

DALLAS BOYS TENNIS

# Gniadecki downs Larson, places third at state

By Lukas Eggen  
The Itemizer-Observer

PORTLAND — It seemed almost inevitable it would come to this. Dallas senior Thomas Gniadecki was one match away from taking third place at the OSAA 5A state tennis championships on Saturday.

His opponent was a familiar one — Corvallis senior Sam Larson. “That was pretty cool,” Gniadecki said. “He got me in districts,

which he deserved. When we play, it’s all about whose day it is.”

The pair had faced off three other times with Larson winning twice.

On Saturday, it was Gniadecki’s turn, defeating Larson in two sets to earn third place.

“I got to play Sam in my last match, which was a lot of fun,” he said. “I got to finish with a win. There’s not a whole lot of people who get to do that.”

Gniadecki won his opening two matches of the tournament, defeating Milwaukie senior Mario Sensat 6-0, 6-1 on Thursday and Ashland senior Mischa Kirby 6-2, 7-5 on Friday. He fell in the semifinals round to eventual champion Nathan Hampton, of Churchill, which sent him to the third-place match on Saturday.

“State was pretty great,” Gniadecki said. “It was nice because there wasn’t that big of expectations for me. I got there, which is what counted.”

Dallas’ doubles pair of Joe Gillette and Josh Dudley lost a first-round match to Hermiston’s Cameron Meade and Race Latham before falling in the first round of the consolation bracket to Quinn Everts and Aiden Green, of Wilsonville.

For most athletes, the end of a season is a bittersweet time. For Gniadecki, more so as it signals the



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Dallas senior Thomas Gniadecki reaches low for a shot during the state tournament on Thursday.

end of his time in Dallas. The senior came on an exchange student program and will return to his home in Denmark this July.

“The school year has gone by really fast,” Gniadecki said. “It’s been great. I made a lot of friends. It makes me a little sad there’s only a couple weeks left (of school). I was

sad when I went to state knowing it would be my last high school match here ever.”

But through the help of his teammates and coaches, his time here has been memorable and he plans to stay connected.

“I plan on coming back next year to show my mom around

here,” Gniadecki said.

Of course, when he does return it won’t be all sightseeing. He may sneak off to face Larson one last time.

“We’re 2-2 now,” Gniadecki said with a smile. “We have to play one more match to see who gets the real honor.”



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Josh Dudley and Joe Gillette wait for a serve on Thursday.

# Dragons: Sandy defeated Hermiston 3-0 in play-in round

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“I know they are very well coached and I think it will be a good battle,” coach Brandi Jackson said. “Kellie Wilkerson, Sandy’s head coach, actually was one of my assistant coaches at Portland State, so I have a lot of respect for her

and her coaching philosophy.”

Sandy finished fourth in the Northwest Oregon Conference with an 18-9 record overall and a 10-6 mark in league play.

The Pioneers defeated Hermiston 3-0 in the play-in round.

“Although we are headed into the postseason by a forfeit, it is very exciting for the girls getting past that first game,” Jackson said. “We have played a great season thus far, and these girls deserve to be in the postseason.”

Dallas enters its first

round matchup on a three-game losing streak, but Jackson said the team has shown critical growth in recent weeks.

“Despite our recent losses in the last few games of league, I think we have learned to be more consistent as a whole and more

disciplined at the plate,” Jackson said. “I believe that will help us in the postseason.”

The winner advances to the quarterfinals on Friday against the winner of No. 14 Corvallis/No. 3 Churchill. The semifinals will take place on Tuesday.

“We won’t be approaching the playoffs any differently than our regular season,” Jackson said. “I think we are in a good spot as a team. If we play consistently offensively and defensively, like we did last week, I am very confident heading into the first round.”

DALLAS BASEBALL

# Dragons ready for first round matchup against Kingsmen

By Lukas Eggen  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Dallas’ baseball team will hit the road for the first round of the state playoffs.

The Dragons earned second place in the Mid-Willamette Conference, finishing the regular season with a 15-6 mark in league play.

That earned them the ninth seed overall in the state playoffs and a matchup with No. 8 Putnam Wednesday (today) at 5 p.m.

Putnam won the Northwest Oregon Conference

with a 17-9 record overall and a 12-4 mark in league play.

“They have a good pitcher, a lefty headed to Western Oregon named Alex Martin,” coach Scot McDonald said. “They pitch well and play good defense. The top of their lineup is potent.”

Putnam gave up 93 runs — the fourth fewest in Class 5A. But Dallas, which won its final eight league games, is confident it can test Putnam’s defense.

“The key is to put the ball in play and put pressure on them to make plays, then in reverse, we need to make plays and handle the ball,”

McDonald said.

The winner advances to the quarterfinals against the winner of 16 seed Milwaukie and top-ranked Summit on Friday.

The state semifinals will be held on Tuesday.

The Dragons will have to play away from home during the postseason, but Dallas will be ready to begin what it hopes will be a deep run in the state playoffs, McDonald said.

“They have gained confidence within the last three weeks,” McDonald said. “We will simply compete and let the game take care of itself.”

## Class 5A State First Round

**What:** Dallas at Putnam.  
**When:** Wednesday, 5 p.m.  
**Where:** Aldercreek Middle School.  
**Admission:** Adults, \$6; students, \$4.  
**What’s at stake:** The winner advances to the second round on Friday against the winner of Milwaukie vs. Summit.

# SPORTS BRIEFS

## Curtis places 14th at state tourney

BANKS — Dallas junior Kailee Curtis placed 14th at the OSAA 5A girls golf state championships May 16-17 at Quail Valley Golf Course.

Curtis shot a 190 over the two-day tournament. Crater’s Kiana Oshiro finished first with a 142.

Curtis advanced to state by finishing third in the Special District 1 tournament.

## Central softball falls in play-in game

CENTRAL POINT — Central’s softball team saw its season come to an end after a 9-5 loss at Crater on Thursday afternoon.

The Panthers led 4-1 after three innings, but Crater responded with eight runs in the bottom of the fourth inning.

The Panthers finished the 2016 season with an 11-13 record overall and a 9-9 mark in Mid-Willamette Conference play.

## Four Pirates earn all-league honors



McGill

PERRYDALE — Four Perrydale softball players earned Special District 2 all-league honors.

Catcher Anna McGill was named first team all-league, while pitcher Hannah Amador and outfielder Hannah Hallock earned second team honors.

Infielder Sierra Starr received honorable mention.

Perrydale finished the 2016 season with a 9-8 record overall and 4-6 mark in league play.

CENTRAL BASEBALL

# Panthers eliminated

Itemizer-Observer staff report

INDEPENDENCE — Central’s baseball team was eliminated in the state play-in round after losing to Eagle Point 8-1 on Friday.

The game was tied at 1 until the fifth inning.

The Panthers trailed 3-1 before the Eagles scored five runs in the top of the sev-

enth to put the game out of reach and secure the win.

“Friday was a day of what-ifs for us offensively and that’s baseball for you,” coach Zach Miller said. “A coach things go our way on the base paths with a steal of home and a squeeze play later in the game when we were tied 1-1, and it’s a different

ball game.”

While Central’s season came to an end, Miller was encouraged.

“Throughout this year I saw a lot of maturity from a predominately young team,” Miller said.

For an extended version of this story, visit [www.polkio.com](http://www.polkio.com).

CENTRAL BOYS TENNIS

# Cable falls in consolation finals at state tournament

Itemizer-Observer staff report

PORTLAND — Central senior Kevin Cable knew he had a tough draw to open the 5A boys state tennis tournament on Thursday.

Cable fell to the second-seeded Carter Quigley, of Summit, 6-1, 6-2 knocking Cable into the consolation bracket.

“I knew I was probably going to lose that first match, but those last three matches were really stressful,” Cable said. “I wanted to keep my career going for as long as I could. I wanted to keep on winning in consolation.”

Cable responded by advancing to the consolation finals before losing to Parkrose senior Luigi Massa 6-4, 6-2 on Saturday.

Cable advanced by defeating Churchill senior Dakota Dean and Mountain View senior Seth Atkinson on Friday.

“It was tough out there,”



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Central senior Kevin Cable advanced to the consolation finals on Saturday before falling to Luigi Massa.

Cable said. “I’m playing kids that I know are better than me, but I just played my best. I wanted to win that final match and get fifth, but I was just glad to advance to the consolation final.”

Cable was the Panthers’ lone state qualifier. He also advanced to state in doubles in 2015.

“Changing from doubles to singles, it was different,”

Cable said. “The competition is a lot better in singles than doubles.”

As the senior closed the book on his athletics career at Central, Cable said he was proud of his accomplishments on the tennis court from the first time he stepped onto the court as a Panther until his final match on Saturday.

“I just fell in love with tennis,” Cable said.



CALEB WALLACE/ for the Itemizer-Observer

Central sophomore Peter Mendazona attempts to slide back into first base on Friday.