

Mustangs oust Cougars, fall to Trojans

By Brian Bunch

Monday, May 26, the #15 Heppner/Ione Mustangs hosted the #19 Illinois Valley Cougars in Round 1 of OSAA playoff action. With three fewer hits on the day the Mustangs managed a three-run win over the second place team out of 2A/1A-SD6.

Ryan Haugen pitched a complete game for the Mustangs, giving up three runs on four hits in the first inning before settling in with a couple three-up/three-down innings to tame the Cougar bats. R. Haugen would earn the win with 7.0 innings pitched, giving up three earned runs (zero unearned) on seven hits with two walks and seven Ks. R. Haugen’s strong performance on the mound wasn’t alone as the defense stood up behind him, only tallying three errors, none of them responsible for a run.

On offense the Mustangs only needed two innings and four hits to put up six runs. The Mustang bats were pesky but disciplined the whole game as they only struck out twice while working six walks.

In the bottom of the first inning, with the Cougars jumping out to a 3-0 lead in the top, the Mustangs looked to even it up as Caleb George smashed a triple to right field on the first strike he saw. Jace Wilson would follow up George with a hard-hit double to center field for the RBI.

An error and a walk would load the bases with Caylan Proudfoot and Karver Wilkins and bring Alakae Rodriguez to the plate. Rodriguez would reach base on a fielder’s choice ground ball RBI that would score Wilson but send Wilkins back to the dugout for the first out. The bottom of the first would see the only two Mustang strikeouts in the game, but an error between them would allow R. Haugen to reach base and Proudfoot to score, making it a fresh game going into the second, tied 3-3.

The first three Mustangs to the plate in the bottom of the second inning would get a free pass to load the bases. Shad Greenup wore one for a lead-off hit-by-pitch from the nine-hole to flip the order over; George and Wilson followed with walks. A bases-loaded balk gave the Mustangs the lead and moved George and Wilson into scoring position before Wilkins could work a walk to load the bases for Rodriguez again. Rodriguez hit a hard ground ball down the third-base foul line for a two-RBI double to give the Mustangs their last two runs of the game, and their final lead, 6-3.

Round 2 @ Kennedy

With the completion of the first round, the Heppner/Ione Mustangs found themselves with a road rematch against the #2 Kennedy Trojans on Wednesday May 28, this time traveling to the Trojan’s home field.

If you remember way back in March they met at the Umatilla Sports Complex in the Stanfield Tournament, ending with a 10-0 Trojan win in six innings. This time the Mustangs would force the Trojans to play seven innings but would still fall 6-1.

Keaton Coiner got the start on the mound and took the loss pitching 3.2

innings, giving up six runs (three earned) on four hits with four walks and five strikeouts. Karver Wilkins pitched 2.1 scoreless innings in relief giving up only two hits with no walks and one strikeout to limit the Trojans to single digits in the run column. Wilkins’ lone strikeout was paired with a double play to make for a 1-2-3 fifth inning, the only inning where the Mustangs limited the Trojans to three batters.

It was a rough day at the plate for the Mustangs as well, the only run generated in the second inning by a series of hit-batters. Caylan Proudfoot and Alakae Rodriguez tallied the only hits of the game for the Mustangs, but neither of them in the second inning, when Rodriguez scored the only run. Proudfoot gave them a lead-off runner in scoring position in the third inning with a single advancing to second on an error, but would get stranded as the next three batters would fall in order. Rodriguez tried to start a sixth inning rally with a lead-off double but would be stranded in a first and third situation with Coiner standing on first after a walk.

That’s a Wrap

With the Heppner/Ione Mustang’s second round exit from the playoffs we call it a wrap on the 2025 Mustang Baseball season. It is important to note, Kennedy is playing in a semi-final match-up on June 3 against Portland Christian and I would not be surprised to see them advance to the final, scheduled for June 7. The Mustangs end the season with a 16-9 overall (11-5 league) record finishing fourth in 2A/1A-SD7.

Ryan Haugen led the team pitching with a 7-1 record on 15 starts (16 games played) with a 2.625 ERA in 72.0 innings pitched. Alakae Rodriguez is next in line with a 3-1 record on one start with one save and a 2.673 ERA in 18.1 innings pitched. Keaton Coiner, the only other Mustang pitcher seeing double digit games on the mound finished with a 2-5 record on five starts with a save and a 5.500 ERA in 28.0 innings pitched.

Caylan Proudfoot led the team hitting with a .313/.402/.373 slash line (AVG/OBP/SLG), 25 runs and 20 RBIs on 26 hits and 14 stolen bases. Caleb George follows closely behind him batting .312/.471/.475, 31 runs and 19 RBIs on 25 hits, and leading the team with 21 stolen bases. Jace Wilson finished the season right next to George batting .312/.407/.351 with 23 runs and 17 RBIs on 24 hits with 10 stolen bases. Rodriguez joined the party, being the only other hitter above .300 with double digit at bats, he went .307/.435/.387 with 28 runs and 17 RBIs on 23 hits with 14 stolen bases.

This marks the end of Mustang Baseball for the three graduating seniors Mason Orem, Shad Greenup and Karver Wilkins. All three will be missed in the starting line-up next year, but they leave the program in good hands. Six of the nine starters will be returning, lots of young talent already on the team, and I can assure you there is a quality class of incoming freshmen to fill the roster spots.

What a season, boys! Go Mustangs!

Lady Mustangs fall to Grant Union but end season strong

Heppner finishes 19-5 overall and 9-3 in league play



Hailey McDaniel catches fly ball in left field. -Contributed photo



Maya Payne pitching. -Contributed photo



Avree Lathrop fields a bunt and throws a runner out at first. -Contributed photo



Isa Payne hits a homerun. -Contributed photo

The Heppner Lady Mustangs’ postseason run came to an end on Friday, May 30, with a 14–5 loss to the Grant Union Prospectors in the third round of the OSAA 2A/1A state playoffs. Despite the defeat, Heppner capped off a stellar season ranked No. 1 in the state, finishing with a 19–5 overall record and 9–3 in league play.

Junior Isabel Payne led the way offensively in the playoff loss, going 3-for-4 with a solo home run in the first inning, a single in the third and another in the sixth. Sophomore Ava Gerry added a two-run homer to center in the third, helping Heppner stay within reach before Grant Union broke the game open in the later innings.

Grant Union got on the board early with a solo shot by Reece Jacobs in the first, then poured in five runs in the second and five more in the sixth, powered by home runs from Addy Northway, Savannah Watterson, and a second homer from Jacobs.

Maya Payne pitched a complete game for the Mustangs, striking out three, but the Prospectors racked up 17 hits and capitalized on key errors.

Heppner Varsity Mustangs accumulated 12 hits in the game. Gerry drove the middle of the lineup, leading Heppner Varsity Mustangs with three runs batted in. The infielder went 2-for-4 on the day. Payne collected two hits for Heppner Varsity Mustangs in four at bats.

Mustangs Dominate Elgin in Second Round

The loss followed a

commanding 21–5 victory over Elgin on Wednesday, May 28, in the second round of the playoffs. In that game, Keeley Nairns starred with five RBIs on three hits, including a bases-clearing double in a seven-run third inning.

Heppner’s bats were unstoppable, recording 19 hits and scoring in every frame. Payne, Nairns and Henrichs all had three hits apiece, while multiple others contributed to a fourth-inning rally that brought in nine more runs.

Payne also pitched five solid innings in that game, allowing just five runs on six hits while striking out three.

A Season to Remember

Although the Mustangs came up short of a championship run, the 2025 season will go down as one of the program’s best. Behind strong leadership, explosive offense, and a deep roster of talent, Heppner proved they could compete with anyone in the state—and earned their spot at the top of the OSAA 2A/1A rankings out of 45 teams.

With key players returning next season and a strong core already in place, the Lady Mustangs will look to build on this momentum and return stronger in 2026.

BUCKNUM'S TAVERN
146 N Main Street
Heppner
541-676-5274

Lunch & Dinner Menu

6/5 - 6/11

Thursday - BLT on wheat with avocado & grapes
Congratulations Ione Senior Graduates
Friday - Turkey & Ham sub sandwich with pasta salad
Saturday - Hot dog, chips, and cup of ice cream
Congratulations Heppner Senior Graduates
Sunday - Closed
Monday - SW Grilled chicken salad
Tuesday - 1/4 breakfast burger w/strawberry orange fruit salad
Tuesday Night 6-9pm \$2 hard shell tacos
Wednesday - Italian chopped salad with garlic bread

UPCOMING EVENTS

Flag Day Ceremony June 14 - Come join the ceremony that tells the history of the flag
Father’s Day Picnic June 15 - CutsforthPark (members and their guests)

Lodge Hours:
Wed 4pm to close with dinner at 6pm
Thurs 4pm to close (Lodge at 8pm)
Fri & Sat 4pm to close with dinner from 5pm to 8pm off the menu

HEPPNER ELKS 358

676-9181 "Where Friends Meet" 142 North Main

Members and their Guests

SUBMIT NEWS, ADVERTISING & ANNOUNCEMENTS
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SEND US PHOTOS
START A NEW SUBSCRIPTION

Leaf & Filter

GUTTER PROTECTION

Spring showers may bring costly home repairs

Spring rain can overwhelm clogged gutters, leading to overflow causing damage to your home.

CALL 1-855-536-8838 **TO SCHEDULE YOUR FREE INSPECTION**

Promo Code: 285

*\$250 discount (no cash value) is for same-day signing only. This offer cannot be combined with any other promotion or offer. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. Expires: 6/30/25. See website for all license and registration numbers.

We Buy Houses For Cash!

Liz Buys Houses Connects Home Sellers with Legitimate Cash Buyers Nationwide!

No Repairs. No Fuss.

- Fair Cash Offer
- Quick Closing
- No Realtor Fees
- No House Repairs
- Simple Home Sale
- Convenient Closing Date

Call (866) 249-8679

SYKES BROTHERS PRINTING

DESIGN.PRINT.PUBLISH

Lexington Hunter Education

The course is a 1 day **Field Day** on June 14, 2025 at 8:00 am. The class requires students to take an approved online course and bring the certificate with you. Instructions for signing up at <http://vem.myodfw.com/eventprofile/174>. For more information contact instructor Jim Marquardt at 541-969-4845. For help signing up contact 855-686-1055 or odfwhelp@payitgov.com

Free to the public Hopeful Saints presents!!

MUSIC IN THE PARK! 5-7 PM

June 8 - Wasteland Kings

Funded by Morrow County Unified Recreation District

For questions please call contact Cody High at 541-256-0847

DID YOU HEAR?

May is National Hearing Month!

Call today for a hearing evaluation with the **ONLY** locally owned & operated hearing specialist in Hermiston!

NEW LOCATION!
405 N. 1st St., Suite 106
Hermiston, OR
Phone: 541-303-1250
vernashearingcarecenter@gmail.com
vernashearingcarecenter.com

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:
MONDAY 5:00 P.M.