

WESTERN OREGON MEN'S BASKETBALL

Nichols becomes leader with the Wolves

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — When Western Oregon senior Julian Nichols arrived in Monmouth prior to the 2014-15 season he had one goal in mind — to lead.

"They needed a point guard," Nichols said. "The opportunity to play was attractive. I knew we had a great group of guys and I knew Devon (Alexander) before I got here. He was a big-time recruiter in that aspect. I'm glad I came."

Nichols made his mark known in his first year with the Wolves, earning the Great Northwest Athletic Conference's Newcomer of the Year award after averaging 12.5 points per game and leading the team with 174 assists and 70 steals.

Nichols is up to more of the same this season, ranking second on the team in scoring (11.8 points per game), while ranking first in assists (99).

"We had largely the same team this year," Nichols said. "It makes my job easier. Everyone knows their roles and everyone knows what they have to bring to the

table. My job is easy."

The senior had 10 points, eight assists and six rebounds during an 85-68 win over Central Washington on Saturday, helping the Wolves get revenge on the lone team in the conference to defeat WOU so far this season.

"We needed this one," Nichols said. "We went up there and played on our heels the whole game. We came out (on Saturday) with a lot of energy."

The win improved WOU's record to 18-2 overall and 11-1 in conference play as the Wolves opened a two-game lead over Alaska Anchorage and Seattle Pacific.

"We always felt like we would have a target on our backs, so to speak," Nichols said. "The records and stats, all of that is for other people outside to look at. We just come into practice and focus on game situations."

Western Oregon, led by Andy Avgi, Nichols, Jordan Wiley, Alex Roth, Devon Alexander and Tanner Omlid, all of whom score 9.1 points per game or more, have established themselves



Julian Nichols drives to the hoop for a layup against Central Washington on Saturday afternoon.

as the team to catch in the conference. But Nichols said the Wolves have their eyes set on a bigger prize and Nichols believes WOU hasn't yet played its best basketball of the season.

Nichols said. "Last year there were some times that we were kind of relaxed. Now that we've seen what we're trying to achieve, we know we can do a lot better. We still haven't played to our highest potential."

WESTERN OREGON ROUNDUP

Maurmann sets new school record at meet

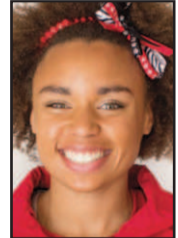
Itemizer-Observer staff report

SEATTLE — Western Oregon junior Nicole Maurmann set a new school record in the women's 3,000-meter run at the University of Washington Invitational on Saturday. Maurmann finished in 10 minutes, 13.24 seconds, breaking the old mark of 10:16.00 set in 1989 by Randi Taruscio.



Maurmann

"We had a very good weekend," WOU coach Mike Johnson said. "We continue to set new records and rewrite our top 10 lists every meet."



Stuckey

Senior Stephanie Stuckey ran the third best time in program history in the 1,600 with a time of 5:00.58.

Senior Badane Sultessa placed fifth overall in the men's 800 with a time of 1:50.23, breaking his own Great Northwest Athletic Conference record, while junior David Cornish finished the men's 3,000 in 8:33.50. WOU will compete at the Pilot Indoor meet in Portland on Thursday.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL DROPS T W O :

Western Oregon's women's basketball squad lost a pair of G N A C games last week. WOU fell to



Henry

Western Washington 70-39 on Thursday and Simon Fraser 66-59 on Saturday. Kaylie Boschma scored a team-high seven points against Western Washington, while Kelsey Henry had a team-high eight points against Simon Fraser. The Wolves (3-17 overall, 2-10 GNAC) have lost eight of their last nine games. WOU hosts Alaska Fairbanks Thursday at 7 p.m. and Alaska Anchorage Saturday at 7 p.m.

Injuries: Dragons fourth in the MWC

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In total, Brautigam said he's had his full team for just two practices and one game.

Among the injuries include multiple concussions, a broken wrist, torn ligament in an ankle and a broken collarbone.

"It's been the craziest season," Brautigam said. "We've used eight or nine different starting lineups and we've played 16 games."

Junior Sarah Zwicker has missed nearly all of the season. She broke her hand early on and then suffered a concussion against Corvallis upon her return to action.

"I think we're used to it and dealing with the fact that we've had so many (injuries)," Zwicker said. "It can be frustrating because I hate watching. But we're doing pretty good dealing with everything."

Dallas reached the halfway point of league play with a 4-3 mark in Mid-Willamette Conference action.

But as players get healthy, Brautigam has had to deal with an unintended consequence: finding playing time for everyone.

"You go into the season

thinking this is probably our starting lineup and these girls will come off the bench," Brautigam said. "The group we've had has played really well. You have to balance that with, 'Do I change the lineup? Do I put players back in who could be significant players? What kind of a message does that send to the players who stepped up in their absence?'"

Finding that balance may be Brautigam's biggest challenge going forward. Despite the injuries, the Dragons find themselves in a position to earn a postseason berth.

Working through adversity is something these girls have prided themselves on.

"Emma Classen, a freshman, has really stepped up," Brautigam said. "Courtney Heggstrom, she's injured now, but she really stepped up in the beginning of the season. Tristan Savage has been awesome all season long. You won't see our team backing down."

Dallas won't let injuries get in the way of their playoff push.

"We've learned to expect the worst and hope for the best," Zwicker said.

DALLAS ROUNDUP

Boys basketball downs Lebanon, falls to Foxes

Itemizer-Observer staff report

DALLAS — Dallas' boys basketball team defeated Lebanon 66-57 on Jan. 26 before falling to Silverton 66-52 on Friday.

Everett Minahan scored a game-high 25 points against Lebanon. Avery Welty added 14 points.

Minahan scored 23 points against Silverton. Aaron White had 14 points in his first half of the season. White had missed all prior games due to a wrist injury suffered during football.

The Dragons played Woodburn Tuesday after press time. Dallas hosts

Central Friday at 7 p.m. and South Albany Feb. 10 at 7 p.m. Dallas entered the week with a 3-4 record in Mid-Willamette Conference play, tied with Crescent Valley and South Albany for fourth place.

SLETTEN TAKES FIRST AT LADIES TOURNAMENT: Dallas

senior wrestler Angie Sletten (109 pounds) placed first at the Hood River Elks Ladies Tournament on Saturday. The Dragons also defeated Crescent Valley in a dual meet on Jan. 27. The Dragons host Silverton Wednesday (today) at 6 p.m. Dallas will compete at the Mid-Valley Classic Saturday at 10 a.m. at South Albany High School.

Mann: School newspaper ad sparks interest in joining the bowling team

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"I played mostly just for fun," Mann said. "I didn't know what I was doing. ... I wasn't good at all. We went to districts that year but I was kind of at the bottom of the totem pole."

Mann is no longer at the bottom, placing first in the all-star scoring at the District 2 championships on Jan. 24, helping Dallas to a third-place finish.

The team earned a trip to state Feb. 27-28 in Klamath

Falls for their efforts.

The seeds of Mann's success began his sophomore year when he switched from a one-handed to a two-handed delivery.

That change in delivery gave him more control over his throws.

"I started getting pretty good then," he said.

The senior also made it a point to recruit new players to the sport.

"Most of the guys on our

team are seniors," Mann said. "I recruited a lot of them to join and we know we're pretty up there on the goodness factor."

Bowling has provided Mann an outlet to have fun and friendly competition with friends — but he also has high expectations for himself and his teammates.

"I want to win," Mann said. "I think we can do it too. We have a chance."

Until state, the Dragons

will work on fine-tuning their technique.

No matter what happens, Mann said he wouldn't trade his experience in bowling in high school for anything.

Mann doesn't plan to stop playing anytime soon.

"I'll definitely do leagues," Mann said. "I won't be able to bowl as much because I'll work full time, but I'll keep going with it and see what happens."

Cutler: Senior was in a coma for two days, had to relearn herself to bowl

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When she came out of coma, doctors were worried about the lasting effects of a severe concussion, bleeding in the right side of her brain and a right ankle injury.

Bowling seemed like an impossibility. Cutler refused to accept it.

"I wanted to take all their negativity and put it into positive energy," Cutler said. "I thought I'm going to prove them wrong and have a better outlook on life. ... People talking me down instead of being supportive (was difficult). Sometimes, people have to keep their thoughts to themselves."

Cutler showed rapid signs of recovery, even as she's had to work through new challenges.

"I still struggle with my speech sometimes," she said. "I mix up my words. It's been a little bit of a struggle, but I'm pushing through. I impressed my teachers by doing more work than they thought I was going to do."

One thing remained out of reach: bowling.

"I had bleeding on the right side of my brain," Cutler said. "So I couldn't do fast motions or up and

Dallas bowling

- Dallas' boys and girls bowling teams qualified for the 2016 state high school finals Feb. 27-28 in Klamath Falls. Team members consist of students from Dallas and Central High Schools and Morrison Alternative School.

- The boys finished in third. The girls placed second.
- Boys team members: Josh Biery, Joe Gallagher, Cameron Gumpinger, Mason Maddox, Luke Mann, Austin Smith, Austin Stacey, Jason Vohland, Ben West, Nick Otto, Hayden Jennings and Harley White.

- Girls team members: Danielle Cooley, Stephanie Cutler, Kerstin Morris, Jennie Sloan, Jessica Fisher, Kristine Marter, Mary Wyckof and Kayla Thommen.
- Coaches: Brad Biery, Melinda Cutler, Marissa Cuno and Anne Smart.

- The Dallas bowling team will hold a fundraiser on Feb. 15. Drop off money, bottles or cans at Starlite Lanes between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Proceeds from the fundraiser will help cover traveling, entry fees and equipment costs.

down motions. I also had strain on my leg. Something happened to my ankle and some bones just aren't the way they used to be, so I have pain in my right leg."

Those closest to her wondered if Stephanie would ever bowl again.

"We didn't think it would be possible," coach, and Stephanie's mother, Melinda Cutler said. "We wondered if the noise and bright lights might cause her to have a seizure."

Stephanie never lost confidence, and on Jan. 19, doctors cleared her to bowl. Districts were that weekend. That same evening,

Stephanie stepped onto the bowling alley.

Prior to her accident, Cutler said her average score was between 150 and 160. She bowled four games that night.

She failed to break 80 in three of them.

"Honestly, she did terrible," Melinda Cutler said. "I was hesitant to have her bowl at districts."

In a single night, Stephanie retrained herself in the sport she had been playing since the age of 4.

"I tried to stay calm," Cutler said. "My fourth game I just went with it and I followed through like I was

supposed to do."

Stephanie would not be denied bowling at districts. She bowled 34 games that Saturday. She placed fifth overall and, for the first time in her high school career, Stephanie will be competing at state.

"It's exciting," Cutler said. "I can't explain it. It's like having butterflies, I guess. I didn't know I was going to make all stars until the end of the day, but I knew that as a team, we had been near the top. It's an awesome feeling."

Cutler hopes the Dragons come away as state champs, but that's not her only goal. She hopes her story serves as an inspiration to anyone who needs it. If she can do that, then it's more than enough for her.

"I hope people realize that yeah, a lot of crap happens in our lives, but that doesn't mean there's not good things as well," Cutler said. "I want to help people realize how much they matter. I didn't realize how much I mattered until the accident. I want to show people that they deserve all the happiness they can get. Instead of putting people down, we should bring them up."

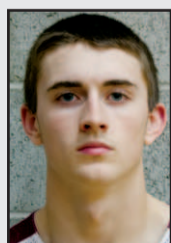
Itemizer-Observer

Athlete of the Week



Badane Sultessa
Western Oregon

Sultessa, a senior distance runner for Western Oregon, set a pair of records in Seattle on Saturday. Sultessa finished fifth in the 800-meter run with a time of 1 minute, 50.23 seconds. The time broke the Great Northwest Athletic Conference record of 1:50.73 — also set by Sultessa in 2015. Sultessa was part of the distance medley relay team that ran a school record time of 9:53.08.



Haylen Janesofsky
Perrydale High

Janesofsky, a junior wing, came up big for Perrydale's boys basketball team. Facing an upstart Livingstone Adventist squad that scored 23 points in the first quarter, Janesofsky helped the Pirates overcome an early deficit to win 67-57. Janesofsky scored a game-high 27 points during the victory, helping the Pirates remain in first place in the Casco League. He also had 10 points in a win over Willamette Valley Christian on Jan. 26.

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.

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