

PREP BASKETBALL

Dragons find groove before play-in round

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-ObsERVER

DALLAS — Dallas' girls basketball coach David Brautigam was looking for the Dragons to end the regular season with some momentum.

Dallas was coming off a pair of two-point losses to both Silverton and Central — games that saw the team score 31 and 33 points, the team's lowest offensive outputs of the season.

The Dragons responded with an 80-9 win over Woodburn on Feb. 22 and a 64-63 win over South Albany on Friday.

"What I told our coaching staff and our players about the losses was that we were one or two possessions away from winning those games," Brautigam said. "We don't need to reinvent the wheel. We just focused on the little things."

That focus paid off for the Dragons, who ended the regular season with a 13-10 record overall and 8-6 in Mid-Willamette Conference play — good for fourth place.

"I think it's great to have that momentum going (into the postseason)," senior Stefani Tallon said. "Knowing we can keep building on that is really helpful."

Girls play-in

What: OSAA Class 5A girls state play-in game.
Who: North Eugene (11-12 overall, Midwestern League No. 5) vs. Dallas (13-10 overall, Mid-Willamette Conference No. 4).
When: Wednesday (today), 7 p.m.
Where: Dallas High School.
Admission: Adults, \$6; students and children, \$4.
What's at stake: The winner advances to the first round of the state playoffs on Saturday.

The Dragons will host North Eugene Wednesday (today) at 7 p.m. North Eugene finished fifth in the Midwestern League with an 11-12 record overall and an 8-6 mark in league play. North Eugene played two games against MWC teams during the regular season, falling to South Albany 54-46 on Dec. 5 and losing to Crescent Valley 63-49 on Jan. 3.

"North Eugene reminds me and has similar type players to teams that are in our league," Brautigam said. "I think our league has prepared us well for this team. I believe we match up well. All we need to worry about is taking one game at a time and playing our game on Wednesday (today)."

The winner advances to the first round of the state playoffs on Saturday.

Getting to host North Eugene is one more opportunity to play in front of a home

crowd — something that players revel in.

"I think it's awesome," senior Becca Ronco said. "I hope we get a lot of fans out, because I think that helps with our energy."

But players know not to get too comfortable. The Dragons have hosted numerous play-in games before and know firsthand what can happen when the team doesn't come out ready to battle.

"We've had the home play-in before, and we've seen it taken for granted a little bit," Tallon said. "We know what can happen and that there are no off days."

The winner of Saturday's game advances to the state quarterfinals on March 8 at Gill Coliseum in Corvallis.

"We have to play as hard as we can — like it's our last game — because from here on out, every game could be our last," Tallon said.



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-ObsERVER

Dallas senior Olivia Nelson drives past a Woodburn defender on Feb. 22. The Dragons defeated Woodburn 80-9. Dallas hosts North Eugene Wednesday (today) at 7 p.m.

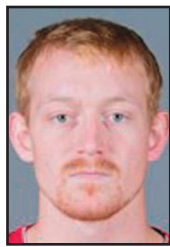
WESTERN OREGON ROUNDUP

Men's basketball looks to defend title

Itemizer-ObsERVER staff report

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon's men's basketball team ended the regular season with a 72-56 win over Montana State Billings on Saturday. Tanner Omlid scored 17 points and grabbed eight rebounds. Ali Faruq-Bey and Demetrius Trammel each added 11 points, and Evan Garrison had 10 points.

Western Oregon ended the regular season with a 16-12 record overall and a 13-7 mark in Great Northwest Athletic Conference play,



Omlid

good for third place. The Wolves were one of six teams to qualify for the GNAC Men's Basketball Championships, which begins Thursday in Lacey, Wash. WOU will play No. 6 Montana State Billings. The winner advances to face No. 2 Alaska Anchorage in the semifinals on Friday. The GNAC title

game will be held Saturday.

The winner of the championships gains an automatic berth to the NCAA Division II Men's Basketball Tournament.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CLOSES SEASON WITH WIN, LOSS: Western Oregon's women's basketball season came to a close on Saturday as the Wolves lost to Seattle Pacific 70-60. WOU defeated Saint Martin's 73-61 on Thursday. Shelby Snook scored a team-high 14 points against Saint Martin's. Kaylie Boschma added 12 points, five rebounds and two steals.



Snook

Snook scored a game-high 20 points against Seattle Pacific. The Wolves finished the season with an 8-19 record overall and 4-16 GNAC record.

SOFTBALL WINS THREE OF FOUR: Western Oregon's softball team won three of four games against the College of Idaho on Saturday and Sunday. WOU won 5-4 and 9-0 on Sat-

urday before splitting a doubleheader on Sunday, falling 5-4 before winning 12-1.

Pitcher Sammi Cadwallader earned a complete game shutout in the second game on Saturday. In the series finale on Sunday, Ashlee Lynch hit a grand slam, helping the Wolves cruise to the victory — extending WOU's lead to 9-0 in the fourth inning. Western Oregon opens GNAC play by hosting Simon Fraser on March 11.

SOFTBALL WINS THREE OF FOUR: Western Oregon's track and field team competed at the Seattle Pacific Final Qualifier on Saturday. Sophomore Olivia

Woods won the women's 800-meter run in 2 minutes, 10.14 seconds, setting a new school record. Suzanne Van De Grift finished second in 2:10.57 and junior Megan Rose finished in 2:13.18. All three times were NCAA provisional qualifying marks.

Junior Kennedy Rufener finished the women's mile in an NCAA provisional qualifying time of 4:57.01. Sophomore Dustin Nading won the men's mile in 4:05.22.

The NCAA Division II Indoor Track and Field Championships will be held March 10-11 in Birmingham, Ala.

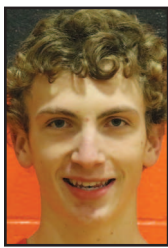
DALLAS BASKETBALL

Dragons end season with a pair of losses

Itemizer-ObsERVER staff report

DALLAS — Dallas' boys basketball team ended its season with a pair of losses.

The Dragons lost to Woodburn 62-44 on Feb. 21 before falling to South Albany 64-59 on Friday.



Richey

Weisensee led the Dragons against Woodburn with 12 points.

Jason Richey scored a team-high 21 points against South Albany.

The Dragons ended the season on a five-game losing streak.

Dallas finished the season with a 7-17 record overall and a 2-12 mark in Mid-Willamette Conference play. The Dragons took eighth in the team standings.

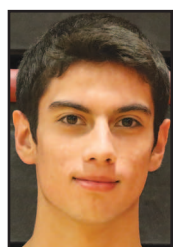
Itemizer-ObsERVER staff report

INDEPENDENCE — Central's boys basketball team ended the regular season with a pair of close losses, falling to Corvallis 56-55 on Feb. 21 and to Woodburn 54-49 on Friday.



Barry

Andrew Barry scored a team-high 14 points against Corvallis. Peter Mendazona



Barba

added 13 points, and Brendan Lesmeister and Alec Barba recorded 10 points each.

"(Corvallis) was a tough loss," coach Tim Kreta said. "We came in prepared and knew what we wanted to do, but did not finish the game the way we would have liked."

Mendazona scored a



Mendazona

game-high 18 points against Woodburn, but the Panthers trailed 33-15 at the half, and a fourth-quarter rally fell short.

The Panthers finished the regular season with a 12-11 record overall and an 8-6 record in Mid-Willamette Conference play, finishing in fourth. Central hosted

Online

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Eagle Point in the state play-in round Tuesday after press time.

The winner advances to the first round of the state playoffs on Friday. First-round winners move on to the state quarterfinals on Tuesday at Gill Coliseum in Corvallis.

CENTRAL BASKETBALL

Panthers close regular season with losses

Pirates: Perrydale faces Crosshill Christian

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The Pirates built their lead to as many as 17 in the third quarter, thanks to a balanced attack seeing key contributions from Dustin Silver, Daniel and David Domes, Haylen Janesofsky, Cooper Butler, and Jacob Pope.

"It felt really good out there," Silver said. "It was really loud and intense."

The win didn't come as easily as the score might suggest. Powers pulled to within nine points twice in the fourth quarter, and Janesofsky fouled out with about four minutes left in the game. Some shaky free-throw shooting down the stretch kept it interesting, but the Pirates never let Powers seriously threaten.

"We just needed to stay calm and play our game," Butler said. "We didn't let anything else get in our head."

When the final buzzer rang out, the celebration was on.

"Those were the longest three minutes with fouls and dead balls," Janesofsky said. "It's a relief to know (we're going to Baker)."

The Pirates enter the quarterfinals as the fifth seed and will face a familiar opponent — Crosshill Christian. The two teams have clashed three times. Perrydale has won all three matchups — most recently a 48-34 win in the Casco League tournament title game on Feb. 17.

Crosshill Christian defeated No. 4 Triangle Lake 65-58 on Friday in its first round playoff game.

Despite the success Perrydale had against Crosshill Christian, coach Brian Domes said the Pirates can't afford to look ahead.

"We've handled them three times, but they've kept

it close," Brian Domes said. "They've been here before but the kids have an understanding that this is a very winnable game and we can move on and play for something pretty meaningful."

The winner advances to the semifinals on Friday against the winner of No. 9 North Douglas vs. No. 1 Sherman.

The loser advances to the consolation bracket on Thursday.

Perrydale is headed to Baker City for the first time this century, and for many of the players, it was a promise to each other finally fulfilled.

"You have no idea how much this means to us," Daniel Domes said. "... Haylen and I have dreamt about this since sixth grade. We'd tell each other, 'just wait until we're in high school.' ... It's literally a dream come true."



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-ObsERVER

Perrydale's Dustin Silver, right, battles for a rebound against Powers on Friday night.