

Mustang boys start basketball season strong with back-to-back wins

The first week of the basketball season began with the Heppner Mustang boys' basketball team winning its first two games of the year. The Mustangs travelled to Imbler and defeated the Panthers by a score of 66-20. They then hosted the Joseph Eagles and beat them 43-28.

The Mustangs started fast in Imbler and led 25-2 after the first quarter. Heppner started the game out shooting the ball well from the outside. They were also able to get out and run on the fast break, which resulted in several layups.

Imbler didn't score its second basket of the game until mid-way through the second quarter. The Mustang pressure defense bothered the Panthers all night long. The Mustangs continued to shoot the ball well and led at halftime 43-9.

The third quarter was closer, but the Mustangs still outscored Imbler 13-9 to keep their commanding lead. At the end of the third quarter the Mustangs led 56-18.

Heppner outscored Imbler 10-2 in the fourth quarter to take the win by the score of 66-20.

Joseph Albitre led the Mustangs in scoring with 16. He also had one rebound and one assist in the game. Scoring eight points each in the game were Marty Medina and Caleb George. Medina also had an assist and two rebounds, and George finished with five rebounds. Mason Orem scored six points and had four rebounds and two assists, while Jackson Coiner also scored six points, had two rebounds and dished out three assists. A big game was had by Keaton Coiner, who finished with six points and hauled down nine rebounds for the team. Gage Heideman also contributed six points to the Mustangs' win. Alakae Rodriguez was next with five points, one rebound and two assists, and Tripp Stewart had three points, two rebounds and two assists. Jace Wilson scored two points in the game. Although he didn't score, Caylan Proudfoot had a rebound and an assist. Darby Spivey played in the game and contributed a solid defensive effort in the key area.

In their second game of the season, the Mustangs didn't shoot the ball nearly as well as they did in Imbler. The game against Jo-

seph started slowly for both teams, and the Mustangs led after the first quarter 8-4. Heppner started to improve its shooting in the second quarter, but so did the Eagles. The Mustangs outscored Joseph 14-11 to lead at halftime 22-15.

The Mustangs did stretch their lead to as much as nine points in the third quarter, but Joseph would not go away and only trailed 30-26 at the end of three.

The fourth quarter continued to be close until mid-way through the quarter. The Mustangs stretched their lead to as much as 11 late in the quarter and didn't let up. Heppner got its second win of the season by the score of 43-28.

Albitre once again led the team in scoring with 11 points to go along with one rebound. Keaton Coiner was next with nine points, four rebounds and two assists. Orem had a big game with eight points, eight rebounds and one assist. Medina and Heideman each had four points in the game. Medina also had a rebound and two assists, while Heideman tallied four rebounds in the game. Rodriguez was solid with three points, two rebounds and two assists for the Mustangs, and George finished with three points and an assist. Jackson Coiner had one point and three assists in the game, and Stewart recorded two rebounds for the team.

The Mustang will travel to Umatilla on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of this week to participate in the Columbia River Clash Tournament. Their first game will be on Thursday at 3:30 p.m. against The Dalles. The game will be played in the Umatilla High School main gym.

Greg Grant and Les Payne reflect on decades of success in emotional farewell

-Continued from PAGE ONE



Greg and Les posing with members of the 2015 Stat Championship team. (L-R) CJ Kindle, Kevin Murray, Greg Grant, Les Payne, Logan Grieb and Pat Collins. - Photo by Petra Payne

number of years they had coached—a symbolic gesture honoring their dedication and achievements. Throughout the night, the crowd was treated to a touching slideshow, gifts for the honorees, and shared laughter and tears as memories and stories were revisited.

Former players traveled long distances to be part of the celebration, underscoring the lasting impact Greg Grant and Les Payne had on their lives. The standing ovation they received was a testament to their influence not just as coaches but as pillars of the community.

As the night drew to

a close, it was clear that Greg and Les are more than exceptional coaches—they are cherished figures whose legacy will continue to inspire generations to come. Their dedication to Mustang football, their players, and the town of Heppner ensures their place in the heart of the community forever.

Greg Grant concluded his remarkable head coaching career with an impressive record of 350 wins and 82 losses, achieved during his tenure at Heppner (1990–present) and Alsea (1985–1989), placing him third on Oregon's all-time high school football coach-



Ken Grieb serving as emcee during the event, guiding the evening's heartfelt tributes and celebrations. -Photo by Petra Payne

ing victories list. Together, Grant and Payne built a legacy of excellence, leading the Heppner Mustangs to 29 league titles and an astounding 84 consecutive league game winning streak spanning 14 seasons, from 1998 to 2011. Remarkably, they never experienced a losing season in their 35 years of coaching together.

Their achievements include state championships in 1992, 2015, and 2019, along with runner-up finishes in 2007 and 2014 and 7 other semi-final appearances. Under their leadership, Heppner holds the OSAA record for the most consecutive winning

seasons, a streak that began with four winning seasons before Greg became head coach—a period during which Les was already coaching.

The legacy of Greg Grant and Les Payne is defined not only by their incredible achievements on the field but also by their commitment to their players, their community, and the values of hard work, dedication, and sportsmanship. Their impact on the Heppner football program will continue to inspire future generations, cementing their place as two of Oregon's most influential and successful high school coaches.

Mustang JV starts season with win over Panthers

The Heppner Mustang boys' junior varsity team opened its season with a 50-15 win over the Imbler Panthers Dec. 4.

Heppner led 8-3 after the first quarter and outscored Imbler 19-1 in the second to lead at halftime 20-4.

The Mustangs continued to score well in the third and led the game 38-9 at the end of three quarters. Heppner then doubled up the Panthers 12-6 in the fourth quarter to get the win by the

score of 50-15.

Everyone scored for the Mustangs in this game. Jace Wilson led the team in scoring with 14 points and Gage Heideman was next with 12. Scoring four points each for the Mustangs were Caylan Proudfoot, Tripp Stewart, Brody McDaniel, Mason Seitz and Mason Haugan. With two points in the game were Alakae Rodriguez and Darby Spivey.

The JV Mustangs' next game will be December 17 when they travel to Dufur.

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Lunch & Dinner Menu

Specials 12/12 - 12/18

Thursday - chicken plus with fries
Friday - Italian sub sandwich with jojos
Saturday - Corn chowder and quesadilla
Sunday - 1/2 order biscuits and gravy, hashbrowns, and egg.
Monday - Buffalo chicken wrap with chips
Tuesday - Reuben and potato salad
Tuesday night - 6-9pm \$2 hard shell tacos
Wednesday - Turkey BLT with macaroni salad

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