

Teeing Off



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Dallas golfer Tristan White tees off from the first hole at Cross Creek Golf Course on Monday morning. White shot a 99 as the Dragons placed sixth at the tournament. Central's boys golf team finished seventh. Dallas' Kailee Curtis placed first in the girls tournament held at Albany on Monday morning. Team results were not available as of press time.

FALLS CITY TRACK AND FIELD

Varney places first at Estacada

Itemizer-Observer staff report

ESTACADA — Falls City senior Brittany Varney placed first in the girls discus at the Estacada Small School Invite on Saturday. Varney won the event with a throw of 92 feet, 5 inches. She also placed second in the shot put with a mark of 30-11½ and ninth in the



Varney

javelin (75-6).

Dylan Young took second in the boys 110-meter hurdles with a

time of 20.68 seconds. Senior Ryan Macnab placed third in the shot put (39-4¼), fourth in the discus (114-4) and eighth in the javelin (127-4) to lead the boys squad.

The Mountaineers will compete at the Life Invitational at Life Christian School in Aloha on Thursday at 3:30 p.m.

Strike



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Central's Peter Mendazona throws a pitch against Woodburn on Friday afternoon. Mendazona threw a complete game against the Bulldogs, giving up just a single hit as the Panthers won 16-0. Central took two of three against Woodburn, winning the series opener 4-2 on March 29 and falling 4-3 on March 30.

Fairchild: Senior ignores knee pain

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But Fairchild enters the spring with state aspirations in the high jump and triple jump.

The senior set school records in the high jump (5 feet, 8 inches) and the triple jump (37-4) in 2015 and set the school mark in the long jump (18-1) at Kennedy on Thursday.

He ranks in the top five in Special District 10 in all three jumping events, including second in the high jump and triple jump.

"Right now, the goal is to keep achieving my little goals along the way," Fairchild said. "I want to set a new record every day and keep getting better."

While he is excelling in all three jumps, it's the high jump that holds a special place.

"I love that feeling of coming over the bar, especially when it's high," Fairchild said. "You get a

free falling feeling for a moment. It's incredible."

Fairchild knows at some point he'll have to see a doctor to get his knees checked out. For now, that's off in the distance. His love for the sport, and his teammates, overrides any pain he's feeling.

"It did go through my mind (whether I shouldn't participate)," Fairchild said. "Then I thought, but what would I be doing? With this, I'm staying conditioned and hanging out with a team that I like. My knees hurt in basketball and eventually pain hits in football. It's just something you have to fight through it, unless something is seriously wrong, which I hope there's not. ... I love track. The experience with the team is what drives me. Being able to encourage others and help them do better and knowing they'll do the same for me, that's why I love track."

HMCAP: WOU aims to change how people view athletes

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"It was really good to be in a room where people are focused and engaged on how do we create more allies and how do we maybe change the culture around sexual assault," Wilkins said. "We're seeing people across the country talk about that. We talked about how sexual violence perpetuates in many different ways, especially around masculinity. In particular, toxic masculinity is pretty persuasive about what it means to be a man, and some of those things have negative impacts on those around us."

Wilkins shared what he learned with the university, which began formulating a plan to create an environment where athletes are seen as allies in preventing sexual assault.

"We want to engage our athletes as positive role models," grant administrator and Abby's House Director Mary Ellen Dello Stritto said. "We want to really examine what we mean by masculinity, what it means to be positive and healthy

and really be the kind of person that speaks up when they see something they don't agree with or something that is degrading or harmful to another individual."

The first steps in that process began in January when student-athletes took part in training sessions with representatives from Men Can Stop Rape.

The group held discussions about masculinity and society's views on what it means to be a male athlete.

"I think some people think there's a lot of alcohol involved with athletic events, that athletes are macho and may be more violent than non-athletes," WOU Director of Compliance Randi Lydum said. "I think through the conversations, we came up with that that's not true. In every category of student, there are people who have some of those characteristics, but they can be good role models to prove those stereotypes wrong."

Whether that means meeting young fans after a

game to holding themselves accountable in the classroom, everything adds up, Lydum said.

The sessions in January were aimed at beginning a discussion, but was certainly not the end.

Dello Stritto said the university will hold more sessions for first-year student athletes this fall.

"I think they are concerned about these high profile cases and how athletes are viewed as a result," Dello Stritto said. "They don't want to be associated with that. They're enthusiastic about taking the positive view of what can we do to prevent (sexual assault) rather than have the media look at them as perpetrators."

Changing the discussion on masculinity may be a long process, Lydum said. But it's one the university is ready to tackle.

"Anything we can do on campus to help our students become better leaders in society is great," Lydum said. "Once they leave campus, they may be a husband, a father, or an uncle."

SPORTS BRIEFS

Cities declare Friday WOU men's basketball day

MONMOUTH/INDEPENDENCE — The cities of Monmouth and Independence declared Friday as Western Oregon University Men's Basketball Day on Tuesday. A joint proclamation was read during Monmouth City Council's meeting.

The men's basketball team advanced to the NCAA Division II Final Four for the first time in school history. The squad set a program record for most wins in a single season (31). WOU won the Great Northwest Athletic Conference tournament title and NCAA Division II West Regional title for the first time.

Registration due soon for Dallas adult rec leagues

DALLAS — Registration for the city of Dallas' coed volleyball and men's basketball leagues are due soon.

Volleyball forms must be turned in by Friday (games begin on Tuesday).

Men's basketball sign-ups must be completed by Monday (games begin April 14).

Forms are available online at www.ci.dallas.or.us/756/Adult-Recreation.

For more information: David Brautigam, 503-831-3559. Email to david.brautigam@dallasor.gov.

Living: Senior cruises to win on Thursday

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"Soccer, our team wasn't that good," Gniadecki said. "We won one game, and it was like the biggest deal ever. It was kind of funny. Wrestling was the opposite. People expect Dallas to win."

This spring, he's ready to leave his mark in the sport he's been waiting all year to begin — tennis.

Gniadecki entered the season as Dallas' boys tennis team's No. 1 singles player and with good reason.

He's played tennis for almost as long as he was strong enough to pick up a racket. He has the size, speed and experience to establish himself among the Mid-Willamette Conference's top singles players — just ask his opponent on Thursday, Central senior Kevin Cable.

"The toughest part is he

just doesn't hit anything out," Cable said. "You have to be aggressive, but he's forcing you to hit it out."

Gniadecki cruised to a 6-1 win in the first set over Cable, a 2015 state qualifier in doubles. The start of the second set showed perhaps his biggest weakness. Trailing 2-0, Gniadecki led the third game 40-15. A scoring dispute between the two players, led to uncharacteristic mistakes.

"I got frustrated because it happened twice. The second time, he stood on the other side and didn't want to move or even talk about it," Gniadecki said. "I lost three points in a row and lost the game. I thought, dang, that was my game right there."

Dallas coach Caleb Gillette pulled him aside to calm him down. He responded by winning six of

the final seven games.

"I forgot the previous game and just played my game," Gniadecki said.

He will face difficult tests, including against traditional league powers Corvallis and Crescent Valley. But he's looking forward to the challenge.

"I haven't really reached my full game," Gniadecki said. "I still hold back a little when I play, but I haven't played matches in six months. I just need to get back into it."

He has done everything he can to enjoy his time spent at Dallas. The U.S. has undoubtedly impacted Gniadecki. Now, he's hoping to do the same for the Dragons.

"Everyone told me Dallas sucks at tennis," Gniadecki said. "I think we have a really strong team and we're pretty stacked with experienced players."



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Thomas Gniadecki attempts to track down a ball on Thursday afternoon.