

SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2
Boys basketball: Class 5A state play-in round: Eagle Point at Central, 6 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 4
Girls basketball: Class 5A State Playoffs, first round: Central vs. TBA, TBA. Dallas vs. TBA, TBA.

Men's basketball: GNAC Championships: Western Oregon vs. Central Washington/Seattle Pacific at Lacey, Wash., 2:15 p.m.

Track and field: Western Oregon at Linfield Icebreaker, all day.

SATURDAY, MARCH 5
Baseball: Western Oregon at Concordia (DH), 1 p.m.

Boys basketball: Class 5A State Playoffs, first round: Central vs. TBA, TBA.

Men's basketball: GNAC Championships: Western Oregon vs. TBA, at Lacey Wash., 5:30 p.m.

Softball: Saint Martin's at Western Oregon (DH), noon.

Track and field: Western Oregon at Willamette Opener, all day.

SUNDAY, MARCH 6
Baseball: Western Oregon at Concordia (DH), noon.

Softball: Central Washington at Western Oregon, noon.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9
Girls basketball: Class 5A State Playoffs, quarterfinals: Central vs. TBA, TBA. Dallas vs. TBA, TBA.

Schedules Subject to Change

QUICK HITS

Veal Bikes Plus to offer safety course

POLK COUNTY — Veal's Bikes Plus, 155 Main St. W., Monmouth, will offer a bicycling safety education course Saturday at 10 a.m.

Two sessions will be held. One at 10 a.m. is for those 16 and older and one at noon is for those ages 16 and younger.

The first 10 people in each session will receive a head and tail light or free tune up (excluding parts). There is no cost to attend.

For more information: Veal Bikes Plus, 503-837-1837.

Dallas bowling competes at state

KLAMATH FALLS — Results from the Oregon High School State Bowling Championships, held Friday through Sunday, were not available as of press time.

Check www.polkio.com for results on how Dallas' boys and girls teams fared.

Avgi named GNAC Player of the Year

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon senior Andy Avgi has been named the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Men's Basketball Player of the Year on Tuesday.

WOU's Jim Shaw earned Coach of the Year honors. Avgi was also named first team all-GNAC.

Senior Julian Nichols and sophomore Tanner Omlid received second team all-conference recognition, while senior Jordan Wiley earned honorable mention.

PREP WRESTLING

Becoming a champion

Central junior earns 5A state title at 285 pounds



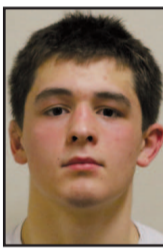
LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Central junior Marlon Tuipulotu celebrates after winning the 285-pound 5A state title on Saturday evening at Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

By Lukas Eggen
 The Itemizer-Observer

PORTLAND — Central junior Marlon Tuipulotu couldn't contain his emotions on Saturday.

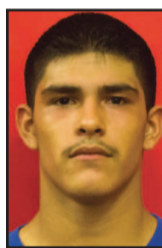
He won the OSAA Class 5A State Wrestling Championships at 285 pounds, earning a 5-0 decision over Churchill's Blayne Burnett, showing a rare outburst of



Swinehart

emotion, clapping, shouting and pointing to his family.

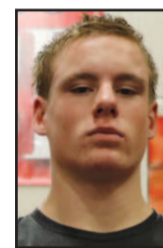
"I was super excited," Tuipulotu said. "I want to thank God, my coaches, my teammates, my family and everyone who



Negrete

helped me through this and got me here."

Tuipulotu controlled the match from the outset, dictating the pace and the action.



Crow

wrestled my style, I'd come out with the victory," Tuipulotu said. "I wanted to set the tone early and

ty and the culmination of countless hours of work, coach Van Holstad said.

"That's a fun guy to watch, isn't he," Holstad said, smiling. "With that athletic ability comes a lot of work. He's put in a lot of time with coaches. He showed heart. He didn't just show up today and win it. A lot of work goes with that."

See CHAMP, Page 13A

Dragons take fourth at state

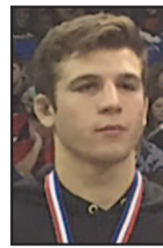
By Lukas Eggen
 The Itemizer-Observer

PORTLAND — Dallas' wrestling team placed fourth at the 5A State Wrestling Championships on Friday and Saturday.

Junior Tanner Earhart (152 pounds) placed second to lead the Dragons, losing a 6-4 decision to Hermiston's Valen Wyse in the state finals.

"Tanner fought his way through the tough side of the bracket and put on a great show in the state finals against a wrestler that was an awful lot like him," coach Tony Olliff said.

Earhart's run to the state finals highlighted the Dragons' performance, but he was already thinking of



Dunagan

a little revenge next season.

"I've got to learn how to win close matches against that guy (Wyse)," Earhart said.

Senior Jeff Dunagan may have turned in the gutsiest performance at state. Facing Churchill's Riley Jaramillo in the championship semifinals, it appeared Dunagan's final state tournament would end early.

"I was making an escape and there was a scramble," Dunagan said. "His whole entire body landed on my ankle. It did not feel good."

Dunagan let out a scream of pain. He forfeited the match and left the



Earhart

floor with help from coaches.

But the senior's day wasn't done.

Needing to advance to the third/fourth-place match to help secure a fourth-place finish in the team standings, Dunagan returned to the mat for one final match in the consolation semifinals.

He won by major decision over Bend's Jacob Dupuis.

"I tried to stay off my ankle," Dunagan said. "It hurt really badly during the match. I just wrestled hard. It was my last match and I figured I'd try and help the team out."

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LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Tanner Earhart looks to make an escape against Valen Wyse.

CENTRAL BOYS BASKETBALL

Panthers clinch home play-in game



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Central senior Madison Stepp drives to the hoop during the Panthers' 52-45 win over Woodburn on Friday night.

By Lukas Eggen
 The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — It took until the final game of the regular season, but Central's boys basketball team advanced to the state play-in round.

The Panthers defeated Woodburn 52-45 on Friday to clinch the Mid-Willamette Conference's fourth seed — and a home play-in game against Eagle Point Wednesday (today) at 6 p.m.

"It feels pretty good," senior Harkie Bal said. "At the beginning of the (league sea-

Playoff push

What: OSAA Class 5A boys state play-in game.
Who: Eagle Point (6-17 overall, Midwestern league No. 5) at Central (10-13 overall, Mid-Willamette Conference No. 4).
When: Wednesday (today), 6 p.m.
Where: Central High School.
Admission: Adults, \$6; students and children, \$4.
What's at stake: The winner advances to first round of the state playoffs on Saturday.

son) our hopes were down and we didn't think we would get anywhere. Something just clicked."

Alec Barba scored 12 points and Bal added 11 points as the Panthers built

a 20-point lead in the fourth quarter. Woodburn wouldn't go quietly, cutting Central's lead to as little as five points with less than a minute remaining.

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