

Mustangs sweep preview tournament with three wins

The Heppner Mustang boys basketball team won three more games at the 2A Preview Tournament held at the Pendleton Convention Center last week. The Mustangs beat the Toledo Boomers by the score of 59-21, then won a double overtime thriller against the Knappa Loggers 58-50 and finished the tournament with a win over the Vernonia Loggers 50-41. That brings the Mustangs' overall record to 10-2. They are currently the fifth-ranked team in the OSAA State Basketball rankings.

Heppner jumped out to a quick 19-7 lead over the Boomers at the end of the first quarter and never looked back. The Mustangs led the game 36-16 at the half and stretched the lead to 48-21 at the end of three quarters. Heppner held the Boomers scoreless in the fourth quarter and won by the score of 59-21.

A balanced scoring attack was led by Landon Mitchell with 14. Caden George had 12 points and Mason Orem eight. Trevor Nichols finished with seven, and with five points each were Tucker Ashbeck and David Cribbs. Thomas Bales scored four points, and with two each were Cameron Proudfoot and Owen Cunningham. Playing significant minutes but not scoring were Jackson Coiner and Cooper Wight.

The game against Knappa was a close one the entire contest. Heppner led 11-8 after one quarter and 22-17 at halftime. It was 35-

30 in favor of the Mustang after three quarters, and it stayed close in the fourth. Knappa fought back to tie the score at 39-39 with 3:20 left in the game. The Mustangs fell behind 43-41 with 1:30 to play but then got a big three-point play to pull ahead 44-43. A Knappa player attacked the rim and was fouled with :4.9 seconds left in the game. He made one foul shot to tie the score at 44-44. Heppner got a shot off at the end of regulation but missed it. The Mustangs were outscored 14-9 in the fourth quarter and the game would go into overtime.

Early in the overtime period, Cribbs made a laying to make it 46-44 Heppner. Both teams then missed free throws and shots during the overtime period until a Knappa player scored with :14 seconds left to tie it again at 46-46. Heppner failed to score after that, and the teams went to a second overtime.

The second overtime saw Knappa score first, but then Ashbeck found Cribbs with a nice pass and he scored a basket to make it 48-48. Asheck then converted a three-point play to give the Mustangs a 51-48 lead. Cribbs and Mitchell both went to the line and made two free throws each to give the Mustangs a 55-48 lead. George then converted two free throws for a 57-48 lead in the game. Knappa got back to the line and made two to make the score 57-50 with only :23 seconds left in the

second overtime. Proudfoot was fouled and made a free throw to secure the victory by the score of 58-50. Heppner outscored Knappa 14-6 in the second overtime period.

Leading the way in scoring for the Mustangs was Ashbeck with 15. Mitchell was next with 11 points, and Cribbs had eight. George finished with seven, and with five points each were Nichols and Proudfoot. Bales scored one point in the game.

The last game of the tournament was against the Vernonia Loggers. The Loggers have one of the best 2A players in the state and it was a challenge trying to contain him during the game. Heppner had a 10-8 lead after the first quarter and led 19-16 at halftime. It was still close at the end of the third quarter as the Mustangs led 33-29. The Loggers were forced to foul the Mustangs late in the game, but Heppner stepped up and went 7-9 from the free throw line. Heppner outscored Vernonia 17-12 in the fourth quarter and secured the win by the score of 50-41.

Ashbeck and Mitchell led the Mustangs with 15 points each. Cribbs followed with nine and Nichols had eight. Proudfoot hit a big three-pointer in the game and finished with three.

The next action for the Mustangs will be this Saturday, Jan. 7, when they travel to John Day to take on the Grant Union Prospectors.

Lady Mustangs take all comers in Pendleton tournament

By Tylynn Cimmiyotti
During the final week of the year, Heppner's basketball teams traveled to Pendleton for three days of basketball, starting on Dec. 28. The Mustang girls were victorious, winning all three games they played. Heppner girls are currently ranked 24th in 2A.

On Wednesday, Heppner played Toledo (ranked 23rd in 2A). The Mustangs worked hard and outscored their opponent during 75 percent of the game. Hallee Hisler led the Mustangs with 20 points. Heppner closed out the win at 50-29.

Stats: A. Worden: 1 fouled. H. Hisler: 20 points, 2 assists, 1 rebound, 4 fouls, 3 steals, 3 turnovers, 2 fouled. H. Nation: 1 assist, 1 rebound, 2 fouls, 1 steal, 1 turnover, 1 fouled. B. Wilson: 8 points, 4 rebounds, 1 foul, 1 fouled. Z. Masterson: 3 points, 1 rebound. I. Kollman: 2 points, 1 turnover. A. Gerry: 4 points, 1 assist, 2 fouls, 2 turnovers. M. Cutsforth: 4 points, 1 assist, 1 steal, 3 turnovers. L. Nichols: 3 points, 1 foul, 1 turnover, 1 fouled. K. Spivey: 2 points. H. Wenberg: 2 points, 1 rebound, 2 fouls, 2 steals, 5 turnovers, 1 fouled. K. Henrichs: 2 points, 3 fouls, 1 fouled.

On Thursday, Heppner played Knappa (#25 in 2A) in a close game that ended in victory for the Mustangs. The girls outscored their opponents during 50 percent of the game and had to fight to keep the win at the end of the game. With six seconds left on the clock, Knappa had possession of the ball, and they ended up missing their final three-point shot. At the buzzer, the score was Heppner 42, Knappa 41. Hallee Hisler

led the Mustangs for the second day in a row with 11 points.

Stats: H. Hisler: 11 points, 4 fouls, 2 steals, 4 turnovers, 3 fouled. H. Nation: 1 point, 1 assist, 1 rebound, 2 fouls, 1 fouled. B. Wilson: 4 points, 1 rebound, 3 turnovers, 3 fouled. A. Gerry: 4 points, 1 assist, 2 fouls, 1 steal, 1 fouled. M. Cutsforth: 6 points, 3 rebounds, 2 turnovers, 1 fouled. L. Nichols: 6 points, 1 foul, 1 turnover, 2 fouled. K. Spivey: 3 points, 3 fouls, 1 turnover. H. Wenberg: 7 points, 4 rebounds, 4 fouls, 2 turnovers, 3 fouled. K. Henrichs: 1 foul, 1 turnover.

On Friday, the third and final day of basketball for our Lady Mustangs, they played 26-ranked Vernonia and took the win 28-23. This was another close game for Heppner, but they held out and outscored

their opponent during 75 percent of this game as well. Brooke Wilson led the Mustangs with nine points.

Stats: H. Hisler: 2 points, 2 rebounds, 3 fouls, 3 turnovers, 1 fouled. H. Nation: 5 points, 1 assist, 1 rebound, 1 foul, 2 turnovers, 2 fouled. B. Wilson: 9 points, 1 rebound, 4 steals, 3 turnovers, 4 fouled. I. Kollman: 1 fouled. A. Gerry: 3 points, 1 rebound, 1 steal, 2 turnovers. M. Cutsforth: 1 rebound. L. Nichols: 2 points, 1 assist, 1 rebound, 2 turnovers, 2 fouled. K. Spivey: 1 turnover, 1 fouled. S. Jensen: 1 point, 1 fouled. H. Wenberg: 2 points, 2 fouls, 2 fouled. K. Henrichs: 4 points, 2 fouls.

The Mustang girls begin league play this Saturday, Jan. 7, when they travel to Grant Union. Game time is 4 p.m.

Wheat Growers to hold joint meeting

The Morrow and Gilliam County Wheat Growers will hold a joint meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 8, at the Gilliam & Bisbee Event Center in Heppner. The meeting will cover issues facing Morrow and Gilliam County wheat and livestock producers, legislative highlights from the Wheat Growers League and an update on research and extension activities.

The program will start with the annual Morrow County Soil and Water Conservation District meeting at 9 a.m., followed by a program designated to wheat producers from 10 a.m. until noon.

Lunch provided by Tumbleweed Cafe will fol-

low with a program sponsored by Morrow County Livestock Growers. Gilliam County Livestock Growers are invited to attend.

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County commission last meeting of 2022

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room and online." Russell also informed the commissioners-elect that they would need to make a budget committee appointment in the near future, and addressed the process for filling the empty county commissioner seat.

While one of the incoming commissioners will fill the seat vacated by Melissa Lindsay after the recent recall, Jim Doherty's term was not to end until 2025, creating the need to appoint a third commissioner.

Russell and Nelson agreed that it was their understanding that it is the responsibility of the two incoming commissioners to appoint a third commissioner. That decision will have to wait at least until January 4, when the county commission has a quorum. Russell said if there had been a quorum, he would have recommended advertising for letters of interest and looking at those applications.

"At least in my mind that's how we would do it. Jeff and David will be the two commissioners who make that selection next year," said Russell. "They can formalize that at the meeting next year, but there's got to be some sort of process where people know that there's a vacated position and can apply for it."

Nelson commented that Grogan had already been getting questions about the vacancy on the commission, even though it was not officially vacant until the recall election was certified Dec. 27.

"In the public's eye, the ball has already been rolling, but it's only happened recently here," said Nelson.

"I've probably had a half a dozen people reach out to me and ask me what the process is," agreed Russell. "You guys need to think about that," he added, saying he didn't see the position being filled until February.

Sykes asked if the Oregon Revised Statutes spelled out the process. Nelson said no, the ORS said the commissioners shall appoint but didn't specify how that should happen, though there were certain best practices that could be followed.

"Again, the temperature in local politics has been a little heated lately,"

said Russell, "so I would try to be as transparent as you can on how you recruit a person for this job."

In other news, Assistant Roadmaster Mike Haugen was scheduled to give a road report. He introduced himself to commissioners-elect and reported continuing road work, including a pothole patch on Barclay Ln., guardrail issues on Division, cattle guard maintenance on Shobe, bus stop signs for Paterson Ferry and a permit for Umatilla Electric on Wyoming Ave., where they were pulling power from a pole and digging underground to someone's property.

Morrow County Clerk Bobbi Childers was also at the meeting, and said she appreciated working with Russell for the past eight years.

"I hope your retirement treats you well," said Childers. "I appreciated you as a person in the position that you're in."

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