

Coquille downs Mustangs 8-6 in semifinal nail-biter



Toby Nation and Blane Mahoney make the tackle in the third quarter. -Photos by Damon Brosnan.

By Blake Carter

11-0, another stellar year put together by the Heppner Mustangs football team. Led by coach Greg Grant, the Mustangs won their first two playoff games and earned their way into the state semifinals. The Mustangs, along with many other high school teams in Oregon, were left with a bitter taste after not being able to compete in the state championships last season. This circumstance only fueled the Mustangs as they had won 29 straight football games up to the semifinals. Friday afternoon the boys loaded the bus, and departed for McMinnville, OR, the site of their next big game. The Mustangs took Friday afternoon to practice on the field they would play on the very next day, as well as enjoying a team dinner, and staying the night.

Their next opponent wasn't any slouch though. Led by senior Gunner Yates, the Coquille Red Devils went through many hardships this season. Earlier in the year they had two games cancelled

due to being exposed to COVID-19. Coquille was able to reschedule one of those games, before it had to be cancelled once again. Sitting at 8-1, the Red Devils have only stepped on the field to play seven games, their other win and loss came via forfeit. The Red Devils loss by forfeit came to the top team in their district, and number three seeded Lakeview Honkers.

Fans flocked to McMinnville High School; the grand-stands were packed. And soon enough noon rolled around where the Mustangs saw their season come to a heartbreaking end with an 8-6 defeat.

Heppner stepped onto the turf at McMinnville High School and received the opening kickoff, but an offensive facemask call moved the Mustangs back before their drive could get going. The Red Devils received the punt, and proceeded to use 18 plays, and ten minutes rolled off the clock. The Red Devils drive started with 9:18 seconds and ended on a Kason Cimmiyotti interception

with 11:17 in the second quarter. A high snap would again stop the Mustangs before they could even get going as they were forced to punt once again. This time the Mustang defense held strong and got the offense another shot with 6:34 seconds left in the second quarter. Unfortunately, the Mustangs stalled as they drove 40 yards before punting again. With only 43 seconds left, the Red Devils ran one play before letting the clock expire heading into halftime.

Much of the same followed in the third quarter, both teams traded stops as Coquille held possession headed into the fourth quarter. The Mustang defense grabbed another stop and took possession with 10:24 seconds in the game. The Mustangs finally found their legs, driving 65 yards in eight plays with Landon Mitchell throwing a touchdown pass to Derrick Smith for eight yards. On a reverse pass, Cimmiyotti rolled out of the pocket to the left where he met a wall of white jerseys at the goal



Jace Coe runs the ball in the second quarter.

line, it seemed as if Cimmiyotti had broken the goal line and scored. However, the referee emerged and waved off the score on a very upsetting, and controversial call. Coquille took possession with 5:25 left in the game. A steady running attack ended in a seven yard touchdown rush from Gunner Yates to tie the ballgame. The Coquille fullback ran up the middle on the two points to give Coquille the slight edge 8-6. Heppner completed a 13 yard pass into the Coquille territory however, a late illegal formation call spoiled that drive as an incompletion brought Heppner's dream season to a controversial, and heartbreaking end.

Heppner players let their emotions out after the

game, hugging one another, and reminiscing on an outstanding season. Heppner unfortunately would say farewell to 13 outstanding football players, and young men. This senior class finished their career with a state championship as well as a semifinal appearance. These young men finished 36-4, with an 18-0 league record across four years. All four seasons they finished as league champions.

While it didn't end the way we all wanted, it was still an amazing season. The football team will be back in action next August. Until then, wrestling and basketball seasons will commence with the first basketball game being December 1 at home. Wrestling will begin their season December 3 in Enterprise.

Statistics; Caden George rushed for 54 yards, Brock Hisler ran for 37, while Cameron Proudfoot and Jace Coe each ran for five yards. Landon Mitchell was 5-8 passing with 52 yards and one touchdown. Cimmiyotti caught two passes for 45 yards, and Smith brought in two passes for nine yards and one touchdown. Blane Mahoney led the way with 16 tackles while Cimmiyotti was right behind with 13 tackles. Conor Brosnan and Toby Nation each had 11 tackles, Hisler had nine tackles, George had seven, Cameron Proudfoot had six, Cade Cunningham had five while Smith and Tucker Ashbeck each had four. Jake Lenz had three tackles and Jace Coe had one.



Conor Brosnan and Brock Hisler make a tackle in the second quarter.



Kason Cimmiyotti and Blane Mahoney take down the Coquille runner in the first quarter.



Landon Mitchell enroute to scoring in the fourth quarter.



Derrick Smith makes a tackle in the first quarter.

NC to hold Black Friday sale

By Hannah Finch

The Neighborhood Center will be hosting a bag sale on Friday, November 26. This is something the Neighborhood Center does on the first Wednesday of every month, but they are doing a special one for Black Friday.

Participants may come into the building and purchase a bag for \$15 and are then able to fill the bag with as much stuff as possible. After the purchase of one bag, the second one is only \$5. Clothing, shoes, movies, books, and other

useful items may be found throughout the store. Everything else will be 50 percent off for the day.

Hours are 9:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. The Neighborhood Center is closed from 12:30 p.m. until 1:30 p.m. for lunch.

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