



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Senior outfielder Amanda Evola was one of Western Oregon's top hitters during the 2014 season.

## Promise: WOU has new look

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WOU coach Lonny Sargent is experimenting with a variety of lineups, but sophomores Lexi Jennings, Destiny Kuehl and Walla Walla Community College transfer Brandy Knowles, a junior, have each started at least four of the Wolves' first six games.

"I think our younger girls this year are more comfortable than last year," Williams said. "I think last year, our newer girls were more nervous and intimidated."

Sargent may be looking to solidify his lineup, but he has confidence that there won't be a drop off in quality.

"The big thing for us is to just see how we gel together as a group," Sargent said. "I want to see how we play defensively and offensively. We split up our seasons in pre-season, regular season and the postseason, if we can make it that far. For our pre-season, wins and losses aren't as important as our growth as a group."

Western Oregon is not without returning threats. Williams, the Wolves' most experienced returning pitcher, will see her role increase greatly after making only 11 appearances in the circle in 2014.

"I've worked on my drop ball," Williams said. "That's what I threw against Central Washington (during the GNAC tournament) and I felt like I needed to work on that to be successful in conference."

Junior Stephanie Morgan and sophomore Sammi Cadwallader also return in the pitcher's circle. Newcomers Alyson Boytz, a junior, and Lizzet Dominquez, a freshman, also will contribute as

the Wolves look to replace Bryll and Kelli Demianew, who combined for 24 wins last season.

At the plate, Evola, (outfielder) a first-team all-GNAC selection in 2014, returns after batting .403 with eight home runs and 55 RBIs — all team highs — as does 2014 GNAC Freshman of the Year Kelsi Gardner (infielder).

"(Kelsi) came in and would get frustrated with herself," Sargent said. "We want to try and get her to understand there are going to be some failures that you have. It's how you handle those failures that will be crucial to your success. Her mental state is evolving. You can see it in her confidence."

WOU was picked as co-favorites with Central Washington in the preseason GNAC coaches poll, and Evola and Williams are hoping to lead this group to back-to-back titles.

"Amanda just goes out there and works hard every day, that's how she likes to lead," Sargent said. "Jourdan, she leads by example too, but she's more vocal about it."

As Evola and Williams prepare to finish their journey at WOU together, both seniors are optimistic for the season and are ready to go out on top.

"If you have high expectations, it'll make us work harder to achieve that goal," Evola said. "Last year, the key word for us was finish. We showed that in the last game of the GNAC tournament. I think we're going to carry that with us this year and finish every game and every play."

### Itemizer-Observer

## Athlete of the Week



**Kylie Nash**  
Central High

Nash, a junior, came through in a major way for Central's girls basketball squad. Nash scored a combined 41 points during the Panthers' victories over Woodburn and South Albany. Nash recorded 20 points against the Bulldogs and 21 against the Rebels, helping Central retain possession of third place in the Mid-Willamette Conference. Nash nearly outscored the entire South Albany team, which scored 26 points.



**Garret Harpole**  
Western Oregon

Harpole, a senior, helped wake up Western Oregon baseball team's offense against Point Loma Nazarene on Saturday. After struggling through the first two games of WOU's series, when Harpole had just one hit, he recorded three hits, six RBIs and two runs scored during a 17-0 Wolves' victory in the first game of a doubleheader. The win was Western Oregon's first of the season.

To submit nominations for the Itemizer-Observer Athlete of the Week, contact Sports Editor Lukas Eggen at 503-623-2373 or leggen@polkco.com by 9 a.m. on Monday.

### WESTERN OREGON ROUNDUP

# Men's basketball rallies twice

## Wolves' second-half efforts dominate opponents

### Itemizer-Observer staff report

The Western Oregon men's basketball team may be getting a new nickname: The comeback kids.

Trailing Northwest Nazarene 61-57 with two minutes left in the game on Saturday, the nationally ranked Wolves appeared to be in danger of falling to the Crusaders.

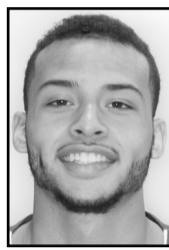
Western Oregon responded with a 9-1 run to finish the game and earned a 66-62 Great Northwest Athletic Conference win over the Crusaders.

"(Saturday) was an exhausting, physical, hard-fought game," WOU coach Brady Bergeson said.

Devon Alexander scored 19 points for the conference-leading Wolves (12-1 GNAC).

Saturday's win wasn't Western Oregon's first comeback victory of the week.

WOU overcame a 10-point second-half deficit to Central Washington en route to a 78-71 win on Thursday. Junior Andy Avgi scored 27 points, while Alexander added 15 points to lead the



Alexander

Wolves, who have won 10 straight.

Western Oregon improved to 20-3 overall, marking the first time since the 1996-97 season the team has reached 20 or more victories in a season.

WOU plays at Saint Martin's on Wednesday (today) in the ROOT Sports GNAC Game of the Week. Tipoff is scheduled for 8 p.m.

### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL STRUGGLES:

Western Oregon's women's basketball team would likely want to forget its trip to Alaska last week. The Wolves opened with a 60-47 loss to Alaska Fairbanks on Thursday. Senior Dana Goularte and sophomore Jordan Mottershaw each scored 11 points to lead WOU, which shot 26.6 percent from

the field. The Wolves' troubles continued against Alaska Anchorage on Saturday. WOU fell behind 19-0 in the first half before losing 77-51. Goularte and Mottershaw scored 10 points each to lead the Wolves (5-15 overall, 2-10 Great Northwest Athletic Conference).

Western Oregon returns home to host Simon Fraser Thursday at 7 p.m. and Western Washington Saturday at 7 p.m.

### BASEBALL EARNS FIRST WIN:

For at least one game, Western Oregon's base-

ball team's bats came alive, as the Wolves went 1-3 at Point Loma Nazarene last week. WOU won the first game of a doubleheader on Saturday 17-0 to earn its first victory of the season. Matt Taylor went 4 for 6 at the plate, while Garret Harpole had three hits and six RBIs to lead the Wolves to the win. Western Oregon lost the other three games, 4-3, 9-4 and 2-0. WOU plays a four-game series at Cal State Monterey Bay Thursday through Saturday.

### SOFTBALL OPENS SEASON:

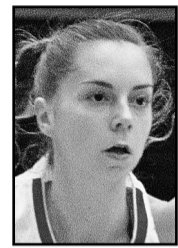
Western Oregon's softball team kicked off its 2015 season with a 2-4 start at the National Fastpitch Coaches Association Division II Leadoff Classic in Tucson, Ariz., Friday through Sunday.

The Wolves opened their year with a 4-1 loss to 16th-ranked St. Mary's of Texas before earning an 11-6 win over New Haven on Friday. Western Oregon dropped its next three games before WOU earned a 4-2 win over Molloy on Sunday in

its weekend finale. Senior Amanda Evola batted .435 with 10 hits over the six games, while Brandy Knowles recorded eight RBIs and two home runs. The Wolves will play six games at the Desert Stinger Tournament in Las Vegas on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.



Knowles



Mottershaw

### PREP BOYS BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

# Central still tied for second

## Panthers break losing streak against South Albany

### Itemizer-Observer staff report

INDEPENDENCE — Central's boys basketball team snapped a three-game losing streak on Friday after earning a 47-44 win over South Albany.

Alec Barba scored a career-high 17 points for the Panthers, who jumped out to a 23-10 lead after the first quarter and

held on for the victory. "We came out and had a strong first quarter," Central coach Tim Kreta said. "Alec Barba got his first start and hit his first three shots that were 3-pointers, and we were able to keep their bigs in check."

The Panthers opened the week suffering a 44-38 loss to Woodburn on Feb. 4. Kaj Bansen scored 13 points, but a second quarter that saw Central outscored 18-0 was too much to overcome.

"We came out really slow and the kids were really disappointed in their play," Kreta said.

The Panthers entered the week 11-6 overall, 5-3 in Mid-Willamette Conference play and were in a three-way tie for second place with Corvallis and Crescent Valley as Central hosted Dallas Tuesday night after press time. The Panthers play at Crescent Valley on Friday.

**DALLAS RECOVERS FROM LOSS:** The Dragons bounced back from one of their worst offensive performances as the Dallas boys basketball team looks to move up in the Mid-Willamette Conference. The Dragons opened with a 53-27 loss to Silverton on Feb. 4. "We shot the ball about as poorly as I've seen, going 15 percent in the first half and finishing the game at 21 percent," Dallas coach Trent Schwartz said. The Dragons bounced back against Woodburn, earning a 47-27 win on Friday. Everett Minahan scored 13 points, while Spencer McCarron added eight points. The Dragons entered Tuesday night's game at Central in fifth place in the MWC with a 4-4 record, one game behind Central, Corval-



AARON YOST/for the Itemizer-Observer

Central coach Tim Kreta (right) argues a call during the Panthers' 47-44 win over South Albany on Friday night, snapping a three-game losing streak.

lis and Crescent Valley for second place. Dallas faces South Albany on Friday.

### PERRYDALE HOPES TO MAKE POSTSEASON PUSH:

With one game remaining in the regular season, the Perrydale boys basketball team's postseason hopes may come down to the wire. The Pirates dropped a pair of Tri-River Conference contests, falling to East Linn Christian 45-44 on Feb. 4 and Western Menonite 68-45 on Friday. Chad Price scored 17 points, while Troy Trembly added 14 points against the Pirates. The losses dropped the Pirates to 8-12 overall and 4-8 in league play, good for a four-way tie for fifth place with St. Paul, East

Linn Christian and Santiam Christian. The top six teams advance to the league playoffs, which begin Monday. Perrydale hosts St. Paul Friday at 7 p.m. for its regular season finale.

### FALLS CITY LOOKS TO FINISH STRONG:

Falls City's boys basketball team earned a 63-36 nonleague win over Eddyville Charter on Thursday. No details were reported. The Mountaineers hosted Livingstone Adventist Tuesday after press time and play at Jewell on Friday in the team's regular season finale. Falls City entered the week with a chance to move ahead of Livingstone into the fifth seed.

# Splash: Brothers lead Central

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The winner of each individual and relay event at the district meet gains an automatic berth to the Class 5A state championship meet. Open lanes are filled with the next fastest times up to 12 competitors.

"If the boys have a good performance on Saturday, they could get to state," Bemrose said.

Regardless of whether they make state, Bemrose expects his swimmers to compete on Saturday in the consolation or the finals.

"The fitness is there," Bemrose said. "If everyone cleans up their technique off the wall and focuses when they get tired, all the swimmers should surpass their ranking for the district meet."

### Central

Central's state swimming hopes will likely fall to brothers Nathan and Daniel Glade.

Nathan, a senior, qualified for the Class 4A-3A-2A 1A state swim meet in the 100 breaststroke as a junior, while Daniel has shown speed in the 500 freestyle, Panthers coach Shawn Martin said.

"I know if Nathan can make it to state, we can learn from our mistakes in previous years and put something together," Mar-

tin said. "Daniel is showing vast improvement and the dynamic of the two of them in practice together pushes them both to their limits."

The Glade brothers started doing double workouts voluntarily, and now that extra work could pay off in a big way.

"Their attitude has become that of dedicated student-athletes that Central has only a few that could ever compare with," Martin said. "If Daniel keeps up his work, he will be a scary competitor in the years to come."

On the girls side, Central's relay teams have an outside shot of qualifying for state, though it will be difficult for swimmers like senior Sabrina Cedillo.

"(These girls are) the best shot our girls have had to

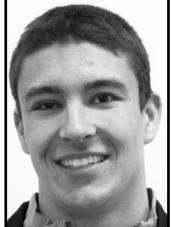
qualify a relay (to state) and our boys teams are on the edge as well," Martin said.

While the future may be bright, Martin said in the present he's not burdening his swimmers with expectations. Instead, he wants them to be ready to give it everything they've got.

"Districts are a struggle to prepare for with so little knowledge of the way our 5A state competitions will pan out," Martin said. "The goal is to have the kids focus on what they can control and be confident in their abilities."



Cedillo



N. Glade