

SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18
Baseball: Cascade at Central, 3:30 p.m.
Softball: McKay at Central, 4:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 19
Baseball: Central at Philomath, 4:30 p.m. Crow at Perrydale, 4:30 p.m.
Softball: Philomath at Central, 4:30 p.m. Crow at Perrydale, 4:30 p.m.

Boys Tennis: Dallas at North Marion, 4 p.m. Central at Philomath, 4 p.m.

Girls Tennis: North Marion at Dallas, 4 p.m. Philomath at Central, 4 p.m.

Track and Field: Perrydale at McMinnville, 2 p.m. Lebanon, West Salem, Willamette at Dallas Ice Breaker, 3:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 20
Softball: Central at Madison, 4 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21
Baseball: Dallas vs. Rex Putnam at Tigard Tournament, 12:15 p.m.

Track and Field: Western Oregon at Portland State Invitational, Mt. Hood Community College, Gresham, 10 a.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 22
Baseball: Dallas vs. Hillsboro at Tigard Tournament, 1:15 p.m.

Softball: Western Oregon at Central Washington (DH), noon.

MONDAY, MARCH 23
Baseball: Portland Lutheran at Perrydale (DH), noon. Dallas at Tigard, 4:45 p.m.

Softball: Medford Spring Break Classic: Dallas vs. Marist, noon. Dallas vs. Hood River Valley, 4 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 24
Softball: Medford Spring Break Classic: Dallas vs. La Salle, 11 a.m. Dallas vs. Liberty, 3 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25
Softball: Western Oregon at San Francisco State (DH), 1 p.m.

Schedules Subject to Change

2014-15 ITEMIZER-OBSERVER ALL-REGION GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR



Always Driven

Nash takes game to new heights

By Lukas Eggen
 The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Central junior Kylie Nash is always up for a challenge.

During the 2014-15 campaign, Nash helped the Panthers succeed in a new league and showed just how valuable she is.

Nash led Central, averaging 16 points per game, a team high, and shooting 52 percent from the field.

Nash's impact, both in her scoring, and beyond, is what made her the *Itemizer-Observer's* 2014-15 Player of the Year for high school girls basketball.

Nash's love of basketball began early. For nearly as long as she can recall, the basketball court has been her proving ground, a place where age and gender didn't matter.

See **DRIVEN**, Page 11A

Inside

• See the 2014-15 *Itemizer-Observer* All-Region team on page 11A. Look for the All-Region boys basketball team in the March 25 issue.

By The Numbers

16

The number of points per game Nash averaged during the 2014-15 season, a team high.

52

Nash's field goal percentage last season, including shooting 38 percent from the 3-point line.

48

The number of total points per game Central scored. Nash was responsible for a third of the total.

COLLEGE BASEBALL

Pratt's patience paying off big

Senior sees expanding role in starting rotation for Wolves

By Lukas Eggen
 The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — From the moment he transferred to Western Oregon, senior pitcher Jesse Pratt has had one thing in mind.

"I just wanted to be out there playing baseball and giving it the best that I got," Pratt said. "Hopefully, it's good enough to help us win."

After earning a complete game victory against Montana State Billings on Friday, it's clear that now more than ever, Pratt's ability to help the Wolves' baseball team is greater than it's ever been.

Pratt's collegiate athletic career appeared headed in a different direction in 2010. Pratt, a 2010 Central High graduate, played basketball and baseball at Chemeketa Community College. After tearing his left ACL during the 2011-12 basketball season, Pratt's athletic future was put on hold.

"I was definitely a little fearful when I first got back into things," Pratt said. "It felt a little weaker than it used to be, but I just kept working on it."

Pratt recovered from the injury, and earned a spot on WOU's roster after calling Western Oregon for a chance to throw in front of them.



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

WOU senior Jesse Pratt delivers a pitch Friday against Montana State Billings. Pratt threw a complete game, giving up two hits and no earned runs.

Pratt made a combined 34 appearances during his sophomore and junior seasons with the Wolves with one start.

His role is far different during his senior campaign. After two seasons of being a relief pitcher, Pratt is becoming the team's ace.

Pratt, who was named the

conference's Pitcher of the Week on Monday, has seven appearances with six starts entering the week. He leads the Wolves' starters with a 2.61 ERA. He also has a team-high 38 strikeouts and has given up the fewest hits, 31, among WOU's starting rotation, despite pitching the most innings.

Up Next

• Western Oregon hits the road to face Northwest Nazarene for a pair of doubleheaders on Friday and Saturday.

• The Wolves are 9-2 in Great Northwest Athletic Conference play and 13-14 overall.

• The Crusaders are in second place in the conference at 4-4 in GNAC play.

"He's always had good stuff," Wolves coach Kellen Walker said. "He's always been a competitive kid. I think he's matured this year. He stops himself when things aren't going perfectly and he's now able to reset and not let it snowball on him."

Pratt has also worked on making more of his pitches harder to hit.

"I've been working on my changeup and keeping my slider in the strike zone more consistently," Pratt said.

Pratt's emergence this season has helped WOU to a 9-2 start in Great Northwest Athletic Conference play, including winning three of four against preseason favorite Central Washington.

Western Oregon swept Montana State Billings on Friday and Saturday. WOU won a doubleheader 7-6 (11

innings), 8-1 on Friday and 14-5 on Saturday.

Junior outfielder Cody Sullivan hit a walk-off double in the first game of the series, while Pratt threw the



Harpole

second game on Friday, giving up two hits and no earned runs. Garrett Harpole finished the series with five hits and three RBIs.

The final game of the series was postponed until April 17, when WOU visits the Yellowjackets.

"This has been a huge confidence booster," Pratt said. "We had a little rough patch during nonconference, but we've definitely started off strongly in GNAC."

After playing a difficult nonconference schedule that saw WOU go 4-12, Walker said the important thing was to not panic and continue to improve.

"The key for us is concentrating on what we're doing on a daily basis," Walker said. "It's not necessarily who we're playing that is making a difference, it's the commitment we've had to our plan."

See **PRATT**, Page 12A

QUICK HITS

CHS Hall of Fame tickets available

INDEPENDENCE — Tickets are on sale for Central High's Hall of Fame Dessert on April 25.

Cost is \$5 per person. A walk through of the school will take place at 5 p.m. with the dessert evening beginning at 6 p.m. in the CHS Auditorium.

The 2015 Hall of Fame class includes the 1967 state champion football team, 1968 state champion track and field team and 1975 state champion boys basketball team.

Individuals being inducted include boys basketball coach Glen Clark (1974-87), football, basketball and baseball player Dick Wiess (Class of 1961), football, basketball and track athlete Steve McArthur (1969) and volleyball, basketball and tennis athlete Lea Allan (1979).

STAT SHEET

3 The number of NCAA Division II Indoor Track and Field All-Americans earned by Western Oregon. Junior Badane Sultessa became the third when he placed fourth in the 800-meter run final.

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