

COLLEGE TRACK AND FIELD

WOU wins four individual GNAC titles

Western Oregon athletes hope for national championship invites

Itemizer-Observer staff report
MONMOUTH — The Western Oregon track and field team took home four individual titles at the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Outdoor Track and Field Championships on Friday and Saturday.
 Junior Emmi Collier started things off Friday when she won the shot put with a throw of 45 feet, 7 inches, setting a new personal best in the process.
 WOU saw a trio of athletes join Collier on Saturday. Senior Rebecca Laible defended



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 won the 800-meter run in 1 minute, 52.31 seconds.
 Freshman David Ribich pulled away from his rivals in the second heat of the 1,500 to win the event in 3:50.58, also setting a new personal record.

her title in the triple jump, winning with a mark of 38-1¼. On the men's side, junior Badane Sultessa won the 800-meter run in 1 minute, 52.31 seconds.
 Freshman David Ribich pulled away from his rivals in the second heat of the 1,500 to win the event in 3:50.58, also setting a new personal record.

Other notable performances included freshman Cody Warner finishing second in the 200 and freshman Kaleb Dobson taking second in the 400.
 WOU finished fourth in the men's teams standings and fifth in the women's.
 Western Oregon will now wait and see if any of its athletes advanced to the NCAA Division II Outdoor Track and Field Championships. The NCAA was scheduled to release a list of qualifiers Tuesday after press time.



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer
Western Oregon's Badane Sultessa (279) wins the men's 800-meter run on Saturday.

GNAC: Wolves hit two home runs in final game

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 "We were locked into what we were trying to do," Walker said. "The situation of the game, each at bat or play in the infield or outfield, we were focused on what we were trying to accomplish."
 In the deciding game, Matt Taylor and Harpole each hit a two-run home

run to build a 4-0 lead, providing just enough run support to hang on for the one-run victory.
 "It was pretty awesome," Harpole said. "I had been struggling a little bit at the plate. I made good contact and got lucky that it did what I was trying to do. I knew it had the distance,

but it was hooking pretty badly. I was just hoping it would stay fair."
 The Wolves, who played the Crusaders seven times over the season's final two weeks, saw its fifth game between the opponents come down to a single run during that stretch.
 "You feel like you've

played them more than you actually have," Harpole said. "It can feel like it's the only team you've played all year."
 With the victory, the Wolves extended its conference championship streak to 14 seasons.
 "I've been on the team for four years and have had a lot of winning success," Harpole

said. "But just the way the whole season went about, making sure our last game was a win, there were a lot of emotions on the field."
 As WOU celebrates its latest triumph, Walker said while this season had its share of bumps in the road, the players and coaches never strayed in their belief.

"They experienced some adversity this year, some of it is self-inflicted, but I give this group a lot of credit for staying with it the entire year," Walker said. "Their focus never changed. The players and coaching staff stayed together for the entire year. I'm happy for them to have some success."

PREP BASEBALL ROUNDUP

Dallas wins two of three against Central



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer
Central first baseman Luis Amador attempts to tag Dallas' Tucker Weaver on Friday afternoon.

Itemizer-Observer staff report
DALLAS — With the regular season winding down, Dallas and Central's baseball squads faced off in a key Mid-Willamette Conference series.
 And while the Dragons took two of three from the Panthers, the series had major ramifications for the MWC standings.
 Dallas started the series with a 13-1 win on May 5 and a 19-9 win on May 6, before Central won the series finale 4-2 on Friday.
 Pitcher Logan Hatley started the opener, recording 13 strikeouts as the Dragons scored seven runs in the sixth inning to pull away.
 In game two, a nine-run third inning helped the Drag-

ons to the 10-run victory.
 In the final contest, Central pitcher Humberto Alarcon kept the Dragons' offense at bay.
 "It's a rivalry week, and we knew they weren't going to roll over in the third," Dallas coach Scot McDonald said. "Humberto pitched really well."
 Central's series was a reminder of its season so far — the Panthers have shown the ability to compete with the league's best teams as well as see teams pull away.
 "We put together a complete game for once," Panthers coach Zach Miller said. "... We had a complete defensive effort (on Friday) that we didn't have the other games."
 The Panthers win meant

Central entered the regular season's final week at 11-7 in league play, two games ahead of fifth-place Silverton. Dallas' loss dropped it into a tie for second with Crescent Valley at 13-5 in MWC play, three games behind league-leading Corvallis (16-2 MWC).
 The top two teams in the league gain an automatic berth into the OSAA's 16-team state championship bracket. The third- and fourth-place teams host a play-in game, while the fifth- and sixth-seeded squads will play on the road.
 "You can only control what you can," McDonald said. "Whatever happens in the other games, we won't worry about it too much. We are looking for our guys to

perform consistently and get ready for the postseason. ... You want to play the best baseball in the playoffs, so that's what we are working toward."
 Dallas hosts South Albany Wednesday (today) at 2:30 p.m. before playing at South Albany Friday in the team's regular season finale. Central plays at Corvallis Wednesday (today) before hosting the Spartans Friday at 4:30 p.m. to close out its regular season.
PERRYDALE DROPS THREE: Perrydale's baseball team lost a trio of Special District 2 matchups, falling to rival St. Paul 5-0 on May 6, East Linn Christian 10-5 on Friday and Regis 8-2 on Monday. The setbacks dropped the Pirates to 9-9 overall and 3-8 in league play.

ANNUAL PLANT SALE RETURNS



PHOTOS BY EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer
The 25th Annual plant sale of the Polk County Master Gardener's sold more than 15,000 plants, the most ever sold in the sale's history.



With 13 vendors, the annual plant sale had the most vendors in its 25-year history. This year featured native plants, 250 unusual and hard to find plants, 83 varieties of tomatoes and 45 varieties of peppers.



More than 2,500 customers were estimated to have attended this year's plant sale. Money raised from the sale will be used to support projects, gardening clinics and activities for Polk County, including repairs to The Gentle House in Monmouth, expanding support to the Fall Fling educational workshop in Dallas and more.