

Mustang basketball is off and running

Mustangs compete in three contests this past weekend to begin their 2022 season

By Blake Carter

Basketball season has arrived once again, and with that the Mustangs are already facing tough competition. Last season the Mustangs qualified for the COVID state tournament, held at neutral sites throughout the state. Both the girls and boys were able to compete, and the girls took one game, while the boys battled a good Knappa team before being bounced from the tournament. With the 2020-21 season in the rearview mirror the Mustangs began their campaign this past Wednesday.

Due to unforeseen injuries on the Condon girls' basketball team, the JV and Varsity boys were the only teams in action on Wednesday. The boys faced a young Condon Blue Devils team, however they got off to a hot start enroute to a 60-34 win. The Mustangs defense came to play early, after conceding the opening four points of the game, they rattled off 13 to end the quarter on top, 13-4. The Mustangs would continue to dominate the opening half, using their quick players to fly up and down the court for easy buckets. Combine their fast offense with their lockdown defense, it creates a difficult team to compete with.

At the half the Mustangs would remain on top 34-17. In the third quarter the Mustang offense sputtered, only producing nine points, however their defense was able to hold strong and keep the game out of reach as they continued to lead 43-29. Heppner would finish off the game in complete control as they outscored the Blue Devils 17-5 in the final period of play. Heppner walked away with a convincing 60-34 victory against the Blue Devils. Senior Blake Carter led the way for the Mustangs, scoring 13 points to go along with three rebounds. Brock Hisler, Joe Sherman and David Cribbs scored eight points each to fuel the offense in the victory. As a team, the Mustangs shot an impressive 53 percent from the field, Condon was led by Eduardo Barrera who scored 25 of the Blue Devils' 34 points on the night.

The Mustang boys team lost in a heartbreaker Friday night, 59-54. Umatilla got off to a fast start, gaining an early advantage at 23-9 at the end of the first quarter. Umatilla was able to build upon that lead in the second quarter, as the Mustangs found themselves down 18 points. Heppner was able to find their feet as the second quarter closed, going on a little run to cut the lead back down to 14 leading into halftime. Early in the third the two squads seemed to be at a stalemate, both teams traded buckets all quarter. Heppner was able to cut the lead down to 10 before the Vikings nailed a three, leading into the start of the fourth quarter. Umatilla opened with a 54-41 lead in the fourth quarter. The Mustangs suddenly started to capitalize on mistakes and score some points, quickly the game tightened as the Mustangs went on a 13-2 run cutting the lead down to 56-54. Unfortunately for the Mustangs, Umatilla hit a late three pointer to seal the win at 59-54. Umatilla shot a total of 11-13 from behind the three-point line, with senior Lincoln McLeod leading the team shooting a perfect 7-7 from three, scoring 29 points. Joe



Blake Carter shoots a jumper over closing Condon defender.

Sherman led the way for the Mustangs with 22 points and Tucker Ashbeck was close behind with 14.

The Mustangs finished off the weekend on a very good note as they defeated the Nixyaawii Golden Eagles 81-45. Heppner was looking to rebound after a slow start in their previous contest. The Mustangs did just that as they jumped on Nixyaawii early. After the first quarter alone, the Mustangs were quickly out to a 26-12 lead. Quality defensive possessions allowed the Mustangs to get out in transition and find easy buckets. This fast-paced attack caused many issues for the Golden Eagles, as they found themselves trailing 45-23 at halftime. Once again, the Mustangs got out of the gates quickly, however the Golden Eagles were able to hang tough, and not give up too much ground. Unfortunately, the deficit was too large for them. Heppner would close out the game with a strong fourth quarter. Landon Mitchell and Joe Sherman powered the offense as Mitchell scored 18 with Sherman not far behind at 16. The bench players came on strong as Cameron Proudfoot scored 12 off the bench.

Extended Stats vs Condon: Tucker Ashbeck, three rebounds; David Cribbs eight points, eight rebounds and one steal; Trevor Nichols seven points, two rebounds, one block, one steal; Caden George two points, three rebounds, one steal; Landon Mitchell, five points, two assists, three rebounds; Cameron Proudfoot two points, one assist, four rebounds; Derrick Smith; two points, two rebounds, one steal; Kason Cimmiyotti two points, one assist, six rebounds; Toby Nation, one point, one assist, two rebounds; Blake Carter, 13 points, three rebounds; Brock Hisler eight points, three rebounds; Joe Sherman eight points, four assists, four rebounds, one block, one steal; Brian Lindsay two points, one rebound.

Extended Stats vs Umatilla: Tucker Ashbeck 14 points, three assists, three rebounds, three steals; David Cribbs, three points, one rebound, one block;



Hadlie Nation shoots a floater over Umatilla Defender.



Irelynn Kollman looks to sneak a pass around Viking defender.

Trevor Nichols, one rebound; Caden George, one point; Landon Mitchell, eight points, one assist, two rebounds, one steal, one block; Toby Nation, one steal; Blake Carter, one rebound; Brock Hisler, six points, four assists, three rebounds, one steal; Joe Sherman, 22 points, one assist, three rebounds, two steals, one block.

Extended Stats vs Nixyaawii: Tucker Ashbeck eight points, three rebounds; David Cribbs one point, one rebound, two blocks; Trevor Nichols eight points, one assist, two

rebounds; Caden George, five assists, one rebound; Landon Mitchell 18 points, eight rebounds, one steal, one block; Cameron Proudfoot 12 points, one rebound; Derrick Smith two points, one assist; Toby Nation six points, one rebound, one steal; Blake Carter four points, three rebounds; Brock Hisler six points, five assists, three rebounds, three steals; Joe Sherman 16 points, four rebounds, one steal, two blocks; Brian Lindsay one rebound, one block.

Friday night all the teams were in action as the



Tucker Ashbeck rises over a defender for an easy basket. — Photos by Susan Hisler



Joe Sherman glides in for an easy two against Nixyaawii.

Mustangs hosted the Umatilla Vikings, with a young girls' basketball team losing a close game 34-26 against Umatilla. After losing a total of six seniors last year the girls' team is just getting going. Led by seniors Hannah Finch and Zabrena Masterson, the Mustangs are still working out some kinks in their offense. Fortunately for them, strong guard play from younger players such as Hadlie Nation and Zandra Masterson will help them get going. However, the Mustangs saw some of those bumps in their first game with Umatilla. A slow shooting performance kept the Mustangs from the win. Saturday afternoon Heppner welcomed the Nixyaawii Golden Eagles; the girls team fell to a strong Golden Eagles squad 62-27. The Mustangs hung in tough for the first quarter, only down 16-12. At the half, the Eagles had distanced themselves, up 30-16. Unfortunately, the Eagles began to make shots while the Mustangs struggled as they pulled away in the victory. ZaBrena Masterson led the way for Heppner with eight

points and five rebounds. Next weekend the Mustangs will be participating in the 2A preview. This event is hosted by Pilot Rock and will bring some tough competition from the west side of the state to battle with the east side. Heppner will open the weekend at home on Thursday, December 9 as they host Toledo, before heading to Pendleton to face Bandon on Friday, December 10, and Culver on Saturday, December 11. Games on Thursday will begin at 6 p.m. with the varsity girls' teams. Friday and Saturday games will be going all day long, with there being a total of eight games each day at the convention center. Teams from the west side will include Bonanza, Bandon, Culver and Toledo. Interconference rivals such as Stanfield, Weston-McEwen and Pilot Rock will battle these teams. Heppner girls' varsity is set to begin at 3 p.m. on Friday, with the boys to follow at around 4:45 p.m. Saturday the Mustangs will cap off the event with the girls playing at 6:15 and the boys to follow at around 8 p.m.