

**SCHEDULE**

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 1**  
**Baseball:** American Legion: Demarini Dirtbags at Grants Pass, 2 p.m. Division II Junior Baseball: South Salem at Dallas, 6 p.m.

**THURSDAY, JULY 2**  
**Baseball:** American Legion: Demarini Dirtbags at Western Oregon Baseball Tournament, TBA. Division I Junior Baseball: Central at Sprague, 5:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY, JULY 3**  
**Baseball:** American Legion: Demarini Dirtbags at Corvallis Tournament, TBA. Division I Junior Baseball: Astoria at Dallas (DH), 11 a.m. Division II Junior Baseball: West Salem at Dallas, 6 p.m.

**SATURDAY, JULY 4**  
**Baseball:** American Legion: Demarini Dirtbags at Corvallis Tournament, TBA.  
**Recreation:** Monmouth-Independence Mini-Marathon, 11:30 a.m.

**SUNDAY, JULY 5**  
**Baseball:** American Legion: Demarini Dirtbags at Corvallis Tournament, TBA.

**MONDAY, JULY 6**  
**Baseball:** Division I Junior Baseball: McKay at Dallas, 6 p.m.

**TUESDAY, JULY 7**  
**Baseball:** American Legion: Florence at Demarini Dirtbags, 2 p.m. Division II Junior Baseball: Dallas at Silverton, 5:30 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 8**  
**Baseball:** American Legion: Demarini Dirtbags at Florence (DH), 1 p.m. Division I Junior Baseball: Corvallis at Dallas, 6 p.m. McNary at Central, 6 p.m.

Schedules Subject to Change

**QUICK HITS**

**Nelson plays in all-star match**

LA GRANDE — Perrydale High graduate Sarah Nelson competed in the Oregon Athletic Coaches Association 2A-1A volleyball all-star match on June 20 at Quinn Coliseum at the Eastern Oregon University campus.

Hosted by EOU, Nelson was one of 24 players to be chosen from across the state to compete.

Nelson led the Pirates in all statistical categories, despite dealing with a shoulder injury during the 2014 season.

She received first team all-Tri-River Conference honors for her efforts.



Nelson

**STAT SHEET**

**43** The number of years the Monmouth-Independence Mini-Marathon has taken place. Organizers are expecting a big crowd for Saturday's edition.

**400** The 2014 Mini-Marathon featured more than 400 runners and walkers who finished the 2.6-mile course between the two cities.

**43rd MONMOUTH-INDEPENDENCE MINI-MARATHON**

**Mini-Marathon offers inviting route**

Organizers expect a large turnout for the Fourth of July tradition

By Jolene Guzman  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH/INDEPENDENCE — Has it been awhile since you've laced up your running shoes? You wouldn't be alone, but July 4 offers a fun and relatively easy way to end your racing drought in the 43rd annual Monmouth-Independence Mini-Marathon.

At a distance of 2.6 miles, on a mostly downhill course following the July 4 Grand Parade route, the race is the perfect distance to reintroduce you to a fun run without wiping you out for the

**Time For A Fun Run**

**What:** 2015 Monmouth-Independence Mini-Marathon.  
**When:** Saturday, 11:30 a.m.  
**Where:** The 2.6-mile run begins in front of Monmouth City Hall and ends at the old Independence City Hall.  
**Cost:** \$15 adults, \$5 children 10 and younger in advance; \$20 adults, \$10 children for day-of-race registration.  
**How to register:** Online registration is available through noon Thursday at [www.eclecticedge.com](http://www.eclecticedge.com). On-site registration will be available on Saturday from 7 to 10:30 a.m.

rest of the day.

"It's a fun, special event to run the route just before the big parade," said Terry Cable, the race coordinator. "As fitness has been more ingrained in our society, a little

2.6-mile race like this isn't intimidating to anyone. Families run together, and we definitely have people who make it a Fourth of July tradition."

See MINI, Page 12A



KURT HOLLAND/Itemizer-Observer file

The 2014 Monmouth-Independence Mini-Marathon featured more than 400 runners and walkers.



**BASEBALL**  
**Making a change**  
Central graduate looks to make a difference

By Lukas Eggen  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Upon finishing his senior season with Central's baseball team, Chris Rech arrived at a pivotal moment in his life — one that could lead him away from the baseball diamond.

"I feel like I'm called for something bigger," Rech said.

Rech just finished a successful campaign during the spring, one that included throwing a no-hitter and talking with a few possible destinations to play in college. Rech also received an invitation to join the Demarini Dirtbags American Legion team.

One thing kept nagging at him, though. "I dug deep into my heart," Rech said. "I struggled with it for a little while. If you love something a lot, you'll be out there doing it every day and pouring your heart and soul into it. Baseball just wasn't at that point anymore. I want to do bigger and better things."

See CHANGE, Page 11A

**Tennis tourney ready**

By Lukas Eggen  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH/INDEPENDENCE — The Monmouth-Independence Fourth of July tennis tournament is set to return July 11 and 12.

This year's tournament will happen the week after Independence Day because the holiday falls on a Saturday.

"Prior experience showed us trying to have the tournament with the parade going on and all the family commitments just wouldn't work out," Ron Warkentin, tournament director, said.

Signups are open through July 8 for the annual tournament, now in its 42nd year.

Matches will be played at Central High School and at Western Oregon University.

See TENNIS, Page 11A

**INDEPENDENCE SPRINT TRIATHLON**

**Pushing for a good cause**

Triathlon a rewarding, worthwhile endeavor



EMILY  
MENTZER  
Commentary

Standing in line to use the toilet at the Independence Heated Community Pool, it dawned on me: this is why we're here.

A lady next to me said, "They should really get that second toilet fixed."

Yeah, they should.

One of the reasons we were participating in the second annual Independence Sprint Triathlon was to raise money for repairs to the pool house — badly needed upgrades. And when everyone in line was pushed for time — we'd all been hydrating all week in antici-



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer  
Emily Mentzer prepares for the running portion of the Independence Sprint Triathlon on Saturday morning.

tion of high temperatures on Saturday and had to start our first heat in 8 minutes, 56:25 seconds it was more apparent than ever that our cause was good.

More than the cause, something happened to me as I trained for and then competed in my first triathlon.

See CAUSE, Page 12A

**Surviving triathlon a rewarding event**

This is the final of a series of columns chronicling my journey in training for my first sprint triathlon, held on Saturday morning.

The moment had finally arrived.

The Independence Sprint Triathlon was about to begin.

I had my final moments of preparation on Friday by watching the film "300." Granted, it did nothing for my actual preparation, but it did reignite the feeling that it would be cool to throw a spear while screaming a manly shout.

Once Saturday morning came around, I was the first participant to arrive at the Independence pool.

The nerves were high.

To combat this, I started to recite some of my favorite movie lines, from, "Spartans, prepare for glory!" to,



LUKAS  
EGGEN  
Commentary

"I drink your milkshake."

Yeah, not sure what that line was supposed to do for me either.

I quickly went over my race strategy. Luckily, it was simple — Pace yourself.

As soon as the triathlon started the only thing I failed to do was ... pace myself.

There's something about the start of a race that gets my competitive juices flowing.

This was a chance to channel my inner Spartan.

That feeling lasted for maybe 30 minutes.

See SURVIVE, Page 12A

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