

## PERRYDALE ROUNDUP

## Pirates find silver lining during difficult season

By Lukas Eggen  
The Itemizer-Observer

PERRYDALE — For almost as long as he's been in school, Perrydale senior Keenan Bailey couldn't wait until high school to get his shot to leave an athletic legacy for the Pirates.



Bailey

"A lot of us have been here since grade school," Bailey said. "We want to make a name for Perrydale. It brings pride to your community and helps give back for what

they gave you."

This baseball season, giving back has meant enduring a season unlike any other.

The Pirates have experienced great athletic success. The football team advanced to the 1A state quarterfinals and the boys basketball squad reached the first round of the 1A state playoffs.

Baseball hasn't gone so smoothly. Perrydale entered the week 0-9 overall. The Pirates have lost all but one game by 10 or more runs.

"Going from football and dominating and basketball where we



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

**Perrydale senior Brant Barnes prepares to take a pitch during a practice on Thursday afternoon. Perrydale is 0-9 so far this season.**

were also dominating to baseball where we don't dominate and we're just out here to play, that's huge," Bailey said. "It takes a toll on us mentally. You don't want to lose every game. That's our mindset right now. It's very different. We're not used to this at all."

The Pirates have six seniors on

this year's roster, but also four sophomores and one freshman.

Six starters from a year ago had to be replaced. Among those positions included catcher, shortstop, third base, center field, second base and pitcher.

"Everyone is doing what they can," senior Brant Barnes said.

"We're all trying hard. Everyone is still kind of moving around and finding our spots. We're getting there."

Six starters have less than one year of high school experience, coach Steve Mabry said.

Players like Colten Moore (outfield/first base), Mike McGill (catcher), Dustin Silver (pitcher) and others are showing steady improvement, Mabry said. But for now, potential and on-field results haven't met yet.

"The biggest challenge we have is trying to get young, inexperienced players up to the speed of a varsity game," Mabry said. "They are having to make decisions during the game that they have only seen in practice. You can't simulate the timing in practice. There are aspects of the game that just have to be learned while playing."

In other sports, the Pirates had league and state title aspirations.

During this baseball season, those expectations are much more modest — mainly to lay the groundwork for future success.

The seniors have taken it upon themselves to embrace that role and, instead of getting down as losses have piled on, they have taken a renewed interest in helping the future of Pirates' baseball — giving tips and working with players

to help with technique and form — giving the seniors something to keep motivated at.

"We understood this was a building year for us," Bailey said. "It's going to make this program grow a lot more. It gives you a good feeling to help the younger guys and help the next generation grow."

The seniors' willingness to embrace this season — even when the losses are mounting — has been key to the team sticking together — and finding the enjoyment in small triumphs.

"It's easy to be all smiles when things are going your way," Mabry said. "The true challenge is not giving in to the negative aspects of losing. The guys are having fun learning as a team and taking each day as a personal challenge to improve."

Despite still searching for its first win, Bailey said the team's made significant progress since those first practices. Slogging through a winless spring has been a difficult pill for players to swallow, but players aren't letting a lack of success lead to a lack of desire.

"It's baseball, you have to have fun with it," Barnes said. "Our record is what it is. You can't do anything about it. We will just try to do our best and try to win."

## PERRYDALE ROUNDUP

## Clark takes second

**Itemizer-Observer staff report**  
PORTLAND — Perrydale's girls track and field squad finished 17th at the Portland Christian Invitational on Saturday as the boys squad placed 20th.

Senior Sarah Clark finished second in the girls javelin (105-10). Freshman Alyssa Lux placed seventh in the high jump (4-2) and sophomore Vanessa Miller took eighth in the 800-meter run in 2 minutes, 49.21 seconds.

Senior Kirk Fairchild took fourth in the boys high jump with a leap of 5 feet, 6 inches.

The Pirates will compete

at the Southwest Christian Invitational at Sherwood High School Wednesday (today) at 4 p.m.

**SOFTBALL FALLS TO CENTRAL LINN:** Perrydale's softball team fell to Central Linn 8-4 on Friday. The Pirates (6-3 overall, 3-2 Special District 2) jumped out to a 4-0 lead after the first two innings, but Central Linn scored eight unanswered runs to finish the game. Hannah Hallock went two for three

with one RBI, while Haley Smith had a hit and two RBIs. The Pirates host Delphian Wednesday (today) and Regis on Friday before playing at St. Paul on Monday. All games are scheduled to start at 4:30 p.m.



Clark



Hallock

## WESTERN OREGON ROUNDUP

## Ribich sets another school record

**Itemizer-Observer staff report**  
AZUSA, Calif. — Competing in two states, Western Oregon's track and field team saw strong performances from several athletes. Sophomore David Ribich set a new school record in the men's 1,500-meter run at the Bryan Clay Invitational in Azusa, Calif., on Saturday. Ribich finished with a time of 3 minutes, 43.41 seconds, a personal best by seven seconds and breaking the old school mark of 3:44.27 set by West Tilgner in 1987. The time is the second fastest in the Division II

level so far this season.

Suzanne Van De Grift set a personal record in the women's 800 at the Mt. Sac Relays on Saturday. She placed first in her heat at 2:11.76 — the fourth fastest time in school history and the fastest mark since 2011. At the same meet, Cody Warner finished the men's 200 in 21.15 seconds — the second fastest mark in program history. The Wolves also competed at the Pacific Open in Forest Grove, where Devonte Woods took third in the 200 (22.83).

WOU will compete at the

Titan Twilight meet in Eugene all day Thursday before traveling to the Oregon State High Performance meet on Friday and Saturday.

**BASEBALL DROPS THREE OF FOUR:** Western Oregon's baseball team saw its 14-game winning streak snapped at Northwest Nazarene last weekend. The Wolves lost three of four to the Crusaders. WOU fell 5-4 and 14-10 on Friday before splitting a doubleheader on Saturday, losing 9-6 and winning 9-8. Western Oregon jumped out to a big lead in the series finale, scoring seven runs in the first inning,

thanks in part to a two-run home run by Cody Poznanski. The Crusaders chipped away at the lead, tying the game at 8 before Forrest Garcia's RBI double scored the winning run. The Wolves (25-16 overall, 20-11 Great Northwest Athletic Conference) entered the week in first place in the conference standings.

WOU is just ahead of Northwest Nazarene (24-16 overall, 19-11 GNAC). Western Oregon hosts Montana State, Billings Wednesday (today) at 2 p.m. The teams also play a pair of doubleheaders on Friday and Saturday.

Games begin at 1 p.m. on both days.

## Celebrate



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

**Dallas' Joe Gillette and Josh Dudley take a moment to celebrate after winning a point. Dallas' boys tennis team defeated Central 7-1. Thomas Gniadecki, Caedmon Blair, Cole Oace and Luis Zavala swept the singles points. Randy Mullins and Ryan Bibler, Travis Wilson and Michael Friesen, and Evan Koons and Honario Colipano won in doubles play. The Dragons also beat Woodburn 5-3 on April 20 and Lebanon 6-2 on Thursday. The Dragons defeated South Albany 7-1 on Monday.**

## FALLS CITY TRACK AND FIELD

## Varney leads Falls City

**Itemizer-Observer staff report**  
PORTLAND — Falls City's girls track and field squad placed ninth at the Portland Christian Invitational on Saturday.

The boys finished 22nd. Senior Brittany Varney led the girls, taking fifth in the discus (85 feet, 8 inches) and sixth in the shot put (30-9 1/2). She also took 10th in the javelin (79-5).

Sophomore Madelyn Hendrickson placed eighth in the long jump (14-6 1/4).

Senior Ryan Macnab finished seventh in the boys



Varney

shot put (37-3) to lead the boys. Jeremy Labrado placed eighth in the high jump (5-4) and ninth in the long jump (18-3 1/2).

The Mountaineers will compete at the Southwest Christian Invitational at Sherwood High School Wednesday (today) at 4 p.m. Falls City travels to the Waldport Small School meet Friday at 4 p.m.

## Smith: Junior looks to stay positive during matches



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

**Central junior Kylie Smith looks to return a shot against South Albany's Lacey McLellan on April 20.**

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"At the beginning of every set, it refreshes you," Smith said. "You don't feel down anymore and you see that you have another shot."

But old habits die hard, and Smith dropped six straight games.

"I realize it now that if I were to take my time and think through all the points as individual points and not worry about the score, I think I would have done a lot better," she said. Overcoming the mental hurdles may be Smith's biggest challenge going forward, but there's little question she's come a long way since the first day she played — a moment she never expected to happen.

By all accounts, Smith appeared headed to a volleyball career during high school — a sport she had played and enjoyed through

## Girls tennis

- Central lost to South Albany 4-4 on a tie breaker (9-8 sets won) on April 20. Tamoka Naru and Mattie Barry earned singles victories. The pairs of Renee Bruning and Patience Teague and Olivia Teague and Diana Huerte won in doubles play.
- The Panthers fell to Corvallis 7-1 on Friday. Naru earned the team's lone victory during the match.
- Central lost to Crescent Valley 8-0 on Monday afternoon.

middle school.

When it came time to think of her high school athletic ventures, she made a surprising choice.

"My first year ever picking up a racket was my freshman year," Smith said, smiling. "I had been playing volleyball, but decided not to do that. I tried figuring out what else I could do. I thought tennis looked fun. I thought, 'I'll be a tennis player. A future Serena Williams.'"

Smith made varsity her freshman year — a big thrill for a new tennis player. It

gave her confidence early on, even when it may not have been fully warranted.

"I went, like, seven games undefeated and thought, 'yeah, I'm great,'" Smith said. "I wasn't even that good. I used to win a lot of my games, but it wasn't because of skill. It was like softly hitting it back."

Things are different now.

"It's more about consistency, having harder hits and using trick shots," Smith said. "It's fun to see how much I've progressed. ... The years before, it was more

having fun and hitting it back and forth. It wasn't like me trying my best to work on my skills. The coaches expect more from me (this year). It makes me want to give more."

As the Panthers make their way toward the Mid-Willamette Conference district tennis tournament in mid-May, players' attentions turn from physical conditioning to fine tuning. That means perfecting new shots, including a drop shot.

But it's the mental challenges that may prove most difficult to overcome. If she can do that, Smith may be ready to take on the league's best.

"Say there's a field of green and there's three or four dandelions," Smith said. "We're working on the little dandelions. I have to fix those little things, working on specific shots so I can get better."