

CLASS 5A PREP SOFTBALL

# Kerr, Panthers take aim at league

*Sophomore learns from difficult freshman year to emerge as leader*

By Lukas Eggen  
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Jori Kerr wasn't ready for what hit her during the 2014 softball season. As a freshman, Kerr saw extensive playing time at the varsity level.

"I didn't know how to hit a curve ball, or a rise or anything," Kerr said. "I kept grounding out and popping out."

This year, she's no longer the player struggling to find her place.

The Central softball team went 4-0 in non-league action, outscoring opponents 40-5. Kerr has played a major role in that, hitting her first high school home run against McKay on March 18, followed by her second against Philomath.

"The first one was iffy," Kerr said. "When I saw it go out, it was the greatest feeling. I never hit one in a game before. ... Just all the little things with my form have improved everything."

Kerr, who said she trained nearly year-round, also saw an evolution on defense.



Huffman

After years of playing the infield, Kerr was moved to right field as a freshman. It was then she learned perhaps her most important softball lesson.

"The biggest thing I've learned from last year is you don't always get what you want position-wise, but you're contributing to the team," Kerr said. "You're being put wherever the team needs you. That humbled me in a way and kept me unselfish."

This season, Kerr is capable of playing where ever the Panthers need her.

"Now, I'm a good utility player for the team," Kerr said. "I've learned how to play everywhere, so it's turned out for the better."

Kerr is far from the lone Central player to step up so far this season. Senior Ryanne Huffman and junior catcher Kylie Nash are providing the Panthers with consistent bats on offense

and steady hands on defense.



Nash

Central, which began league play against South Albany Tuesday after press time, looks to continue its success in league.

"We've really come together," Kerr said. "Everyone has their sport and is working to improve. Our league is going to be a step up going into 5A. We need to make sure our game is tight and we play well every game."

Central coach Kendra George said she's seen her team make some big strides from last year.

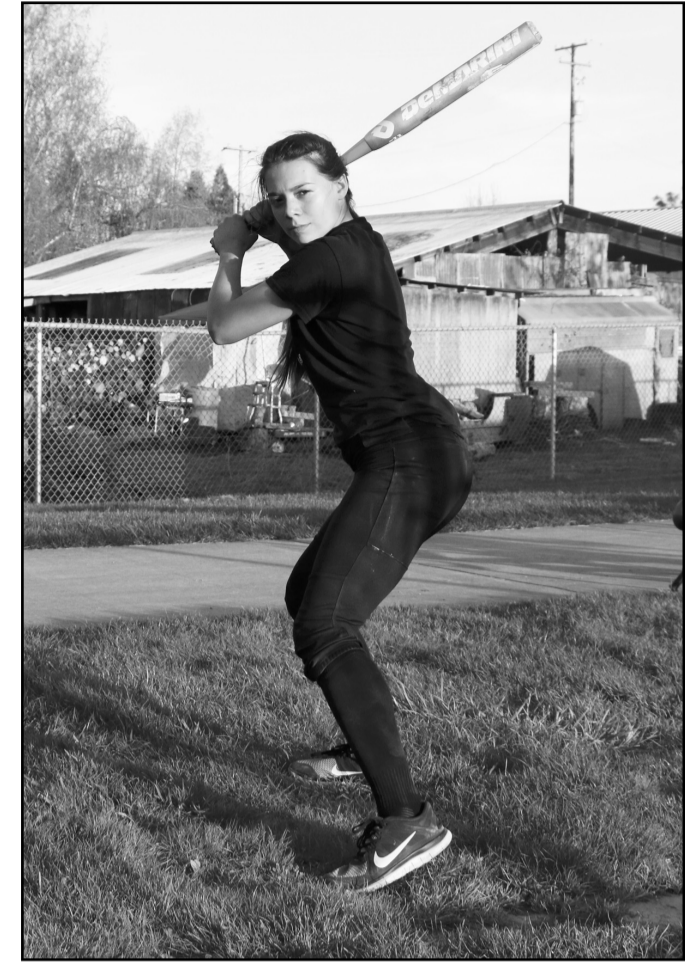
"I'm excited for our league season," George said. "This is a great group of girls and I'm excited for us to compete."

Whatever problems the Panthers do face during the season, Kerr said the team has matured enough to handle them.

"Last year there was a gap between upperclassmen and lowerclassmen, I think,"

Up Next

- Central finished non-league play with a 4-0 record.
- The Panthers outscored opponents 40-5 during that stretch.
- Central opened Mid-Willamette Conference play against South Albany Tuesday after press time.



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Central sophomore Jori Kerr recorded her first two home runs of her high school career this season.

CLASS 5A PREP SOFTBALL

## Dallas picks up first win of year

*El-Hato hits two home runs*

Itemizer-Observer staff report  
MEDFORD — The Dallas softball team earned its first victory of the season at the Medford Spring Break Classic.

The Dragons (1-4 overall) defeated Liberty 8-6 after falling to La Salle 13-12 on March 24.

Kassidy Totten recorded seven hits over the two games.

Yasmine El-Hato hit a pair of home runs during the two contests, including a grand slam against the Falcons.

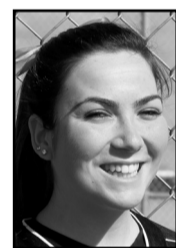
Makena Linn added five

hits and three RBIs. El-Hato also earned the victory in the pitcher's circle against Liberty after two innings of work.

Keisha Sickles got the start.

Dallas was scheduled to open Mid-Willamette Conference play against Woodburn Tuesday after press time.

The Dragons play at Central Wednesday (today) at 4:30 p.m. and South Albany on Friday. Dallas returns home to host Corvallis Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.



El-Hato



Totten

WESTERN OREGON ROUNDUP

## Wolves earn consolation title

*Softball goes 2-5 at Tournament of Champions*

Itemizer-Observer staff report  
TURLOCK, Calif. — Western Oregon's softball team recovered from a rough start to win the Consolation No. 1 championship at the 14th annual Tournament of Champions.

The Wolves (13-20 overall) defeated Academy of Art 3-1 and the University of California-San Diego 4-3 Sunday to clinch the title.

WOU opened tournament play with five straight losses.

Sophomore Kelsie Gardner recorded nine hits during the tournament, including three each against UC San Diego and Acad-

emy of Art. Freshman pinch-hitter Amy Anderson hit a two-out, RBI double in the top of the seventh to propel the Wolves to the victory over the Urban Knights. Seniors Amanda Evola and Jourdan Williams had two hits each against Academy of Art, while pitcher Sammi Cadwallader threw the final four innings to preserve the victory.

Western Oregon hosts Western Washington for a doubleheader Thursday at 2 p.m. before traveling to play at Saint Martin's on Saturday. WOU's game against the Vikings is a makeup for the contests postponed from March 15 due to weather conditions.

BASEBALL DROPS THREE: Garret Harpole hit a grand slam in the series finale, but Western Oregon lost three of four to Northwest Nazarene. The



Pratt

Jesse Pratt earned the victory. Matt Taylor recorded seven hits over the series, while Harpole hit his grand slam to tie the fourth game at six in the sixth inning. The Crusaders responded, however, in the bottom of the sixth with four runs of their own, as Northwest Nazarene took the final two games 3-1, 10-6. Western Oregon plays at Central Washington for a pair of doubleheaders on Friday and Saturday.

TRACK AND FIELD: Junior Sam Moore performed strongly for the WOU track and field team, placing second in the heptathlon at the Mt. Hood



Moore

Multi Meet on Thursday and Friday. Moore's final tally of 3,982 points was 46 behind champion Kiki McDonagh of Warner Pacific. Four WOU athletes took home individual titles at the Willamette Invitational on Saturday. Freshman Cody Warner won the 100- and 200-meter runs in 10.76 and 21.40 seconds, respectively. Freshman Kaleb Dobson placed first in the 110 hurdles with a time of 15.22, while junior Badane Sultessa won the 800 in 1:52.64 to lead the men's squad. Junior Rochelle Pappel took first in the 100 hurdles in 14.51, narrowly beating Rosie Smith of Alaska Anchorage by .03 seconds. The Wolves will compete at the Stanford Invitational Friday and Saturday.

CLASS 5A PREP GOLF

## Dallas, Central open season at Trysting Tree

Itemizer-Observer staff report  
CORVALLIS — The Dallas and Central boys golf teams kicked off the 2015 season at Trysting Tree Golf Course on Monday.

Both teams struggled to keep up with the Mid-Willamette Conference's

top squads. The Dragons placed sixth out of eight teams, with a combined score of 416.

Dylan Cackler led Dallas, scoring a 90 after 18 holes. Mosier Locke was second for the Dragons, recording a 104.

Tyler Kunz (110), Hunter Lindsay (112) and Nolan Miller (113) rounded out Dallas' varsity finishers.

The Panthers finished eighth as a team after scoring 456.

Joey Wittgrodt scored a 106 to lead Central, while

Andrew Love recorded a 110.

Ty Whittemore (118), Madison Delaney (122) and Dylan Lewis (127) also competed for the Panthers' varsity squad.

Crescent Valley won the team title, scoring a 314.

Corvallis finished second with a 319. The Raiders' Kevin Geniza finished first overall with a 69.

The Dragons will host the Mid-Willamette Conference's second league tournament on Monday at Cross Creek Golf Course.

Dallas' girls golf squad will compete in its first tournament of the season on Monday at Mallard Creek Golf Course in Lebanon.

The girls team will then compete at Spring Hill Golf Club in Albany on Tuesday.

## Silver: Senior has high expectations for team



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Senior David Silver will start at catcher for the Pirates.

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"We didn't have a bona fide catcher until David came," Mabry said. "He came out and took advantage of the opportunity to be the guy behind the plate, and we didn't give him a break for the past two years because we didn't have the depth to be able to do that."

Silver built up relationships with pitchers Chad Price, Haylen Janesofsky and Troy Trembly.

"I've learned to expect everything and anything," Silver said. "I like each one of them like a brother."

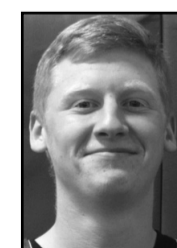
These days, Mabry said when his pitchers need a break, he rarely has to step onto the diamond. It's Silver who approaches the pitch-



Price

er's mound. That level of trust is what sets Silver and the pitchers apart. Silver may be right about the Pirates' season. Perrydale, which played St. Paul Tuesday after press time, opened the season by outscoring opponents 42-8, including two shutouts in a row.

"We've gotten to a point where the younger guys have developed in the program," Mabry said. "The seniors are the first who have been here for four years in the program. They teach the younger guys



Trembly

what's expected of them. They own it." But Mabry wants them to become more dangerous and consistent at the plate. "We've scored pretty consistently, but we've had three or four opportunities with the bases loaded and zero or one outs and only scored once or not at all," Mabry said. "We can't do that in league play. We won't be up six or seven runs. We'll be up one or tied."

While success in non-league play is nice, Silver said it will mean little if the Pirates don't advance to the

Class 2A-1A state playoffs this year. After years of growing in the program, Silver and his teammates are ready for a breakout season.

"We have to leave it all in the past," Silver said. "We've got to come out on the field ready to go physically and mentally. The one game you aren't ready will come back to bite you in the butt."

Perrydale plays at Crow on Friday before opening league play at Country Christian on Tuesday. It will, Mabry hopes, be the start of something special.

"Our motto this year is 'finish,'" Mabry said. "We've finished in the middle of the pack. The guys believe that this is our year to change that."