

SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 30
Boys basketball: Dallas at Abby's Holiday Tournament at North Medford, TBA.
Girls basketball: Dallas at Nike Interstate Shootout at Lake Oswego High School, TBA.
Wrestling: Central, Dallas at Northwest Duals, 9 a.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 31
Men's basketball: Western Oregon at Central Washington, 4:30 p.m.
Women's basketball: Simon Fraser at Western Oregon, 3 p.m.

FRIDAY, JAN. 1
Wrestling: Dallas at Pacific Coast Tournament, 1 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 2
Boys basketball: Mountain View at Central, 3 p.m.
Girls basketball: Mountain View at Central, 1:30 p.m.
Men's basketball: Western Oregon at Northwest Nazarene, 6:30 p.m.
Women's basketball: Western Washington at Western Oregon, 7 p.m.
Wrestling: Central at Bob Bishop Invitational, 9 a.m. Dallas at Pacific Coast Tournament, 1 p.m.

TUESDAY, JAN. 5
Boys basketball: Falls City at Perrydale, 7 p.m.
Girls basketball: Beaverton at Central, 7 p.m. Sunset at Dallas, 7 p.m. Falls City at Perrydale, 5:30 p.m.
Swimming: Corvallis at Dallas, 4 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 6
Wrestling: Central, Dallas at Lebanon, 3 p.m.

Schedules Subject to Change

QUICK HITS

WOU announces Hall of Fame class

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon University announced its 2016 Hall of Fame inductees: Bruce Hamilton, Casey Cosler, Tony Burris, Robert Day, Bridget Johnson-Tetteh and Tyler Walker.

Hamilton played football and baseball from 1946-49. He was inducted into the NAIA District II Hall of Fame.

Burris played football from 1985-86 when he was a two-time NAIA honorable mention All-American at quarterback.

Cosler played women's basketball from 1985-87. She holds the school record for most field goals in a single game (18) and ranks fourth in career scoring (1,222 points).

Day played men's basketball from 2001-04. He is WOU's all-time scoring leader with 2,110 points.

Johnson-Tetteh competed in track and field from 2003-06. She holds the school records in the heptathlon with 5,080 points. She currently serves as the associate commissioner of the Great Northwest Athletic Conference.

Walker played softball from 2007-10. She earned honorable mention All-American recognition in 2009, one of only two WOU softball players to be named All-American.

WOU will recognize its Hall of Fame class on Jan. 29 at 5:30 p.m.

Tickets cost \$40 or \$220 for a table of six and \$275 for a table of eight.

For more information: www.wouwolves.com/new/2015/11/12/ATH_1112154752.aspx.

CENTRAL BOYS BASKETBALL

Bringing the energy

Stepp hopes to bring the X factor for the Central Panthers

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Madison Stepp entered the 2015-16 season with a pretty good idea where he'd fit in for Central's boys basketball team.

"I felt like I would be able to start, play some good defense and be that 'energy guy,'" Stepp said.

The senior post has more than fit the bill so far this year.

Stepp likes to get physical. As a tight end during football, Stepp was called upon to both block in the trenches and be a receiver.

"Playing football has definitely helped me with basketball and vice versa," Stepp said. "Football helped make me a lot quicker, which has allowed me to play better this year."

In the spring, Stepp plays rugby through a club team — a sport that not only increases physical strength, but his endurance as well.

"It's a different pace," Stepp said. "You're constantly moving so you have to get used to that."

During basketball, Stepp isn't afraid to step into the paint and get physical with whoever he's guarding.

"When he plays in control, Madison does some great things on the court," Central coach Tim Kreta



Central senior post Madison Stepp looks to split a pair of Roosevelt defenders during the Panthers' 66-51 loss on Monday night.

LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

said. "We can all see that." Up until seventh grade,

Stepp appeared headed in a different direction for his winter sport — wrestling.

"In middle school, you can do both sports, so I decided I wanted to try to play

Central

- Central lost to Roosevelt 66-51 on Monday night.
- Junior Peter Mason led the Panthers in scoring with nine points.
- Central (4-4 overall) hosts Mountain View Saturday at 2 p.m. in the team's final nonleague game of the season.

basketball," Stepp said. Without any prior basketball experience, Stepp showed natural talent and determination.

He made the school's "B" team that season, but basketball had become his new focus during the winter.

"I liked it better than wrestling," Stepp said. "I felt like I got to use my athleticism more in basketball."

Basketball provided him with an avenue to be aggressive and use his physical skills the most. He just had to learn how to make sure his physical tools didn't get the best of him.

"Sometimes he's a football player on the basketball court," Kreta said. "He's learning the finesse side of the game. I love him to death."

Once he arrived at high school, the then-freshman had a new reality check.

"I was surprised how much faster the game is now than it was in middle school," Stepp said.

He didn't let his lack of experience hold him back, though.

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DALLAS GIRLS BASKETBALL

Nelson finds her voice

Junior becomes vocal leader for Dragons

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Dallas girls basketball coach David Brautigam had a simple message for junior point guard Olivia Nelson — it was time to step up.

"After the first game, coach talked to me about being more of a leader on the court," Nelson said.

With three key players out with injuries, Nelson's leadership has been more important than ever.

From a physical standpoint, she has become one of the Dragons' most complete all-around players.

"Olivia is the glue," Brautigam said. "She keeps us all together. She is physically a great point guard and brings a lot to the table. She can break her man down, get other players involved and is awesome as an on-ball defender."

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Dallas junior Olivia Nelson has become the Dragons' starting point guard this season.

LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Here's to an athletic 2016

Ah, the New Year is almost upon us.

The time when anything seems possible. A time when an inspirational movie quote gets me pumped up to set ridiculously ambitious (for me) goals, because how hard could that really be? A time when the possibilities seem endless — until I remember my favorite cooking tool is a microwave and my athletic career peaked before the age of 18.

Those darned resolutions. Those promises of a better life that we commit to for a shorter length of time than some celebrity marriages. Those goals that are supposed to make me feel better, but instead reveal that, alas, I'm not quite the awesome, athletic, and multi-talented superhero I thought I was.

History should suggest I temper my expectations for 2016. Will I? Of course not!

What better way to hold myself accountable than printing my sports resolutions? There may be triumphs (I use that word loosely). There may be fail-



LUKAS EGGEN

Commentary

ures, but 2016 will be one to remember.

In no particular order:

Enter the Monmouth-Independence Fourth of July Tennis Tournament — It's a little known fact I once had a promising tennis career at a young age. By promising I mean I took tennis lessons one summer and beat three other students (two of whom had the agility of an overweight sloth and the hand-eye coordination to match). OK, so I'm no Roger Federer. Or Timotenda Chanakira (No. 2,255 in the Association of Tennis Professional's men's singles rankings as of Monday).

I can, however, hit the ball over the net ... sometimes. Whether it lands in play, on someone else's court face or over the fence is a whole different matter.

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