

## GP will have to shore up defense at Oregon City

By Lance Ogden of the Daily Courier

The Grants Pass High football team once again will make a healthy preseason trip on Friday, as the Cavemen travel to Oregon City for a nonconference contest with the Pioneers.

After opening with a 61-6 victory at Hood River (612 miles round trip) during the season's opening weekend, the Cavemen fell to 1-1 when they dropped their home opener 35-18 to Class 5A Sherwood this past Friday.

This week the Cavemen will make a 484-mile round trip as they attempt to get back on track.

Grants Pass will have to figure out a way to stop the run, because the Pioneers (0-2 overall) love to put the ball in tailback Thomas Coyle's hands and run between the tackles behind an offensive line that averages 240 pounds.

During this past Friday's game, the Bowmen were able to exploit the Grants Pass defense when they rushed for 302 yards.

"We need to run our D package," Grants Pass coach John Musser said. "Last week we tried to package a different D scheme to play (against their motion) offense, and it just doesn't work with high school kids.

"We need to attack, penetrate and have our linebackers play downhill to stuff the run."

Coyle is a 5-foot-9, 194-pound senior who Musser refers to as a "strong, fast runner."

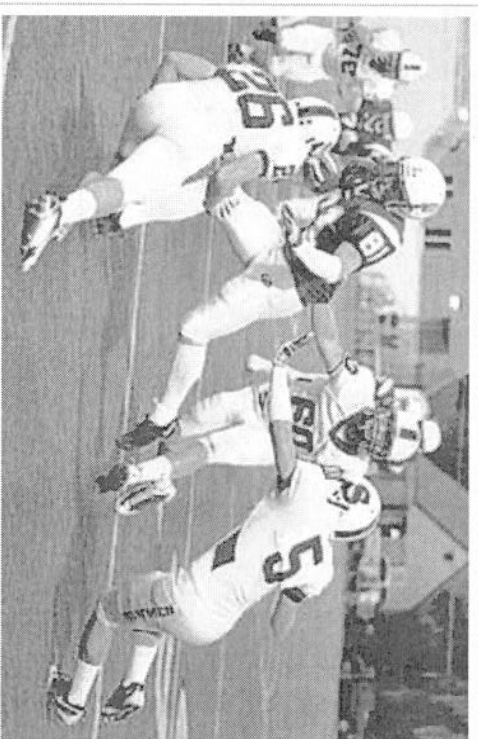
The second-year Grants Pass coach said he expects Oregon City to run the ball about 70 percent of the time, but the Pioneers will ask quarterback Zach Roberts (6-foot, 175) to keep the Cavemen honest.

Defensively, the Pioneers are led by linebacker Austin Smith (6-3, 215) and defensive end Taylor Meyrick (6-5, 276).

Jordy Romick gives Grants Pass a viable run/pass threat at quarterback. Against Sherwood, the senior was 17-of-31 passing for 263 yards. He also rushed the ball 13 times for 64 yards.

"He's one of the more athletic kids that we've seen in a while and is an obvious playmaker," Oregon City coach Dane Iverson said of Romick. "But our whole philosophy is to play team (4-4) defense and do a good job of pursuing the football.

"We're not going to do anything special for Jordy, but we do need to know where he's at at all times."



KEVIN LAUNIUS/Daily Courier  
Grants Pass' Ronnie Fields (81) and his Caveman teammates will travel to Oregon City to take on the Pioneers on Friday.

And expect Romick to distribute the ball to a variety of players.

"We need to get (slotback) Brock (Dean), (tight end) John (Tardieu), (receiver) Jonz (Olander) and (receiver) Ronnie (Fields) all touches on offense," Musser said. "The more we can spread the ball out via passing, the more time we can buy to develop our run game.

"Ultimately, we would like to be 50-50 (run-to-pass ratio)."

Musser also went on to say he believes the Cavemen have bounced back since Friday's loss to Sherwood and are ready for Oregon City.

"The kids were a bit pouty on Sunday during films, but they had a great day (Monday) and have rebounded," he said. "Football is a series of sprints that make up one big marathon.

"We lost the sprint last week, but the overall race is still going and we're going to get in front of the pack."

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