

Mustang wrestling team takes fifth place in Grant Union Tournament



Dillon Lutchter takes down his opponent during a match at Riverside High School last Tuesday night. -Photo by Autumn Morgan

On Saturday, December 6, the Heppner Mustangs' wrestling team traveled to John Day to compete in the 5th annual Grant Union Kick-off Tournament. The teams that competed were Burns, Crane, Grant Union, Heppner, La Pine, Pine Eagle and Ontario. Despite missing three varsity team members, the Mustangs finished fifth after holding third place for most of the tournament.

Heppner had five wrestlers earn silver medals, including three freshmen making their varsity debuts. Freshman Seth Palmer started it off at 112 pounds when he advanced to the finals by pinning his opponent from Ontario. Curtis Martin, also a freshman, won his way to the championship round at 130 pounds by beating wrestlers from Ontario and Crane. Conner Pappas was the third freshman wrestler to compete in the finals at 145 pounds. Also bringing home second place medals were senior Grant Smith at 119 and sophomore Jarreid Miller at 135.

Wacy Coil finished third at 171 pounds, arguably the toughest bracket in the tournament with wrestlers that included a state placer, two state qualifiers and four district placers from previous years.

The Mustangs' next highest placer was freshman John Nelson who finished 2-2 on the day and won fourth place while competing as a non-team point

scorer at 130 pounds.

Heppner got sixth place finishes from Busta Alzante, Andrew Bara, Tyler Robinson and Drew Brannon. Also competing for the Mustangs was Zach Yocom, Cody Nelson, Garrett Gibbs, Alex Fuentes, Jonathan Von and Zach Hintz.

Justin Yocom wrestled in two exhibition matches where he finished 1-1. His win came in a high scoring bout where the lead changed several times. Yocom finally prevailed with a fall late in the third round.

Coach Troy Morgan was pleased with his young team's performance. "We came here with a lot of kids that had never wrestled in a high school tournament. We competed well with schools that have long wrestling traditions. Everyone on our team contributes. Even guys that don't win a match still contribute team points by helping their teammates get better in the practice room. Nobody should hang their head with the way we wrestled today. We were just a few points from third place and gave up some opportunities because our wrestlers were focused on just winning the match rather than on adding team bonus points. Later in the season they'll understand that better."

The Mustangs' wrestling team travels next to La Grande to compete in the two day Mullenburg tournament on December 12th and 13th.

Ione boys lose first two games of season

The Ione boys' varsity kicked off their basketball season at the Ione Basketball Bonanza last weekend, losing a close one to Riverside on Friday night and a not-so-close one to Enterprise on Saturday.

Friday's game did not look like a first game of the season for the Cardinals as they came out looking sharp. Matt Hams put up 13 points in the first quarter and only a Riverside three pointer at the buzzer kept the Pirates in front 21-20. Freshman, Zac Orem made seven of his game high 24 points in the second quarter and the Cards trailed 34-37 at the half. The Cards kept it close in the third quarter but could never quite regain the lead. They also lost Matt Hams to a double technical foul ejection when he and a Riverside player exchanged an elbow at the conclusion of a play. The Cardinals could not get closer than three points in the fourth as fatigue started to affect shots and the Pirates took the win 65-59.

"Rebounding and free throws were the difference in the game," noted Coach Dennis Stefani. Riverside made 15 of 24 free throw attempts while the Cardinals were able to connect on just four of their nine attempts. Also the Pirates had 39 rebounds to the Cardinals' 29. "We were moving the ball in that game and we shot fairly decent from the field," said Stefani. He also commended Zac Orem for his efforts as a freshman starting his first high school



Top Photo: Clay Morter tips off at the Ione versus Riverside Game on Friday night, December 5. Bottom Photo: Matt Hams takes a shot during the Ione versus Enterprise game on Saturday, December 6. -Photos by Teresa Crawford

game. "Zac put together a heck of a ball game. He did a good job asking for the ball and went right at them."

Zac Orem led all scorers with 24 points. Matt Hams added 15 and RJ Ramos was also in double

figures with 12. Clay Morter had 10 rebounds to lead that effort and Cory Peterson had six assists. Coach Stefani also noted that although the team had 19 turnovers in the game, they only had five in

the second half.

Saturday night looked more like a first game for Ione when they took on Enterprise. Down 15-2 early, the Cards looked tired from the get-go while Enterprise was red hot from the field hitting five three pointers in the first half. Zac Orem had 12 points in the first half but it was not enough as the Cards were down 38-22 at the half. Things never really improved in the second half and Ione lost the game 70-43.

Zac Orem again led the team in scoring with 16 points. Matt Hams had eight and Cory Peterson added six. "We were just slow," said Coach Dennis Stefani. "It looked like we were wearing cement shoes. They were getting wide open looks and we had a heck of a time getting back on defense."

Enterprise had a 38-22 rebounding advantage. The Cards were led by Matt Hams with six and Clay Morter with five. Gunner Jessen had three assists and Clay Morter had four steals to lead those categories.

"We have got to play together and we have to have ball movement," said Coach Dennis Stefani. "We got behind early and the wheels kind of fell off."

Overall, though, Stefani was pleased with the first weekend of play. "Our performance Friday night was incredible. Saturday we had tired legs and tired minds but we have to learn to play through it."

Lady Cards drop opening weekend games

The Ione Lady Cardinals dusted off their game for the new season, losing two games at the Ione Basketball Bonanza. The Cards fell to Umatilla on Friday 32-51 and watched a close one get away in the closing minutes, falling to Riverside on Saturday, 32-38.

Playing their first game of the season under the direction of first year head coach, Mike Garrett, the Lady Cardinals looked a tad rusty. Umatilla's squad included a 6'2" post player who used her size advantage to put up 12 points. The Cards trailed 27-16 at the half,



Tyree Svetich takes a shot during the Ione versus Riverside game on Saturday December 6. -Photo by Teresa Crawford

keeping the game within reach but Umatilla pulled away in the second half for the final 51-32 margin.

Beth Morter led the team in scoring with eight points. Tiana Camarillo added six and Brianna Peterson and Brenna Rietmann each had five. Ione made six of 18 free throw attempts for 32% while Umatilla got 42 chances at the line, connecting on 19.

"We are glad to get our first game under our belt," commented Coach Mike Garrett. "We had a significant mismatch in size playing against a 6'2" girl but I liked our intensity. It was a good team effort."

On Saturday, the Lady Cardinals faced Riverside. The Lady Pirates took the early lead, jumping out to a 10-4 first quarter advantage. Ione outscored Riverside in the second quarter 13-9 to make the game 19-17 in favor of the

visitors. After sticking close in the third, the Lady Cards had their chances in the fourth, attempting 12 free throws but converting just three as Riverside pulled away for the 38-32 win.

Brenna Rietmann led the team in scoring with nine points. Stefanie Archer had eight and Beth Morter added six. Rietmann also led the rebounding effort with nine boards.

"It was a good defensive game for us," said Coach Garrett. "Our shots were just not dropping. Our field goal and free throw percentage is down but that's because of the style of play and being early in the season."

Summing up the weekend, Coach Garrett was pleased with the effort. "The hard preseason schedule will benefit us when we start league play. I'm proud of the way the girls played this weekend for their opening games."



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