB	AST	STL	BLK
Heppner: Beck 12, Richards 8, P.O. Martin 10, R.A. Ball 12, D.E. Devin 10, S.H. Devin 7, T.C. Harrison 10, A.L. Padberg 10, C.J. Ball 10, S.J. Devin 10, S.H. Devin 10.					
Umatilla: Nelson 22, D. Coffey 4, D. H. Thompson 12, Mattie 8, D.E. Devin 12, T. Patterson 12, Tim 12, Matt 8, D.E. Devin 12, T. Patterson 12, Mattie 8, D.E. Devin 12, T. Patterson 12.					

Cardinal girls disappointed



Ione girls (dark) wrestle for ball against Culver.

The Cardinals made the long trip to Central Oregon Saturday, only to be out played by the Culver Bulldogs. Final score was 51 to 26. As well as the Bulldogs played, the Cardinal girls didn't play up to their potential.

The Culver Bulldogs start a line up of experienced juniors and seniors with an average height 5' 10". Their defense is good, but not as important as their team rebounding. They don't let their opponents have a second chance at the basket.

The Cardinals started out slow and were never able to pick up the pace. They were getting the type of shots that have helped them win eleven games this season. The problem was that they only shot 21% in the first half and 13% in the second half. Add to this poor shooting, the Cardinals were out of position to get many rebounds and second shots. Because of Culver's good ball handling, the Cardinals didn't steal the ball as often as in previous games. Two steals in this game compared to 15 the night before against Echo.

Deena Hams was leading scorer for Ione with 18 points and 10 rebounds. Hams also fouled out of the game late in the fourth quarter. Culver was led in scoring by Ohide with 18 and Thompson with 13.

The Cardinals can't afford to dwell on this loss because they have tough games at home this weekend against the Dufur Rangers and Condon Blue Devils.

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