

FALLS CITY GIRLS BASKETBALL

Mountaineers' successful season comes to an end

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

PORTLAND — Falls City's girls basketball team's bid for a return to the state playoffs fell a game short.

The Mountaineers lost to Willamette Valley Christian 35-25 on Saturday in the third-place game of the Casco League Tournament, ending the team's season.

Brittany Varney scored a game-high 18 points in the losing effort.

The Mountaineers opened the tournament with a 25-24 win over Livingstone Adventist on Friday — a game that saw the Mountaineers trail 11-2 after the first quarter and 22-12 in the



Varney

were encouraging each other the whole game," Allison Kidd said. "We weren't being negative, which was nice."

The Mountaineers ended the game on a 13-2 run.

"We just asked our girls to play good defense," Tiauanah Davis said.

On Saturday, another slow start, this time being shutout in the first quarter, proved too much to overcome.

The Mountaineers finished the season with a 15-10 record overall and a 9-7 mark in league play.

"We talked about all year that all we can control is our attitude and our effort," Mountaineers coach Micke Kidd said. "One thing I can say about these girls is that they don't quit. They keep playing."

Allison Kidd earned first team all-league honors, Varney received second team all-league recognition and Davis earned an honorable mention for their efforts during the season.

"I thought our girls had a great season," Micke Kidd said. "I am very proud of their effort and am looking forward to next season."



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Falls City players celebrate after beating Livingstone Adventist 25-24 on Friday.

Dallas: Dragons hope to build on district performances

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"He and I set this goal that we're going to push each other every day and be the best workout partners we could," Dunagan said.

The pair wrestled almost daily.

"We wrestle all the time," Earhart said. "He's one of my best workout partners. He always kicks my butt, but we had a little rivalry going."

As a result, the pair became close friends off the mat. On Saturday, the pair shared a celebration for their long-awaited district titles.

Dunagan pinned Lebanon's Orasio Lopez in the finals, while Earhart earned an 8-2 decision over teammate Cody Janssen.

"I was pretty excited," Dunagan said. "I don't know how else to explain it. I finally won districts. Last year, I got to the finals and lost. This year, I got back to the finals and got to take it. It's a good feeling, especially with Tanner. For him and me to win it together is pretty cool."

Molina, a senior, was always confident in his chance to walk away with a district title. When the moment finally came, and Molina defeated Central's



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Dallas sophomore Noah Sickles looks to gain position on an opponent. Sickles placed second at district.

Opeti Tuipulotu in the finals, the feeling was unlike anything he's ever felt.

"It's fantastic," Molina said. "I feel better than ever. ... I saw that hard work pays off and giving your all gets you where you want to be."

All three know their ultimate goal is now closer than ever.

"I'm ready to kick butt and get my state title," Molina said. "We're a strong

team. We have a lot of guys qualified for state. We'll go out there and do our best and hopefully win some titles."

Dallas' state qualifiers have a mix of seniors looking for one last state title run to freshmen ready to take on state for the first time.

"Some of the guys punched through a good district tournament," coach Tony Olliff said. "I'm proud



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Dallas senior Jesse Stuhr attempts to pin an opponent on Saturday. Stuhr was one of 13 Dallas wrestlers to qualify for state at the district championships.

of them. It was neat to see Jesse (Stuhr) battle his way into state in fourth place. Jacob Jones worked his way to the finals. I'm excited to see how he does at state."

But the district tournament also revealed that the Dragons still have work to do.

"We had a series of things that made you think, 'oh man, we've got to make sure

that doesn't happen (at state)," Olliff said. "Treve Earhart dropped some close matches. Clay Coxen needs to get healthier. Ean Woodruff had a wonderful match in the finals, but got caught. We had a lot of stuff this weekend that didn't go our way. You don't want to attribute that to luck. We have stuff we have to work on in practice."

Things like that are a big reason why, despite having cause for celebration, Dallas wasn't satisfied with the overall outcome.

"When it feels like luck isn't going your way, you have to do some self-evaluating and say we have some things to fine tune," Olliff said. "We have a few practices between now and state. We can't be done yet."

Central: Panthers send eight to state



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Central coach Van Holstad talks with junior Sam Crow before a match on Saturday afternoon.

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For Tuipulotu and Swinehart, both seniors, it's a final chance to win a state title — one year after losing in their respective state championship matches.

"It feels real good (to win districts), but now it's time for state," Tuipulotu said. "It's about staying physically and mentally ready for state, and we have to just finish. That's all I can say right now."

Swinehart completed the first step in ending his high school career on the ultimate high. Now he's hoping to become a state champion for the first time.

"I needed to make it through the match wrestling my style and I did that today," Swinehart said. "At state, I need to keep the matches going with my style and pretty much force it on people, instead of fading into theirs."



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Central senior Marlon Tuipulotu won a district title in the 285-pound class on Saturday.

State provides a proving ground for Negrete. The junior made it to the state tournament in 2015, but failed to place.

He's on a mission to change that this year.

"There is some unfinished business for a couple of them who made it to the finals last year, and David (Negrete) making it to state and not competing that well," coach Van Holstad

said. "He's anxious to show what he actually has."

Holstad said, despite hoping for more state qualifiers, the Panthers put forth a solid effort, and he is excited to see what his qualifiers can do this weekend.

"I'm proud of all the kids who went out there and competed," Holstad said. "Everyone fought well. We're excited to compete at state."

DALLAS ROUNDUP

Ford finishes sixth at state championship

Itemizer-Observer staff report

GRESHAM — Dallas junior Jolie-Rae Ford placed sixth in the finals of the 200- and 500-yard freestyle races at the OSAA state swimming championships on Saturday.

Ford finished with a time of 2 minutes, 1.47 seconds in the 200 and 5:28.91 in the 500.

Senior Elizabeth Dressel narrowly missed qualifying for the finals in the 100 butterfly, placing seventh (1:03.43).

"It was a good showing by two experienced swimmers," Dallas coach David Morelli said. "I was pleased Liz qualified for state this year, since it is her senior year, and very pleased she swam her best race at the end of her long and successful swimming career here in Dallas."

GIRLS BASKETBALL DEFEATS CRESCENT VALLEY: Sparked by a strong third quarter, Dallas' girls basketball team defeated Crescent Valley

52-49 on Feb. 19 and moved into a tie with Central for third place in the Mid-Willamette Conference.

The Dragons outscored the Raiders 18-5 in the third quarter, taking a 40-31 lead into the fourth, and held on for the victory. Sarah Zwicker scored 17 points, while Tristin Savage added 12 points and seven rebounds. Dallas (12-10 overall, 7-5 MWC) played Lebanon Tuesday after press time. The Dragons close out the regular season by hosting Silverton Friday at 7 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL DROPS PAIR OF CLOSE GAMES:

Dallas' boys basketball squad lost a pair of heartbreakers, falling to Crescent Valley 49-46 on Feb. 17 and Redmond 44-42 on Friday. Senior Everett Minahan scored 18 points to lead the Dragons against the Raiders, and Mitchell Laizure added 12 points. Minahan scored 21 points against Redmond. Dallas (7-15 overall, 3-9 MWC) played Lebanon Tuesday after press time. The Dragons play at Silverton on Friday to end the regular season.

CENTRAL ROUNDUP

Boys basketball looks to lock up postseason berth

Itemizer-Observer staff report

SILVERTON — A 65-39 loss to Silverton on Feb. 17 created some drama for Central's boys basketball team.

"It was a tough game for the Panthers," Central coach Tim Kreta said. "We went down big early and couldn't pull ourselves out of it before the half. Silverton came

out with much more energy and poise. We tried to match their intensity, but got caught up fighting our own energy instead of sticking to what has been working for us."

Harkie Bal scored 12 points during the loss, while Kevin Cable added nine points.

The Panthers close out

the regular season at home against Corvallis Wednesday (today) at 7 p.m. and Woodburn Friday at 7 p.m.

Central entered the week in a three-way tie for fourth place in the Mid-Willamette Conference standings with South Albany and Woodburn.

The Panthers (9-12 overall, 5-7 MWC) also hold a

one-game lead over Crescent Valley for seventh (because of the tie at fourth) and a two-game lead over Dallas for eighth.

The top six teams advance to the postseason.

"The kids were disappointed, but they also understand that Silverton is a very disciplined team and that if we want to think

about any type of postseason, we need to be able to play as we were before," Kreta said.

GIRLS BASKETBALL FALLS TO SILVERTON: Central's girls basketball team lost to Silverton 43-26 on Feb. 16. The loss, the team's third straight, dropped the Panthers into a tie for third place in the MWC with Dallas. The Panthers played Corvallis Tuesday after press

time. Central closes out the regular season at Woodburn Friday at 7 p.m. The Panthers need to win one of their final two games to clinch a home play-in game or have Lebanon and Crescent Valley lose one of their final games. Central (12-9 overall, 7-5 MWC) will face a Midwestern league opponent in the play-in round on Tuesday. Check www.polkiio.com on Sunday for the opponent.