

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

# Dirtbags prepare for state tournament

*Withnell Dodgers take two of three from Dirtbags to win league championship*



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer  
Tucker Weaver delivers a pitch against Withnell on Saturday. Weaver helped the Dirtbags earn a 5-4 win.

**By Lukas Eggen**  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — The Demarini Dirtbags aren't ending the regular season with a league title, but that hasn't changed the team's expectations for the American Legion baseball state tournament, which begins July 29. The Dirtbags dropped two of three games against the Withnell Dodgers in the battle for first place. Pitcher Tucker Weaver earned Demarini's lone victory on Saturday at home, throwing a complete game during the 5-4 win.

"The defense worked their butts off the entire time," Weaver said. "They were making plays I thought would be hits for sure, but they were knocking every ball down and came through. Our bats came alive. I was just trying to

**Batter Up**

The Demarini Dirtbags will compete in the American Legion state tournament starting July 29. The team's opponent is yet to be determined. For more information: [www.ballcharts.com/team/?team=Post20Dirtbags&pg=schedule](http://www.ballcharts.com/team/?team=Post20Dirtbags&pg=schedule).

slow down, take my time and keep the ball down."

Despite giving up four runs in the sixth inning, Weaver helped the Dirtbags shut out the Dodgers the rest of the way to preserve the victory.

"Tucker has a rubber arm and conditions a lot," coach Taylor Hetrich said. "We let him have the ball if he wanted it. I think Tucker got in a zone and competed all game. That's what it's all

about — throwing strikes and giving your defense a chance to make plays."

Weaver is just one of several Polk County players to compete for the Dirtbags, joining Central's Luis Amador and Pete Mendezona, Dallas' Logan Hatley and Perrydale's Hunter Johnson.

"There's a lot of energy and great teamwork," Weaver said. "It's a lot of fun and there's a great atmosphere. I think there's more focus without school because you can just focus on baseball." Helping to lead the squad is Hetrich in his first year as head coach of the Dirtbags. Hetrich, a former player at Western Oregon University, served as an assistant coach last season.

Making the leap from assistant to head coach hasn't been difficult, Hetrich said, thanks in large part to his players.

"They want to be out here more than any team I've ever been a part of," Hetrich said. "I couldn't ask for a better group of guys. It's a little different having to manage the game and filling out the lineup card. Other than that, it's a lot of fun. There's not a whole lot of coaching we have to do. These guys have been doing this their whole lives."

The Dirtbags closed out the regular season against Klamath Falls Tuesday after press time. Demarini's tournament opponent will be determined once all regular season games are finished.

Until then, Hetrich said the focus will be on refining and perfecting.

"We have some things to clean up offensively and defensively," Hetrich said. "But we feel we are playing well and that we can compete with anyone."

COLLEGE ATHLETICS

# Western installs new track surface

*Track coach says it will benefit university students, community at-large*

**By Lukas Eggen**  
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon's track is receiving a makeover.

WOU has installed new track surface over the past few weeks.

"We think this will be a longer lasting, more attractive facility," WOU track and field coach Mike Johnson said.

The surface comes with a 10-year warranty, Johnson said.

The track was last resurfaced in 2005.

"The surface underneath is 11 years old," Johnson said. "This new surface, we've been able to remedy some issues and we have a much more uniform surface."

Western Oregon's track and field program hosts multiple meets during the spring, including the Great Northwest Athletic Conference championships.

The university has also hosted multiple high school meets, including the Mid-Willamette Conference Championships this past spring.

"It's important for the championships and invitations we host," Johnson said. "The quality of the

training is affected when your track starts to break down. For any facility, it's harder on your athletes when it starts to break down. The track serves not just track and field, but we have instruction on the track, classes that are taught out there and all of our teams use the track in conjunction with their training."

WOU's track also serves more than just its athletic programs and classes.

The track is also open to public use.

"In non-active hours, we have people who walk and run," Johnson said.

WOU's track and field will be ready for use for the 2015-16 sports seasons.

The track will remain closed to the public until work is completed.

Workers will paint lanes on the track on Thursday and Friday.

Johnson said while the track benefits Western Oregon athletics, this resurfacing is something everyone can enjoy.

"We see (the track) as a community facility that serves the university and the greater community at large," Johnson said. "We're just really, really happy to get this project done."



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Western Oregon University will paint lane lines on its new track surface on Thursday and Friday.

## SPORTS BRIEFS

**Youth softball teams find success**

POLK COUNTY — Three West Valley Little League all-star softball teams competed in the District 7 Little League All-Star Tournament on June 27-29.

The minors team (9-10) finished second, while the Majors squad (11-12) and Juniors (12-14) won the district title.

The Majors team competed at the Little League State Tournament July 11-12, while the Juniors squad competed in the state tournament, held July 11-15.

Minors: Emily Nicholson, Jenna Tompkins, Katie Raines, Kaitlyn Brian, Sadie Wendring, Alexis Moniz, Emily Amador, Daphne Fuller, Sophee Koos, Devon Hedges, Toa Pritchard-Moa, Maya Shinkle and Kalia Baker. Coaches: Kathy Tompkins, Damon Hedges, Casey Fuller

Majors: Abigail Sabuceto, Natalie Davis, Jocelyn McMillan, Hayley Johnson, Sonya Keller, Ana Garus, Micky Garus (coach), Shanoah Saunders, Samantha Baldwin, Madison Rodriguez, Kalie Schrock, Hunter Partain, Miah Friederick, Amaryssa Mooney, Tamra Rober (coach) and Shawna Johnson (coach).

Juniors: Rachael Ruman, Lilly Comer, Mackenzie Broussard, Jessica Nolan, Taryn Hunt

Minors: Paula Van Elverdinghe (coach), Kyra Church, Anna Van Elverdinghe, Jenessa Parnell, Norma Hernandez, Delaney Headley, Kora Logan, Adrian Lee, Nora Parnell (coach) and Bailey Golden.

To view photos of the teams, visit [www.polkio.com](http://www.polkio.com).

**Sudoku solution**

1	4	2	6	8	5	7	3	9
7	3	9	1	4	2	5	6	8
8	5	6	7	9	3	4	2	1
9	2	8	4	6	1	3	7	5
4	6	7	3	5	9	1	8	2
5	1	3	2	7	8	9	4	6
6	7	1	5	2	4	8	9	3
2	8	5	9	3	7	6	1	4
3	9	4	8	1	6	2	5	7

**CYS to host youth football signups**

INDEPENDENCE — Central Youth Sports (CYS) will hold football registration Aug. 10-14 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Panther Stadium. Signups will take place at the concession stand.

There will also be an opportunity for registration on Aug. 15 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. CYS youth football is open to students in grades K-6. Cost is \$125 per child.

# Swim: Diaz becoming a leader

**Continued from Page 10A**

Diaz may love having fun, but once practice begins, she's all business. She's one to support her teammates through thick and thin.

"(Isabel) is a great worker," Blue Dolphins coach Mark Maxwell said. "She is great with teammates and is showing leadership as she grows."

Diaz is also motivated by

another factor — sibling rivalry.

"I'm trying to beat what they already did," Diaz said with a smile. "It makes things a little more fun."

The Blue Dolphins will have a chance to show how far they've come this Thursday through Saturday when qualified swimmers will compete in the 13 and over champi-

**Up Next**

The Blue Dolphins Swim Team will compete at the 13-and-over championships in Gresham this Thursday through Sunday.

onships in Gresham.

But Diaz isn't worried about the competition she'll face.

"Just focusing on what I

can do, and not what others are doing is important," Diaz said.

Diaz is the youngest in her family of swimmers, but her maturity and potential has Maxwell excited to see how much she can improve in the coming years.

"She is the kind of kid that the Dallas community should see and be proud of," Maxwell said.

## Ready To Tee It Off



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Youth golfers wait for their tee time during the Oregon Golf Association youth tournament on Thursday. Cross Creek Golf Course in Dallas hosted the event, which attracted 79 competitors from Oregon and Washington. Results were not available as of press time.