

DALLAS TRACK AND FIELD

Dallas trio primed for final push to state

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — With the Mid-Willamette Conference district track and field meet quickly approaching, Dallas' boys and girls track and field teams have their sights set on a strong showing.



White

The Dragons' final two meets of the regular season are upon them.

For three of Dallas' state hopefuls, this crunch time has arrived as the Dragons look to send their biggest contingent to state in recent memory.

The jumper

Junior Aaron White had a stellar sophomore campaign, culminating in a trip to the state championship meet in the triple jump.

Track and field

- Dallas' boys and girls track and field squads placed third at the Central Coast Invitational on Friday.
- Cody Tilgner won the boys 800-meter run in 2 minutes, 2.67 seconds. The 4 x 100 team of Aaron White, Cody Webb, Jacob Deming and Justin Huxel also placed first, finishing in 44.81 seconds to lead the boys.
- Kylene Benz won the girls shot put with a throw of 38 feet, 5 inches to lead the girls. Benz also took third in the discus (106-10). Kayley Sayer finished third in the long jump (16-0 3/4).
- Dallas hosted South Albany for its final home meet of the season Tuesday after press time.
- The Dragons will compete at the Rob Allen Twilight Invitational at Lebanon on Friday and at Corvallis on May 4.

Once he got there, the moment threatened to overwhelm him.

"When I got there last year, I was nervous," White said. "Everything seemed so big. My first jump, I didn't jump really well. I was trying so hard to do really good I needed to calm myself down."

Getting a taste of state was inspiring for White, and he was ready to build on that success.

So far this spring, White has established himself as one of the conference's premiere jumpers. White ranks first in the MWC in the triple jump (42 feet, 1 inch) and second in the long jump (20-7).

This spring, just making it to state isn't the goal. Now, his attention turns to placing on the podium.

"At the start of the season we weren't so focused on getting the form down, now

we're critiquing everything a little bit more," White said.

The hurdler

If it were up to Naomi Howe, she never would have stuck with hurdles.



Howe

and convinced her to give it one more try her freshman year.

Howe decided to humor her coaches. Then, something strange happened.

"I used to do the 100-meter hurdles, but I wasn't fast enough," Howe said. "I tried the 300 hurdles. And it's definitely hard, but I liked them immediately."

Howe found her race. As a junior in 2015, Howe took fifth in the finals of the 300

hurdles at the MWC district track and field meet. Now in her senior year, she's down to her final shot to qualify.

"I think I was able to build off of last year because of winter training," Howe said. "We've gone past the part of looking at my form. It's about continuing to push yourself."

The distance runner

Senior Cody Tilgner's path to distance running was as much a process of elimination as it was curiosity.

"It's in the family," Tilgner said. "Distance is where I was drawn to. My dad was

successful at it. I tried sprint workouts and didn't think they were very hard, and I didn't do jumps because I didn't want to get my shoes dirty. I thought I'd give dis-

ance a shot."

Tilgner appears to have his best shot of making state that he's had during his high school career.

He enters the week ranked first in the MWC in the 800 after setting a new personal best of 2 minutes, 2.67 seconds at the Central Coast Invitational on Friday.

"There's more in me," Tilgner said. "I know there's a couple of more PRs. We are working on strength to hold my speed longer."

The trio is far from Dallas' only state contenders. The Dragons are hopeful to send its largest group of state qualifiers in recent memory.

"Last year, we had three people," White said. "It was kind of weird. Normally when you go to a meet, you have a ton of people around you. It was quieter and different. You see teams that have 20-plus kids there. It would be cool to be one of those teams."

DALLAS ROUNDUP

Softball wins big against SA

Itemizer-Observer staff report

DALLAS — Dallas' softball team cruised to a 17-1 win over South Albany on April 19 before falling to Corvallis 6-2 on April 20.

The Dragons racked up 15 hits against South Albany. Madi Feldman had three hits and four RBIs.

Pitchers Kaelynn Simmons and Emma Klassen combined to throw six strikeouts.

Pitcher Yasmine El-Hato threw a complete game against the Spartans, but the Dragons could not pick up the victory.

Dallas entered the week



El-Hato

in third place in the Mid-Willamette Conference. The Dragons played Lebanon Tuesday after press time. Dallas hosts Silverton Wednesday (today) before playing at Crescent Valley on Thursday. The Dragons return home to host Central on Tuesday. First pitch for all games is at 4:30 p.m.

BOYS GOLF TAKES FOURTH:

Dallas' boys golf squad places fourth at Corvallis Country Club on Monday. Adam Nicholson led the Dragons with a 92 on the 18-hole course. Fabian Schmidt (93), Mason Maddox (95), Tristan White (96) and Zac Price (98) also competed for the Dragons. The tournament was the final before the MWC district golf tournament May 9-10 at Trysting Tree in Corvallis.

The girls golf squad competed at Tukwila on Monday. Dallas will compete at the

MWC district golf tournament at Quail Valley in Banks for a two-day tournament beginning Tuesday and ending May 4.

GIRLS TENNIS DEFEATS WOODBURN:

Dallas' girls tennis team defeated Woodburn 5-3 on April 20.

Silja Bjoerneby earned the Dragons' lone singles victory and the pairs of Addie Gillette and Lynn Gumpinger, Megan Ronco and Amanda Shafer, Mikayli Laizure and Kloe Totlen, and Allison Hirshi and Emma Cromwell swept the doubles matches. The Dragons also played South Albany on Monday.

The Dragons play at Corvallis on Wednesday (today) before hosting Central on Thursday and Crescent Valley on Friday. Dallas hits the road to end the regular season at Lebanon on Tuesday and at Silverton on May 4. All matches are scheduled to begin at 4 p.m.

Kessler: Dallas entered the week in third place in league

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Kessler's ability and willingness to play a variety of positions stems from a lifelong love affair with the game.

"I remember being really small and hitting the ball off the tee. I just fell in love with the game," Kessler said.

As he grew older, Kessler moved from position to position, filling team needs no matter where they were.

That experience provided him time at multiple positions.

These days, Kessler has

improved a little from his T-ball days and has become an integral part of the Dragons lineup.

"My thinking approach changed," Kessler said. "I used to go up there and just tried to be ready to hit. Now, I go up with an exact plan of how I'm going to do it or, on defense, what I'm going to do with the ball when it gets to me."

The Dragons won two of three games against Silverton last week and entered the week in third place in the Mid-Willamette Conference.

Kessler has been a major reason why Dallas has found success.

"He is very consistent and brings a lot of things to the table," McDonald said.

Kessler didn't enter the season with grand expectations, but he did hope for the chance to play the game he's grown up around no matter where he is on the field.

"I don't really have a favorite (position)," Kessler said. "I love playing the game. Any chance I get to play, I enjoy it every single time."

SPORTS BRIEFS

Tickets available for Central Hall of Fame ceremony

INDEPENDENCE — Tickets are available for Central High School's Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Saturday at 6 p.m. Tickets cost \$5 and can be purchased at the school's main office, athletic office or the Independence Les Schwab.

Coach John Oliver, athletes Joe Mendazona, Johanna Koch Dillard, Dick Britton, Jordan Pratt, Floyd Graves and Darryl "Mouse" Davis, and the 1983 football team and 1982 boys tennis team will be honored. Clyde McMillan will receive the Meritorious Award.

Tai Chi offered at Dallas Aquatic Center for free

DALLAS — Gentle Tai Chi Stand or Sit will be offered at the Dallas Aquatic Center every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11 a.m. to noon through May 18. Classes begin on Monday.

There is no cost to attend. There will be no kicks or squats. The class will focus on slow body movements for balance, agility, flexibility and meditation.

Chair Tai Chi will be offered during the first 15 minutes with the rest of the class devoted to standing Tai Chi.

For more information: Oregon Health Authority, 503-751-1595.

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With two outs in the eighth inning, Huffman singled before advancing to second on a stolen base. She made it to third base on a passed ball.

An RBI single by Kelsie Gardner — one that saw Gardner barely beat out the throw at first, gave the Wolves the win.

Western Oregon clinched the second seed in the conference. The Wolves open the GNAC tournament with a familiar opponent on Thursday in Lacey, Wash. — Concordia.

"I expect (Concordia) to come out and fight,"

Sargeant said. "They're a really good team. They're well coached. We know we have to play really well to compete with them and, hopefully, be able to outlast them at the end."

The winner advances to face the winner of Central Washington/Saint Martin's on Friday. The loser plays the loser of that game.

"Knowing we have to win to stay in this thing, that's our motivation," Sargeant said.

In a challenging season that saw the Wolves play away from home until April 9 because of weather and field conditions, WOU enters the

conference tournament winners of five of its last six games — and confident that they can bring a tournament title back to Monmouth.

"That shows you what kind of team we've had," Sargeant said. "We've been able to find success under tough situations. We won games that were really close in the last inning or extra innings. That kind of fight and determination, that's what they've learned about each other. It doesn't matter who is the big hitter or defender that day. Everyone steps up at any given time. When they're all on the same page, they're really good."

CENTRAL ROUNDUP

Boys track and field wins John Oliver Invitational

Itemizer-Observer staff report

INDEPENDENCE — Central's boys track and field team took first at the John Oliver Invitational on Friday.

The girls finished second.

Jaxon Hutchinson (boys 200-meter run, 23.30 seconds), Aaron Padilla (800, 2:06.45), Darien Hume (3,000, 10:04.94),

the 4 x 400 relay team of Isaac Burgett, Juan Rivera, Josh Peterson and Antonio Rincon (3:33.00), Sam Cole (shot put, 50 feet, 2 inches) and Kyle Miller (discus, 136-10 1/4) all took first to lead the boys.

Bethanie Altamirano (200, 27:15), Bailie Hartford (1,500, 5:17.30), Abby McBeth (3,000, 11:47.00) and the 4 x 100 relay team of Elizabeth Chavez, Alex Alvarez, Altamirano and Reba Hoffman (50.95) placed first



Central's Jamie Smith and Bailie Harford lead the girls 1,500-meter run on Friday.

to lead the girls. Central will compete at Crescent Valley Wednesday

(today) at 4 p.m. and the Dick Baker Invitational on Saturday at 11:15 a.m. The

Panthers close out the regular season on May 4 at Woodburn at 4 p.m.

BASEBALL LOSES TWO OF THREE:

Central's baseball team lost two of three games to Crescent Valley. The Panthers won the opener 7-5 on April 19 before falling 11-3 on April 20 and 10-1 on Thursday.

Pitcher Humberto Alarcon earned the Panthers' win.

The Panthers, which played South Albany Tuesday after press time, entered the week in fourth place in the Mid-Willamette Conference. Central hosts South Albany Wednesday (today) and closes out the three-game series at South Albany on Friday. The Panthers begin a three-game set with Dallas at home on Tuesday. First pitch for all games is scheduled for 4:30 p.m.

BOYS GOLF FINISHES SEVENTH:

Central's boys golf team placed seventh at a Mid-Willamette Conference golf tournament at Corvallis Country Club on Monday. Andrew Love shot the team's low score of the day, recording a 103 over the 18-hole course. The Panthers will compete at the MWC District golf tournament May 9-10 at Trysting Tree Golf Club in Corvallis.

The girls golf squad competed at Tukwila on Monday. Re-

sults weren't reported as of press time. The girls will compete at the MWC district golf tournament at Quail Valley in Banks on Tuesday and May 4.

BOYS TENNIS DROPS THREE OF FOUR:

Central's boys tennis squad fell to Crescent Valley 5-3 on Monday afternoon. Kevin Cable, Chris

Polanco and Anthony Martinez earned wins in singles play for the Panthers. Central cruised to a 7-1 victory over South Albany on

April 20 as Cable, Polanco, Adam Rangel and John Bradley swept the singles matches. The doubles pairs of Brice Spreadbury and Hassan Eltelbany, Joel Robison and Luis Vera, and Justin Landers and Clark Gallagher also won. The Panthers fell to Corvallis 7-1 on Thursday and to Dallas 7-1 on Friday. The Panthers host Lebanon on Wednesday (today), Silverton on Friday and Corvallis on Monday. All matches are scheduled to begin at 4 p.m.



Cable