

WESTERN OREGON TRACK AND FIELD

Dobson hurdles over doubts

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — The moments before the gun goes off signaling the start of a race may seem like just seconds to the crowd, but it can seem like an eternity for those waiting to compete.

“You’re not sure when the gun is going to go off so you’re just kind of waiting for it,” Western Oregon sophomore Kaleb Dobson said. “Usually, athletes like a really fast gun so they can set and just get out. It’s a lot harder to hold yourself up and then have to take off when you’re in a set position for a while.”

On Friday, an extended pause before the starting gun did little to throw Dobson off.

The sophomore won the 110-meter hurdles at the John Knight Twilight meet at WOU on Friday, finishing in 15.12 seconds.

“I got out really well to the first hurdle,” Dobson said. “The first three hurdles are probably the best part of my race. I’ve been working in practice on shuffling in between hurdles.”

Friday, in front of a home crowd and with sunny, warm conditions, was a moment Dobson said makes track and field so special.

There was something about the hurdles that attracted Dobson, even from his middle school days.

“It just looked really fun,” Dobson said.

In eighth grade, he joined the hurdles squad. When he hit high school, he felt ready to try the 110 hurdles for the first time — that is until he hit the track and the first one loomed.

“My freshman year in high school, I couldn’t run the 110-meter hurdles, because I kept turning my lead leg in because I was



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Western Oregon sophomore Kaleb Dobson races ahead in the men’s 110-meter hurdles on Friday afternoon at the John Knight Twilight meet at WOU.

scared of the height,” Dobson said.

It wasn’t until his sophomore season — thanks in part to a growth spurt — that he overcame his fear and competed in the 110 hurdles, even though there were a few bumps and bruises along the way.

“Oh yeah, there’s definitely a trial and error,” Dobson said with a laugh. “As I grew taller, that’s when I became a better hurdler. I started with the 300 hurdles (which are

shorter than the 110 hurdles) and that helped build up my confidence. I started off small and gradually progressed into the hurdler that I am now.”

Dobson set a personal record in the 110 hurdles at the Willamette Invitational March 26, finishing in 14.98 seconds.

His first-place finish on Friday marked the third time he’s placed in the top two in four races this season.

Leading the pack

- Western Oregon’s men’s and women’s track and field teams placed first at the John Knight Twilight meet Friday at WOU.
- Suzanne Van De Grift won the women’s 800-meter run in 2 minutes, 14.28 seconds. Cody Warner placed first in the 100 (10.92 seconds) and long jump (22 feet, 7¼ inches). Wesley Gray won the triple jump (48-2¾).

A key to his success may come as a surprise: Training with the cross-country team in the fall.

“You get really close because you’re with the team in the morning and in the afternoon,” Dobson said. “It’s a great chance for me to get started here and get a base underneath me.”

That base has allowed him to become one of the conference’s best — entering the week with the second fastest time in the 110 hurdles in the conference.

He knows that for as far as he’s come since his first days as a hurdler, there’s still a long way to go.

“I got low in my hips,” Dobson said. “That’s the weak part of my race. I have to stay high in my hips throughout the whole race.”

If Dobson can improve on that, one of the conference’s top hurdlers may become the man to beat going forward. But that’s a worry for another day, he said.

Friday was all about enjoying the crowd and a rare chance to compete at home.

“We don’t always get to compete at home,” Dobson said. “It’s a good feeling to see the fans who don’t get to travel to some of these meets and are here now supporting us. They get to see what we’re all about on the track.”

CENTRAL ROUNDUP

Baseball wins two of three against Lebanon

Itemizer-Observer staff report

INDEPENDENCE — Central’s baseball squad won two of three games against Lebanon last week. The Panthers dropped the opening game 6-5 on April 5 before winning 11-1 on April 6 and 2-1 on Friday.

Jackson Holstad hit a pair of home runs, while Luis Amador hit one during the Panthers 10-run victory on April 6. Central racked up 11 hits.

On Friday, pitcher Peter Mendazona earned a complete game win for the Panthers.

Central opened a three-game series against Silverton with a 2-1 victory on Monday.

The Panthers (7-3 overall, 5-2 Mid-Willamette Conference) play at Silverton Wednesday (today) and Fri-

day at 4:30 p.m.

BOYS TENNIS DEFEATS

LEBANON: Central’s boys tennis team defeated Lebanon 6-2 on Thursday. Kevin Cable, Anthony Martinez and Adam

Rangel earned singles victories for the Panthers, while the doubles pairs of Bricce Spreadbury and Hassan El-

telbany, Brian Larson and Nathaniel Miller, and Luis Vera and Clark Gallagher won in doubles play. The Panthers opened the week with a 5-3 loss to Crescent Valley on April 5. Cable, Chris Polanco and Rangel earned singles points against the Raiders. Central played at Silverton Tuesday after press time and hosts Corvallis Thursday at 4 p.m.

GIRLS TENNIS FALLS TO RAIDERS: Central’s girls tennis team fell to Crescent Valley 8-0 on April 5 before defeating Lebanon 5-3 on Thursday. The Panthers all fell in straight-sets to Crescent Valley.



Bruning

Against Lebanon, Tomoka Naru was the Panthers’ lone winner in singles play. The doubles pairs of Renee Bruning and Danielle Chance, Andrea Garibay and Julia Hamar, Olivia Teague and Diana Huerte, and Annika Riddle and Katelyn Trevino swept doubles points to clinch the victory.

The Panthers hosted Silverton Tuesday after press time and plays at Corvallis on Thursday.

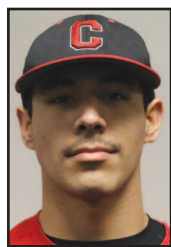
SOFTBALL GOES 1-2: Central’s softball team went 1-2 last week, falling to Lebanon 12-2 on April 5 and Silverton 7-4 on April 6 before defeating Corvallis 7-1 on Friday. Central (4-4 overall, 3-3 MWC) hosted Woodburn Tuesday after press time. The Panthers play at South Albany Wednesday (today) before hosting Dallas Friday at 4 p.m. Central will play at Crescent Valley on Tuesday and hosts Lebanon on April 20 at 4:30 p.m.



Cable

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Amador

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Amador: Pirates jump out to 5-2 start

Continued from Page 10A

“I was hoping I was able to improve from last year,” Amador said. “I think I have.

I’ve gotten faster since my freshman year.”

The results so far this year have been encouraging.

Against St. Paul, Sierra Starr went three for four with four RBIs. Anna McGill recorded three hits, one RBI and three runs scored

a 9-6 win over their rivals on April 6.

During a 9-0 win over Regis on April 5, she threw a complete game with no walks, helping Perrydale to a 5-2 mark overall.

It’s not just solid defense carrying the team. The Pirates are exploding at the plate, scoring nine or more runs in five of its first seven games.

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against Regis.

“We definitely had a lot of improvement,” Amador said. “We are a younger team now, but we’re doing really great and are holding on our own.”

The Pirates, which host Siletz Valley Wednesday (today), Santiam on Thursday and on April 20, have gotten off to a strong start, and she’s excited about Perrydale’s potential going forward.

“I’m proud of how we’re playing and how we’ve held our own,” Amador said. “I think if we keep doing what we’re doing, we’ll be OK.”



Amador

Against St. Paul, she threw a three-hitter in seven innings of a work, helping the Pirates to

FALLS CITY TRACK AND FIELD

Macnab, Varney win at Life Invite

Itemizer-Observer staff report

ALOHA — Falls City seniors Ryan Macnab and Brittany Varney led the Mountaineers’ track and field team at the Life Invitational on Thursday.

Macnab won the boys shot put with a throw of 38 feet, 1¼ inches, took second in the discus with a mark of 99-0 and finished sixth in the javelin with a throw of 126-3.

Varney won the shot put with a mark of 32-0, second in the discus with a throw of



Varney

87-7 and finished 10th in the javelin (62-10). The girls 4 x 100-meter relay team of Amara

Houghtaling, Rachel Beaty, Milli Limberg and Madelyn Hendrickson finished third in 57.74 seconds.

Austin Burgess took second in the long jump (18-10),



Macnab

Robert Kempfer placed third in the triple jump (36-5) and Dylan Young finished third in the 110-meter hur-

dles (19.31 seconds). Falls City will compete at the Up and Comers Invitational Friday at Philomath High School. First event begins at 4 p.m.

Breaking: Samuel smashes previous personal records

Continued from Page 10A

“While Sara was in junior high and high school, Samuel joined us for most of the practices, starting at a very young age,” James Cole said. “... He’s been around the track his entire life.”

At the age of 7 Samuel got his first shot at throwing, competing in the turbo javelin.

By the age of 10, he was competing in his first youth national championship in the shot put.

“I saw the accomplishments (my family) made and the fun they had,” Samuel said. “My sister, Sara, set new records. I just wanted to follow in her shoes.”

By the time Samuel hit high school, Cole was ready to etch his own legacy in the Panthers’ history books.

After a promising freshman campaign, Cole’s seemingly huge potential took a big hit.

Cole tore the labrum in his right shoulder early in football season during his sophomore year.

He would need surgery to repair it, but Cole informed football coach Shane

Hedrick that surgery could wait until after the season.

The surgery occurred without any complications, but left Samuel with a difficult path ahead of him.

“The recovery was long and grueling,” James said.

Samuel, who is right handed, was forced to compete throwing with his left arm for several meets.

He was eventually able to return to using his right arm for meets, but the effects of his injury lingered through his junior year.

“Returning to throwing on the right side with full confidence has taken a while,” James said. “Normal day-to-day operations post surgery are one thing. Pushing a 12-pound ball or 3.5-pound discus with reckless abandon is another.”

As a freshman, Cole set marks of 115 feet, 2 inches in the discus and 39 feet, 6 inches in the shot put.

By the end of his junior year, his personal records in both events stood at 125 feet, 7 inches (discus) and 46 feet, 1 inch (shot put) — modest improvements given the potential he showed so early in

Track and field

- Central’s boys and girls track and field teams defeated Dallas in a dual meet on April 6.

his high school career.

“Last year, I didn’t focus on technique,” Samuel said. “I was only thinking about how far can I throw it. That got me pretty much nowhere.”

Samuel wasn’t about to let an injury determine his athletic fate.

“Samuel’s work ethic is unparalleled,” James said. “I’ve been nudged out of a deep sleep countless times this winter, answering the call to go lift weights or compete the rest of a workout cut short by other commitments.”

That work ethic has paid off handsomely.

“It’s been awesome watching Samuel break through this year,” head coach Eli Cirino said. “It gets our whole team excited when he throws a ‘bomb.’”

Samuel has already set new personal records in both throwing events. He’s

reached 140 feet, 7 inches in the discus and 49 feet, 4 inches in the shot put, both of which are second in school history.

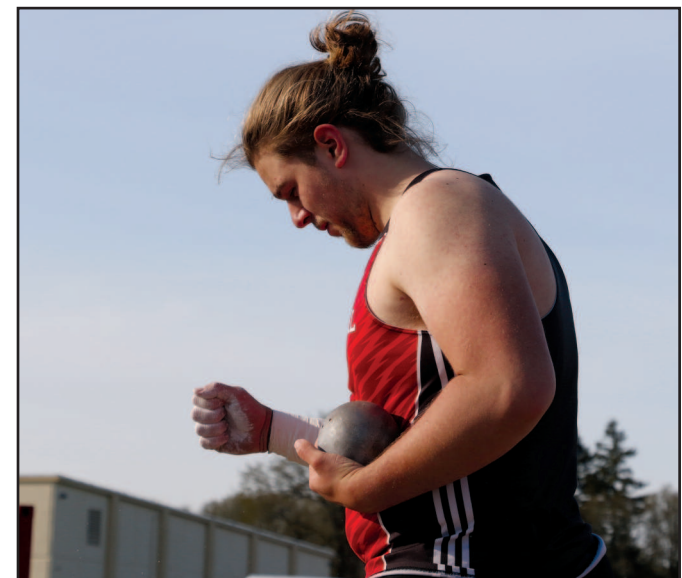
“Right now, the focus is on the technique,” Samuel said. “Not so much on the strength part of it. I’m the strongest I’m going to be right now. I need to buckle down and work on drills.”

And, as has been the case throughout his career, his father will be by his side helping him along the way.

“I can get 24/7 coaching,” Samuel said. “Whenever I have a question, he’s always there to answer them. We talk about throwing all the time. I think sometimes I take him for granted because he’s always there. He’s right most of the time, but sometimes hearing advice from someone else helps.”

The chance to see Samuel grow up as an athlete has been a privilege, James said. Getting more time to spend with his son has been even more gratifying.

“There is nothing better than spending time with the ones we love, as every moment is precious,”



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Central senior Samuel Cole prepares to throw the shot put during a meet at Central High School on April 6.

James said.

Track and field has become part of Samuel’s identity; something that helps bring his family together.

Now he’s sharing everything he’s learned with the Panthers’ younger throwers.

“I like it,” Samuel said. “It helps with my throws if I can teach it to somebody else. It helps me apply it, think about what I’m doing and

understand it better. It’s a great learning experience.”

It’s that role that has made those who care about him the most proud.

“Not only has Samuel been our top thrower, but he is also an extremely positive team leader,” Cirino said. “... That group of throwers is very tight and they definitely look to Samuel to lead. ... He’s earned everything he gets.”