

CLASS 1A PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

# Falls City's run comes to an end

*Mountaineers fall in the first round of OSAA Class 1A state playoffs*

By Lukas Eggen  
The Itemizer-Observer

PORTLAND — Falls City's girls basketball team etched itself into school history, but on Feb. 25, the Mountaineers saw their historic run come to an end.

Falls City lost to Portland Lutheran 50-39 in the first round of the Class 1A state playoffs. But the undermanned squad proved its regular season success was no fluke.

"I told the girls that you can't fear failure if you want to be successful," Mountaineers coach Micke Kidd said. "I saw girls doing things I haven't seen them do this season. I saw girls attacking the rim, taking good shots and playing almost a full game of solid defense."

Falls City came out strong, leading 17-16 at the half, and trailed by just one after three quarters in a game that



Varney

Junior Brittany Varney scored a team-high 17 points, including hitting three 3-pointers in the first quarter, while senior Shea Coker scored all eight of her points in the third quarter to give Falls City an offensive boost to start the second half.

"For how strongly we started the game, I knew that I needed to come out and bust my butt and do everything I can," Coker said.

Senior Tierra Reynolds played through an unknown illness that caused her to vomit each time she left the game, but she refused to sit out. Reynolds finished with

saw the crowd split between Blue Jays and Mountaineers fans.



Coker

six points. "I knew there was a chance it could be our last game," Reynolds said. "I didn't want to walk out knowing I didn't give it my all."

In the end, Portland Lutheran's Danica Roady was the difference, scoring 30 points. She made 12 of 13 free throws in the final period to seal the victory.

"It was an emotional time for me," Coker said. "When I woke up at the beginning of the day, I couldn't believe that we made it and this experience has been amazing."

Falls City will lose two seniors to graduation, but Kidd hopes the team's two freshmen, Drew Ellingson and Sarah Ziola, will build a winning tradition.

"I told the freshmen that they have a long ways to go (in high school)," Kidd said. "I hoped they enjoyed this and that they want to get back to this. The freshmen got better every game this year. I'm excited about their potential."

While Kidd is excited about the future, players knew the current season has been special.

The only difficult part was having to say goodbye after such a special season for the players.

"This was our best game, hands down," Reynolds said. "We put everything out there and we showed how badly we wanted it. We had a few minor mistakes that caught up to us. ... I'm not going to take any regrets. It was my senior year and we made the state playoffs. That's something that Falls City's never done. I just wish it could have lasted a little bit longer."



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer  
Falls City's Allison Kidd drives down the court against Portland Lutheran on Feb. 25. Kidd scored two points.

CLASS 5A PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

## Dragons, Panthers enter play-in round

Itemizer-Observer staff report

POLK COUNTY — Dallas and Central's boys basketball teams competed in the OSAA 5A play-in round Tuesday after press time. The third-seeded Dragons hosted Eagle Point, while the fifth-seeded Panthers played at Crater.

The winners advanced to the first round of the state playoffs scheduled Friday.

Dallas (12-11 overall, 8-6 Mid-Willamette Conference) closed out its regular season with a 51-48 loss to Lebanon on Feb. 24 and a 52-45 defeat to Silverton on Friday.

Everett Minahan and Hayden Broadus scored 15 points each against the Warriors, while Minahan scored 16 points against the Silver Foxes.

Central (13-10 overall, 7-7 MWC) recovered from a 58-36 loss to Corvallis on Feb. 24 to defeat Woodburn 37-30 on Friday.

Kevin Cable scored 16 points against the Spartans, while Tyler Fleming recorded 12 points against Woodburn.

Follow the *Itemizer-Observer* on Twitter and Facebook for results and future schedules.

CLASS 5A PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

## Dallas clinches MWC's third seed

*Dragons to face Eagle Point in OSAA play-in round*

By Lukas Eggen

The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — For years, Dallas' girls basketball team has been told the best is yet to come.

The Dragons' group of seniors of Sarah Mitchell, Makenzie Davis, Taylor Fennell, Brianna Classen and Eva Ronco have helped form the core of Dallas' lineup since they arrived as freshmen. Now, they have one final chance to make a run at a state title.

Dallas, the Mid-Willamette Conference's third seed, hosts Eagle Point Wednesday (today) at 7 p.m. in a Class 5A play-in matchup.

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

The Eagles earned the Midwestern League's sixth seed after finishing 12-11 overall and 3-9 in league play.

But Dallas coach David Brautigam said Eagle Point's is better than its record.

"They have a couple of



AARON YOST/for the Itemizer-Observer  
Dallas players watch during the Dragons' 54-30 victory over Lebanon on Feb. 25.

good scorers, they play good defense and rebound the basketball well," Brautigam said. "They're a solid team."

The Dragons and Eagles posted similar numbers on defense. Dallas gave up 41.4 points per game, while Eagle Point allowed 42.4 points per contest.

The Dragons (14-9 overall, 9-5 MWC) clinched the conference's third seed after defeating Lebanon 54-30 on Feb. 25. Sarah Zwicker scored a game-high 14 points, but it was Dallas' 52-

**Play-in Round**

**What:** Eagle Point at Dallas; Churchill at Central.

**When:** Wednesday, 7 p.m.

**Cost:** \$6 adults, \$4 students.

**Of note:** The winners of the play-in round advance to the first round of the OSAA girls state basketball playoffs. Follow the *Itemizer-Observer* on Twitter and on Facebook for updates.

leadership step up."

Dallas enters the play-in round scoring 51 or more points in five of its last seven matchups. Zwicker and Mitchell give Dallas an inside-out threat, but Brautigam said players must continue to show their resolve if they want to advance.

"They're going to continue to fight," Brautigam said. "You can see it in our character. They care about each other and will do what they can to be successful. We're ready to go on Wednesday (today). We're excited."

## SPORTS BRIEFS

### Local grad qualifies for NAIA meet

LA GRANDE — Tanner Yarbrough will compete at the NAIA Indoor Track and Field Championships Thursday through Saturday.

Yarbrough, a 2011 graduate of Dallas High, is a junior at Eastern Oregon University.

Yarbrough will compete in the weight throw. He set a season-best mark of 55 feet, 6¼ inches, at the Jackson's Invitational in Nampa, Idaho, on Feb. 6.

The mark also hit the NAIA's qualifying mark for the indoor track and field championships.

### Youth softball umpire clinic Thursday

POLK COUNTY — Dallas Kids, Inc. and West Valley Little League will hold a youth softball umpire clinic Thursday from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the LaCreole Middle School cafeteria.

There is no cost to attend.

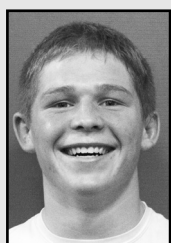
The clinic will go over Little League rules, umpire mechanics and how to handle various situations.

Volunteers are needed for Dallas, Falls City, Perrydale, Monmouth and Independence.

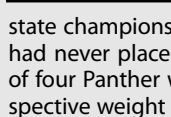
For more information: Kids, Inc., 503-623-6419.

Itemizer-Observer

## Athlete of the Week



### Tanner Swinehart Central High



### Matt Hofenbredl Dallas High

Hofenbredl, a senior, won his third OSAA state wrestling championship on Saturday, defeating Hood River Valley's Christian Marquez for the 132-pound title. The match was a rematch from last year, when Marquez took home the championship. This time, Hofenbredl earned a 7-1 decision to become the second wrestler in Dallas High history to win three state titles during a high school career.

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.

By Lukas Eggen

The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — The Central girls basketball team hopes a difficult league schedule pays big dividends in the postseason.

The Panthers host Churchill Wednesday (today) at 7 p.m. for a Class 5A play-in showdown. The winner advances to the first round of the Class 5A state playoffs on Saturday.

The Lancers finished 9-15 overall and 4-8 in Midwestern League play to earn the league's fifth seed.

Churchill played three Mid-Willamette Conference squads during the regular season. The Lancers defeated Lebanon 49-38 on Dec. 9, lost to Crescent Valley 60-51 on Dec. 12 and fell to Corvallis 53-29 on Jan. 6. Churchill gives up 48 points per game, the most in the Midwestern League, but Central coach Julie McDonald said stats mean little when it comes to the postseason.

"(Churchill) is a team that is beatable, but is going to come ready to fight," Mc-



AARON YOST/for the Itemizer-Observer  
Central junior Kylie Nash looks to drive past a Woodburn defender on Friday. Nash scored 24 points.

Donald said.

Central (13-10 overall, 8-6 MWC) clinched the league's fourth seed prior to last week's regular season finale. The Panthers earned a 62-52 win over Woodburn on Friday. Kylie Nash scored 24 points, while Sai Tapasa added 20 points to lead the Panthers.

Central began its week by falling to Corvallis 37-36 on

Feb. 25. Rianne Huffman scored a team-high 15 points for the Panthers, which led 36-34 before the Spartans' Hannah Creswick hit the game-winning 3-pointer with nine seconds left in the final period.

The Panthers enter the play-in round with a number of offensive weapons, both inside (Tapasa, freshman Krista Omlid) and out-

side (Nash, Huffman).

McDonald hopes the MWC prepared players for whatever Churchill throws at them.

"Our league this year, you had to come ready and prepared every single game," McDonald said. "That's going to help us going into our play-in game. Every game has been a dogfight for us. Even a team like Lebanon with four (league) wins, I wouldn't be surprised if they upset Marist Catholic (in the Warriors' play-in matchup). We're starting to understand what it takes to be consistent throughout a game."

Physically, Central has the talent and athletic ability to compete with any team, McDonald said. The team's biggest battle, however, may not be anything that happens on the court.

"We've been working on our mental toughness and staying mentally focused for four quarters," McDonald said. "We are working to stay within our game plan, move the ball on offense and play good defense."