

Mark: Pirates recover from slow start

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The surgery was scheduled for October of 2014. Bibler had the support of family and friends, but it was his faith that helped him stay positive.

"I prayed and I prayed and said if I make it out of this, I'm going to do everything for you Lord," Bibler said.

The surgery was successful, but Bibler was forced to miss school and sports as he recovered.

"I was in ICU for a couple of days and I was out of school for two weeks," Bibler said. "I never got to play football that year."

His recovery didn't keep him down for long. By December of 2014, Bibler was back on the basketball court and he was ready to approach his play on the court, and life in general, with a new-found determination.

"I went and got this tattoo to represent my faith and my love for God," Bibler said. "I know my teammates

will give everything they have and I'm ready to give it my all, too."

Bibler entered his senior season ready to grow on the court, but began on the bench.

The senior wasn't about to let that deter him.

"I felt like I could have done better than being on the bench," Bibler said. "If we're going to succeed, we're all going to have to improve, so I'm going to start that."

Early in the season, Bibler's workouts weren't done once practices ended. He continued to do speed workouts at home, dribbling before lunch at school, and focusing on his defense and 3-point shot during practices.

The result has been earning a role in the starting lineup, providing the Pirates with a versatile player who can play in the paint or beyond the arc.

"Spencer first got in because Kirk (Fairchild) went down with some health issues," Perrydale coach Mike



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer
Devin Cruickshank has become a starter for Perrydale.

Lowry said. "We didn't miss a beat. He's gotten better on offense and gives us a little better shooting. I'm sure our

point production has gone up since he's been in the lineup."

Bibler's not the only one

making his mark this season.

Devin Cruickshank

During his freshmen, sophomore and junior seasons, Cruickshank rarely saw significant minutes on varsity.

"I didn't really expect to start that much (this season) because I hardly ever got in the games in varsity," Cruickshank said. "All of sudden, I was kind of thrown into it."

He has responded well, not only as a scoring leader, but as a calm presence running the offense.

"Devin has been one of those guys who constantly has scored around 10 points," Lowry said. "He has improved a lot with handling the ball and handling the pressure to help us get into what we need to do on offense."

Much of Cruickshank's success has come from a willingness to sacrifice individual statistics to help the team win.

"I don't like individualism on the court," Cruickshank said. "I want to move the ball around and get us an open shot. As long as we win, if I don't get any points, I'm fine with that."

That unselfishness has coincided with the Pirates' five-game win streak.

"Everyone was doing more individual things than as a team," Cruickshank said. "We started looking at why we were losing. We started playing more as a team and saw that we play a lot better."

The Pirates host Crosshill Christian on Friday, which entered the week in first place in the Casco League.

The game represents a test to see just how far Perrydale has come — and a moment that could help define their season.

"We have room to get better, but I think we could have a fun run for the rest of the year," Lowry said. "I think the sky's the limit for us. I think we can do some big things."

Legacy: Senior places fourth at Brunner Invitational

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While he looked up to his older siblings, they weren't about to let him off easy.

"Not so much advice, just beating up on me," Dunagan said, smiling. "At home, we'd always get into fights and wrestle at home."

Dunagan isn't alone as the youngest of a trio of brothers. Senior Cody Janssen has also seen two older brothers wrestle for the Dragons,

while the Rebischke family had three former wrestlers at Dallas.

A competitive nature between siblings is essential for success, Dallas coach Tony Olliff said.

"A family has to foster a culture of, 'I'm not going to baby you,' in order for the boys to be successful in this sport," Olliff said. "Once the family has fostered that culture, my work is mostly done

because the boys have a drive to compete with their older siblings. That drive leads to success."

Dunagan, who placed fourth in the 160-pound class at the Brunner Invitational on Saturday, finished sixth at state as a junior.

Down to his final year with the Dragons, Dunagan wants to make his senior year his best one yet.

"The goal is a state cham-

ampionship as a team and individually," he said. "That's basically it. That's all I want this year."

On the mat, Dunagan has become more thoughtful in his approach, always thinking about his next three moves and adjusting on the fly.

He's also bringing more focus and intensity during practices as he hopes to achieve the perfect ending

to his high school career.

"Because it's my last year, I know I don't have another chance," Dunagan said. "I have to make the most of this year. I'm working the hardest I've ever worked this year. I know there are guys out there who can beat me. I'm just going to have to work on my technique, get better cardio and work harder than them."

Team results

- Dallas placed second in the team standings at the Brunner Invitational on Saturday. Redmond took first.
- Clay Coxen (182 pounds) placed first.
- Dawson Barcroft (106), Sammy Chung (126), Noah Sickles (132), Cody Janssen (152) and Tanner Earhart (160) placed second in their respective weight classes.

FALLS CITY ROUNDUP Mountaineers down Crosshill Christian

Itemizer-Observer staff report

FALLS CITY — Falls City's girls basketball team cruised to a 49-22 win over Crosshill Christian on Friday. Brittany

Varney scored a game-high 19 points, while Allison Kidd added 16 points to lead the Mountaineers.

"The girls came out with a lot of energy, intensity and focus," Falls City coach Micke Kidd said. "It was nice to see them taking the basketball to the basket rather than settling for outside shots."

The Mountaineers opened the week with a 30-25 loss to Perrydale on Jan. 5.

"We were down one with about a minute left, and down three with 10 seconds

left," Kidd said. "It was a very close game in the second half."

Varney had seven points against the Pirates.

Falls City (6-5 overall, 2-3 Casco League) played Jewell Tuesday after press time. The Mountaineers host C.S. Lewis Academy on Friday and Willamette Valley Christian on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL DROPS
TWO: Falls City's boys basketball squad lost a pair of league contests. The Mountaineers fell to Perrydale 62-26 on Jan. 5 and Crosshill Christian 69-36 on Friday. Falls City (2-8 overall, 0-5 Casco League) faced Jewell Tuesday after press time. The Mountaineers host C.S. Lewis on Friday and Willamette Valley Christian Tuesday at 7 p.m.



Varney



Kidd

Identity: Dallas to host rival Central

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"I think every single kid we had was in foul trouble," Brautigam said. "We have to be more disciplined on defense."

On offense, the Dragons found success to varying degrees.

Savage, a 6-foot-7 post, gave the Dragons a towering player inside the paint.

Her presence inside allowed teammates to find open shots.

That inside-out found success in spurts, but players must be more consistent in their execution, Brautigam said.

"We moved the basketball in and out well to start the second half, and then we stopped," Brautigam said. "That consistency is something we have to find."

The Dragons (5-5 overall, 1-0 MWC) host Central Wednesday (today) and South Albany Friday at 7 p.m. before playing at Corvallis on Jan. 20. This three-game stretch will help set the tone for league play, but the team could be missing some key players.

Dallas hopes to have Sarah Zwicker, who has missed multiple games because of a box fracture in her

right hand. Starting point guard Olivia Nelson left Friday's game with a concussion and will be re-evaluated later this week. Injuries have been a constant presence throughout the season, preventing the Dragons from playing at full strength.

"We've dealt with more adversity this year than all my coaching years combined," Brautigam said. "We're still figuring out who we are as a team and what kind of identity we're going to have this year, but I saw more positives than negatives (on Thursday) and I think we're just going to

keep getting better."

The Dragons will get a chance to show how much they've grown starting Wednesday (tonight). In recent years, Dallas worked to realize its potential on the court with varying degrees of success in league play. This season, players are eager to show things may be different this year and that the Dragons are ready to stand amongst the league's top teams.

"I think (Thursday's) win will help us show other schools that we're not the same team as last year," Savage said.

Itemizer-Observer Athlete of the Week



Andy Avgi Western Oregon

Avgi, a senior, showed why he is the leader for Western Oregon's men's basketball team. Avgi scored a game-high 34 points against Seattle Pacific, helping the Wolves to a 96-90 overtime win. He

then scored a game-high 24 points in a win over Saint Martin's on Saturday. Avgi was named the Great Northwest Athletic Conference's Player of the Week for his efforts as WOU improved to 12-3 overall.



Kylie Nash Central High

Nash, a senior, helped Centrals' girls basketball team end nonleague play and begin Mid-Willamette Conference play with a bang. Nash scored a game-high 18 points on Jan. 5, leading the Panthers to a 46-31 win over Beaverton. Nash then added nine points during Central's 44-26 victory over South Albany on Friday night. The victories helped Central enter the week 6-4 overall and 1-0 in MWC play.

To submit nominations for the Itemizer-Observer Athlete of the Week, contact Sports Editor Lukas Eggen at 503-623-2373 or leggen@polkio.com by 9 a.m. on Monday.

DALLAS ROUNDUP Boys basketball opens league play with win

Itemizer-Observer staff report

WOODBURN — Dallas' boys basketball team defeated Woodburn 54-30 on Friday to open Mid-Willamette Conference play.

Senior Everett Minahan scored 20 points to lead the Dragons (5-5 overall, 1-0 MWC) to the victory.



Minahan

Dallas played Central Tuesday after press time.

The Dragons play at South Al-

bany on Friday before hosting Corvallis Tuesday at 7 p.m.

SWIM TEAMS FALL TO CORVALLIS: Dallas' boys and girls swim teams lost a dual meet to Corvallis on Jan. 5.

Jolie-Rae Ford placed first in the 200-yard freestyle in 2 minutes, 53.6 seconds to lead the girls. Elizabeth Dressel

took first in the 500 freestyle (6:00.86).

Ryan Kennedy led the boys with a first-place finish in the 500 freestyle (5:49.59) and a second-place finish in the 200 freestyle (2:09.98).

Parker Ford took first in the 50 freestyle (27.26).

The Dragons will host the Dallas Invite on Jan. 21.

CENTRAL ROUNDUP Nash, Chavez lead Panthers to wins

Itemizer-Observer staff report

INDEPENDENCE — Central's girls basketball team opened Mid-Willamette Conference play with a 44-26 win over South Albany on Friday.

Freshman Elizabeth Chavez scored a game-high 12 points, while seniors Kylie Nash and Alex Alvarez added nine points each. The Panthers (6-4 overall) also defeated Beaverton 46-31 on Jan. 5 to close out their nonleague season. Nash scored a game-high 18 points to lead Central. Chavez scored 13.

The Panthers play at Dallas Wednesday (today) at 7 p.m. before hosting Crescent Valley Friday at 7 p.m. Central plays at Lebanon on Jan. 20.

BOYS BASKETBALL OPENS MWC PLAY WITH WIN: Central's boys basketball squad defeated South Albany 68-54



CALEB WALLACE/for the Itemizer-Observer
Central senior Kylie Nash looks to drive to the hoop against South Albany on Friday night.

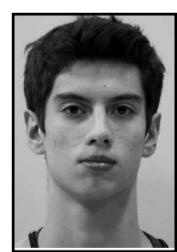
on Friday in its MWC-opener. Harkie Bal scored a game-high 23 points, while Alec Barba added 22 points to lead the

Panthers to the victory. "The kids came out strong in the first half, led by Harkie Bal and Alec Barba," coach Tim Kreta

said. "I was really proud of the way they communicated on the floor and worked to get their teammates open shots." The win snapped a three-game losing streak. Central (5-5 overall) hosted Dallas Tuesday after press time. The Panthers play at Crescent Valley on Friday before hosting Lebanon Tuesday at 7 p.m.

WRESTLING GOES 1-2:

Central's wrestling team went 1-2 at Lebanon's four-way duals on Jan. 6. The Panthers defeated Corvallis 48-33 and lost to Dallas 63-15 and Lebanon 57-22. Central hosts South Albany Wednesday (today) at 7 p.m. before taking part in the Oregon Classic on Friday and Saturday in Redmond.



Barba