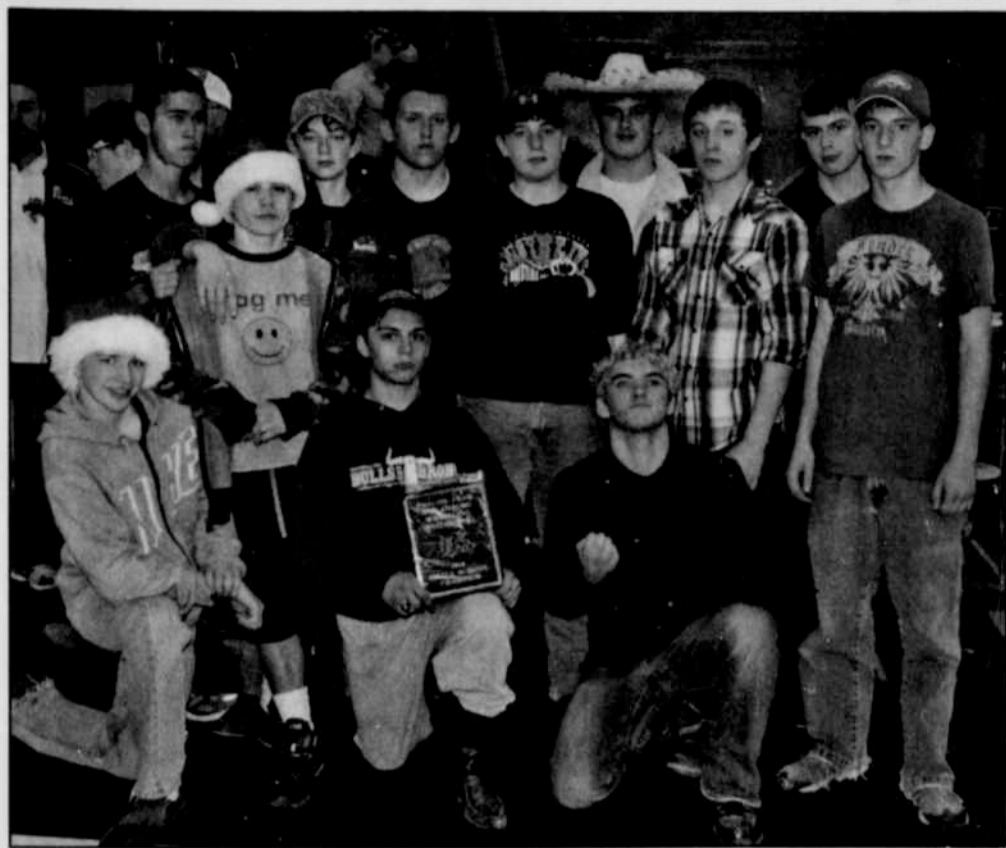


Mustangs bring home wrestling trophy



Heppner wrestling placed 1st in small schools at the Muilenberg Tournament in La Grande this weekend. -Contributed Photo

The Heppner wrestling team competed in one of the largest and longest running wrestling tournaments in Oregon Friday and Saturday, the Muilenberg Tournament in La Grande. Eighteen teams from 1A to 6A competed in the two day tournament, with 6A #2 ranked Oregon City finishing as the overall champion just three points ahead of 4A #2 ranked Mac Hi. With over 400 wrestlers, each weight class featured a 32-man bracket and nearly all were full.

The Mustangs showed that they were not afraid to compete with anyone, winning nine of their first eleven matches, including eight with bonus pin points. That strong start put them solidly in the driver's seat for the small school trophy ahead of the second place contender, the cop of Enterprise/Wallowa. Everyone in the gym took notice as Heppner went up on the board in a surprising fifth place overall after the first round of the championship bracket, an extraordinary start considering

that small schools were allowed only one scorer per weight class while 3A-6A schools entered two. In the end, Heppner finished 13th overall, ahead of the rest of the 1A/2A teams and Hermiston JV, and only eleven points behind the next large school.

"We made it a team goal to win the small school trophy at this tournament," said Coach Mark Lemmon. "To give us more scoring opportunities, we asked some of the guys to bump to bigger weight classes. That amounts to risking your personal placing for the benefit of the team. Every one of them was willing." The strategy paid off big as Earl Prophet, Wade Matthew, and Andrew Bara each scored both advancement points and bonus pin points for the team effort at higher weight classes. Bara had a career best tournament going 4-2 and finishing in second place of the consolation bracket at 160 lbs.

The team's senior, Jarreid Miller, placed the highest for Heppner.

Miller finished with three wins and two losses, taking fourth overall in the 135 lbs championship tournament bracket.

Jared Lemmon was consolation champion at 112 lbs with three straight wins after dropping to the consolation bracket with a loss in his first match. All three wins were by pin, including one in 16 seconds.

Alex Smith, Treston Maben, Garrett Gibbs, Tim Nelson, and Jacob Moore also won matches for the Mustangs. Nelson won 3-2 and made it to the championship quarterfinals on Saturday morning before incurring his first loss. Six of the 12 Heppner wrestlers had a .500 or better tournament record.

The Mustang grapplers have another busy week ahead with a four way dual meet in Heppner on Thursday at 6 p.m. against Irrigon, Riverside, and Pomeroy, WA. Then the team travels to Milton-Freewater to compete in the Mac Hi Christmas tournament on Saturday.

Lady Cards split weekend games at Heppner Tournament

The lone Lady Cardinals split their weekend games last weekend at the Heppner Tournament losing a close one to Crane on Friday and pulling away from Heppner at the end of the game.

On Friday, Ione got a chance to play Crane, a perennial powerhouse from the High Desert League and a third place finisher at the state tournament last year. Both teams played tight in the first quarter and after eight minutes, Crane held a 5-2 lead. Three Cardinals, Beth Morter, JoAnna Patton and Shadow Kendrick, put points on the board in the second quarter with Kendrick's two free throws bringing the Lady Cards to within one at the half 12-13.

Ione took the lead in the third and held it the entire period but Crane went on an 11-2 run at the tail end of the third and into the fourth quarter to swing the lead back their way 29-25. The Cards weren't done fighting though, answering each Crane score and closing the margin to a two point deficit several times. With 1:20 on the clock, Beth Morter's putback off the offensive glass made the score 33-31 in favor of Crane. In the next 30 seconds, the Lady Mustangs went to the free throw line four times but were only able to capitalize on two. With 36 seconds on the clock and a four point lead, it looked like they were home free. 'Not yet' said the Lady Cardinals. Makenna Ramos went to the line to shoot two. She sunk the first one and the second one rebounded into the hands of JoAnna Patton, who put it back for two points. Now with 20 seconds to go, Crane brought the ball down court and got two or three shots off. By the time the Lady Cards snagged the rebound and headed down court, the final buzzer sounded with the score 35-34 in favor of Crane.

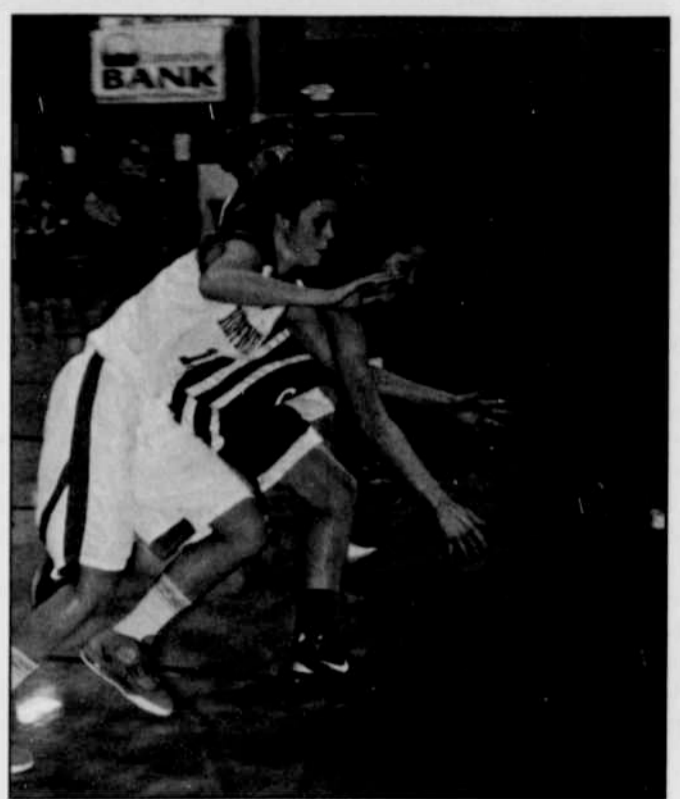
"It was a good physical game," said Coach Mike Garrett. "It was close the whole way and I was pleased with how we handled the ball."

Beth Morter led the team in scoring with 12 points and JoAnna Patton added 11. Also scoring for the Cardinals was Shadow Kendrick with six, Makenna Ramos with three and Stacey Halvorsen with two. Morter and Patton led the

Heppner beats Crane 37-36



Heppner Mustang Jared Hedman goes up for a basket during the tournament in Heppner. Heppner beat Crane 37-36 in a fast paced game. -Photo by Sandy Matthews



Heppner Mustang Taighler Dougherty scrambles for the ball with Ione Cardinal Joanna Patton. The Cardinals beat the Mustangs in a close game during the Heppner tournament this past weekend. -Photo by Sandy Matthews

rebounding effort with eight each and Ramos snagged five steals.

"I would have liked to get the win but I liked how the team played. Crane will be a state contender again this year," said Coach Garrett.

On Saturday, the Lady Cardinals faced Heppner for the first time in many years. Ione jumped out to an early 9-3 lead but Mustang sharpshooter, Alaina Wilson put Heppner right back into the game with three 3-pointers in the first quarter. Heppner took a 17-15 lead midway through the second quarter scoring six unanswered points before Stacey Halvorsen scored on a fast break lay-in to tie the game. Shadow Kendrick canned a pair of free throws with just over a minute left in the half and the Lady Cardinals hung on to a 19-17 halftime lead. For the first time this season, seven Cardinals had points in the scorebook by halftime.

Although Heppner tied the game early in the third, the Cards went on a 10-2 run that looked like it might be the undoing of the Lady Mustangs. However Heppner swapped scores with the Cardinals before nailing another three-pointer to narrow the margin to four points with 6:20 remaining in the game. It was free throws down the stretch that finally provided the separation between the teams. Ione went to the line ten times in the last three minutes and made eight crucial shots. The Lady Cards finished the game scoring 10 unanswered points for the final 43-29 margin.

Eight Cardinals scored in the game led by Shadow Kendrick with 14. Makenna Ramos had seven

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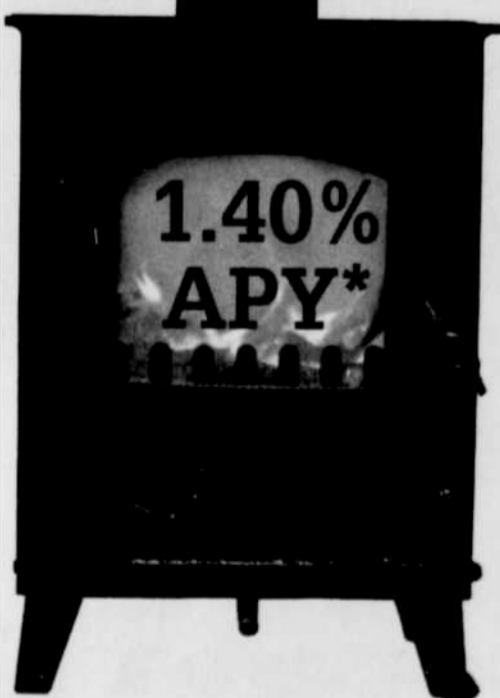
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