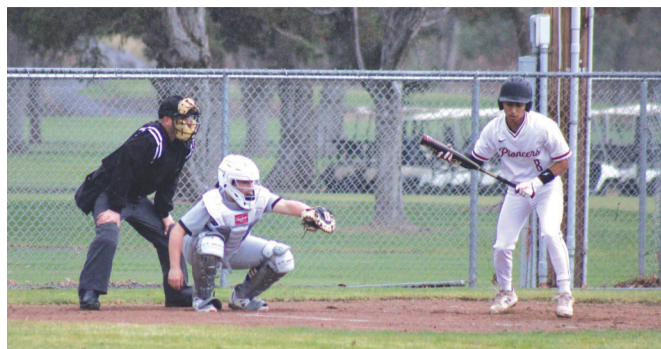


# Mustangs drop season opener to Buckaroos

Pendleton/Nixyaawii J/V 9, Heppner/Ione 6



Freshman umpire Jace Wilson catches a fast ball that got by a McLoughlin Pioneer last Friday. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo



Ryan Haugen on the mound during the first inning of the game versus Mac-Hi last Friday. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

## By Brian Bunch

A sixth-inning rally was not enough as the Heppner/Ione Mustangs dropped the 2025 baseball season opener to the Pendleton/Nixyaawii Buckaroos.

On St. Patrick's Day, the Mustangs could have used a little luck of the Irish as they traveled to Bob White Field for a non-league matchup, as both teams looked to sharpen their skills ahead of their grueling 20-plus game seasons ahead.

For a mid-March game, the weather was surprisingly comfortable, with a temperature around 50 degrees at the first pitch and a typical Eastern Oregon spring breeze. The worst part was the cold metal bench, as I had forgotten seat padding, standard for the first game of the season.

The box score tells the story of a hard-fought game. The Mustangs outthit the Buckaroos, 8-7, but the three additional errors made the difference.

The Mustang bats came out swinging in the first inning, with Caleb George hitting a leadoff double. George would go on to be the lone Mustang run in the first inning with a Caylan Proudfoot RBI single. Proudfoot was thrown out when he attempted to stretch it to a double. Mason Orem also picked up a single in the top half of the frame.

Keaton Coiner started on the mound for the Mustangs in the bottom of the first inning, struggling to find the zone. Coiner gave up a walk, a single and a triple that made the game 3-1 Buckaroos after an error allowed Nathan Driskell's triple to score.

Shaking off the rust, Coiner found the zone, and his defense stepped up behind him, getting the first two outs of the inning with a ground out and a fly out. Coiner gave up a single before freezing Keli Spencer with three straight strikes looking to end the inning.

The second inning was the inning of twos, as in double plays, two of them. In the top of the inning, Shad Greenup popped up into a double play that also got Coiner thrown out trying to retreat back to first after the catch by Buckaroo pitcher Joe Foster.

In the bottom of the second, the Mustangs looked for payback as Proudfoot at shortstop and R. Haugen at first made a double play on a ground ball look routine to end the inning and keep the score at 3-1 Buckaroos. Both teams changed pitchers after the second inning. Coiner gave up three runs

(zero earned) on three hits, and Foster gave up one earned run on three hits.

New pitchers in the third inning brought on more base-running activity. Proudfoot scored after getting on base with an error by Buckaroo shortstop Driskell. Alakae Rodriguez got his lone hit of the game, a single, before falling victim to Orem's fielder's choice while advancing to second.

R. Haugen got his second of three hits and an RBI for batting in Proudfoot with a single hit to second base. Coiner grounded out to first base to slow the Mustang momentum and bring the Buckaroos to the plate up 3-2.

George was on the mound for the Mustangs in the bottom of the frame. The Buckaroos took advantage of an untimely walk and a hit-by-pitch. Grouping those together with a sacrifice fly and a couple of singles, the Buckaroos stretched their lead to 6-2 by the end of the third. George finished the inning, giving up three earned runs on two hits.

The fourth inning was very tight defensively by the Buckaroos, and R. Haugen started his appearance on the mound with quality pitching. The Buckaroos' defense picked up the first two outs, and Jace Wilson struck out after working a seven-pitch at-bat.

The Buckaroos changed pitchers in the middle of the fourth, with Driskell replacing Bonifer. Bonifer allowed one run on two hits in 1.1 innings of work. The Buckaroos went down in order, from the top, with R. Haugen dealing three straight strikeouts. The only action was Bonifer getting thrown out on a dropped third strike.

The fifth inning was a rough one for the Mustang hitters, as George was the only base runner after getting on base with a leadoff hit-by-pitch. Proudfoot laid down a sacrifice bunt, but both Rodriguez and Orem grounded out to first.

Three errors and a balk for the Mustangs in the bottom of the frame helped the Buckaroos push the score to 9-2 with runs by Kolt McQuinn, Kreg Krol and English. Orem stepped up defensively out in center field in the bottom of the frame to account for two of the three outs for the Mustangs, the other being

a ground out to Jace Wilson at second.

R. Haugen led off the sixth inning with a single, followed by Coiner with a walk to give the Mustangs first and second with no outs. The Buckaroos replaced Driskell on the mound with Krol. Driskell ended his pitching night, allowing two earned runs on one hit through 1.2 innings.

Greenup got on base but at the expense of Coiner in a fielder's choice. Lindsay was thrown out at first by the pitcher, but Greenup was able to move into scoring position. Mason Haugen replaced Wilson in the game and walked to load the bases after working it to a full count.

Bases loaded, two outs, the Mustangs returned to the top of the order. George squared up a bases-clearing triple, scoring both the Haugen brothers and Greenup. What a moment for the Haugen family as Mason scored his first run of his freshman year on the same play Ryan scored his first run of his senior year.

With the score 9-5 Buckaroos now, George standing on third, still two outs, Proudfoot at the plate, hit an RBI single to score George and bring the game within three. Rodriguez worked the count full and went down with a strikeout, leaving Proudfoot on base, 9-6 Buckaroos.

R. Haugen, still on the mound for the Mustangs, faced the three, four, and five hitters due up for the Buckaroos. R. Haugen got the first out, throwing out Driskell at first, and the second out with a strikeout against McQuinn. Krol flew out to Orem, who made a diving catch in center as the Mustangs' momentum closed out the sixth.

The heart of the order was due up for the Mustangs. Orem tried to take first on a dropped third strike, and the Buckaroos set the tone for the last half an inning. R. Haugen managed a walk on a full count to give the Mustangs a base runner and their last bit of hope.

The last two outs for the Buckaroos to earn were Coiner, going down swinging, and Brody McDaniel, with a fielder's choice, making the final score 6-9 Buckaroos.

Rodriguez was a wall behind the plate, catching six innings and allowing only one passed ball. George (.667/.750/1.333), Haugen (.667/.750/.667), and Proudfoot (.667/.667/.667) led the team hitting with two hits apiece, being joined by Orem (.250/.250/.250) and Rodriguez (.250/.250/.250), both adding one.

## Pre-Season Wrapping Up

The Mustangs traveled to McLoughlin on Friday, March 21, only to be rained out in the first inning.

On Tuesday, March 25, they will travel to the Umatilla Sports Complex for a double-header, with the first game against Umatilla at 11 a.m. and the second game against Kennedy at 1 p.m.

On Wednesday, March 26, they will take on Crosshill Christian at Riverside High School, with a noon first pitch.

The last non-league game will be a home match-up against Joseph/Enterprise/Wallowa on April 1 at 4 p.m.

# Heppner athletes open season with top performances at The Dalles

Heppner track and field athletes proved themselves again despite cold, nasty weather at the Mullen-Leavitt Invite last Friday in The Dalles. Athletes from 15 teams around the state competed, but Heppner athletes took the top spots in multiple events.

Placing first in the javelin was junior Chris Humphreys with a 163' 8 throw. Marty Medina placed third in the 1500 meter with a personal record of 4:44.97, while Nick Wenberg' 19' 2.25 long jump secured him the third spot on the podium

Hallee Hisler took first in the women's 100 and 200 meter races, with sister Healy Hisler hard on her heels in second place in both races. Lily Nichols clinched the 800 and 1500 meters as well as the 300m hurdles, while Riley Archer showed her cross-country staying power as she led the pack to finish the 3000 meter in 12:01.6. Archer also placed second in the 400 meter race. Laia Puelles placed third in the 100m hurdles.

Rounding out the victories for the women was the 4x400 relay team of Healy Hisler, Riley Archer, Lily Nichols and anchor Hallee Hisler. Their 4:26.14 run earned them first place, more than six seconds ahead of second-place The Dalles.

Full team results are as follows:

## Men's Results

### 100 Meters Varsity - Finals

7. Hayden McMahon (12.35a SR)
12. Nick Wenberg (12.57a SR)
37. Joseph Albitre (13.28a PR)

### 200 Meters Varsity - Finals

5. Hayden McMahon (25.44a SR)

### 800 Meters Varsity - Finals

5. Marty Medina (2:21.16a PR)

### 1500 Meters Varsity - Finals

3. Marty Medina (4:44.97a PR)

### Shot Put - 12lb Varsity - Finals

6. Chris Humphreys (38' 5 PR)
14. Lucas King (31' 10.5 PR)
15. Landon McMahon (31' 0 SR)
20. Gage Heideman (29' 8 PR)
26. Austin Willis (27' 6 PR)

### Discus - 1.6kg Varsity - Finals

4. Landon McMahon (106' 1 PR)
13. Chris Humphreys (88' 2 SR)
18. Gage Heideman (79' 3 PR)
20. Lucas King (72' 10 PR)
23. Austin Willis (70' 10 PR)

### Javelin - 800g Varsity - Finals

1. Chris Humphreys (163' 8 PR)
19. Gage Heideman (93' 6 PR)
21. Lucas King (92' 8 PR)

### Women's Results

### 100 Meters Varsity - Finals

1. Hallee Hisler (13.07a SR)
2. Healy Hisler (13.87a SR)
13. Teagan Kelton (15.12a PR)
15. Laia Puelles (15.14a PR)
27. Natalie Piper (15.84a SR)
29. Samantha Lamb (15.87a PR)

### 200 Meters Varsity - Finals

1. Hallee Hisler (26.76a SR)
2. Healy Hisler (28.30a SR)
11. Teagan Kelton (32.27a PR)
12. Laia Puelles (32.35a PR)
16. Samantha Lamb (33.30a PR)

### 400 Meters Varsity - Finals

2. Riley Archer (1:08.90a PR)



Hayden McMahon. -Photos by Susan Hisler



Healy Hisler handing off in the 4x400. -Photos by Susan Hisler



Marty Medina. -Photos by Susan Hisler



Riley Archer in the 3000-meter race. -Photos by Susan Hisler

- 29 Landon McMahon (81' 0 SR)
34. Austin Willis (65' 5 PR)

### High Jump Varsity - Finals

4. Joseph Albitre (5' 4 PR)

### Long Jump Varsity - Finals

3. Nick Wenberg (19' 2.25 PR)
24. Joseph Albitre (16' 0.25 PR)

### Women's Results

### 100 Meters Varsity - Finals

1. Hallee Hisler (13.07a SR)
2. Healy Hisler (13.87a SR)
13. Teagan Kelton (15.12a PR)
15. Laia Puelles (15.14a PR)
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11. Teagan Kelton (32.27a PR)
12. Laia Puelles (32.35a PR)
16. Samantha Lamb (33.30a PR)

### 400 Meters Varsity - Finals

2. Riley Archer (1:08.90a PR)

### 800 Meters Varsity - Finals

1. Lily Nichols (2:34.19a SR)
10. Loren Trujillo (3:24.41a SR)

### 1500 Meters Varsity - Finals

1. Lily Nichols (5:10.56a SR)
5. Brooklyn Hendricks (5:49.12a SR)

### 3000 Meters Varsity - Finals

1. Riley Archer (12:01.60a SR)
5. Brooklyn Hendricks (12:30.07a PR)

### 100m Hurdles - 33" Varsity - Finals

3. Laia Puelles (19.83a PR)

### 300m Hurdles - 30" Varsity - Finals

1. Lily Nichols (52.40a SR)

### 4x400 Relay Varsity - Finals

1. Healy Hisler, Riley Archer, Lily Nichols, Hallee Hisler (4:26.14a)

### Shot Put - 4kg Varsity - Finals

8. Avia Boutefuhr (23' 5 PR)

### Discus - 1kg Varsity - Finals

15. Avia Boutefuhr (55' 3 PR)

### High Jump Varsity - Finals

8. Natalie Piper (4' 0 SR)



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