

Dallas volleyball camp



Left: Jayden Chancery attempts to catch a volleyball during a drill at Dallas High School's youth volleyball camp on Monday afternoon. The camp, aimed at children entering grades 1-8, runs through Friday. Right: Camp participants take part in a drill on Monday. Bottom: Dallas volleyball coach Shana Lavier gives some tips during Dallas' youth volleyball camp.

LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

SPORTS BRIEFS

Fall sports season begins on Monday

POLK COUNTY — The high school sports season will hold first day of official practices on Monday. All student-athletes must have registration forms turned in prior to competing. Sports physicals are required every two years.

WOU women's basketball earns academic honors

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon's women's basketball team was honored by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association after being named to the 2015-16 Academic Top-25 Team Honor Roll. The Wolves ranked 21st in Division II and were the highest ranked team from the Great Northwest Athletic Conference. Among all divisions of the WBCA (Division I, II and III; NAIA), Western Oregon ranked 46th. "What's really impressive about this recognition is that they are able to achieve at such a high level in a fast-paced quarter system," Howard-Carpenter added. "Our travel during the winter quarter is challenging, to say the very least, but they make academics a priority and find a way to excel despite missing class." Ali Nelke topped the team's GPA list with a 4.0 mark. Natalie DeLonge and Jordan Mottershaw had a 3.93 GPA and Launia Davis recorded a 3.92 GPA.

Bike: Group gave sisters hope for the future

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"I realized that, although I couldn't stop what was happening to her, what I could do was raise money to help fight MS."
Shannon hadn't heard of Bike MS prior to 2013, but she quickly grew to love it.
"Every time I took a training ride or received a donation, I felt I was helping my sister and everyone else with this disease," she said. "I was finally doing something to help."
Shannon was ready to participate in Bike MS for the first time in August of 2013. She assumed she would show up, ride the 35-mile route, and head home. She was placed on Team Roadkill, but didn't know any of the members.
"It's an amazing experience," Shannon said.

"Every year, I am inspired by the people who participate in this event. Reconnecting with this community of people who are so positive and self-effacing, every year I feel recharged by being around these people. The team I had been assigned to (in 2013) — Team Roadkill — treated me like I had been a part of their group for years."
Nora, only six weeks after being discharged from the hospital in 2013, showed up to Bike MS in a wheelchair.
"On the drive, I struggled with anxiety," she wrote in a blog post. "After a month and a half in the hospital, I saw myself as a victim of circumstance — a near-invalid patient with an incurable neurodegenerative disease. I assumed my life was only going to get worse from that

point on. 'Why am I doing this?' I thought to myself. 'I want as far away from MS, and anyone who has anything to do with it, as possible.'
She arrived to find bright colors, energetic music and people who weren't letting MS define them.
"MS is a terrible disease and can be cruel and reductive, but the people who live with it every day are some of the best folk I've met in (all my) years," Nora wrote. "They are generous, encouraging, and so incredibly welcoming. So many went out of their way to introduce themselves and to make sure I felt included in the weekend's festivities. I felt empowered and reinvigorated just by being in their presence. ... These people, I quickly re-

alized, were not victims. These were warriors, survivors and they were anything but defeated. By the end of the weekend, I was no longer a victim — I'd become a warrior, too. I learned that this disease can be fought, and my new friends were my comrades in arms. Best of all, I was no longer alone in my fight. I had found my community."
Shannon has taken part in Bike MS every year since she started — and was even joined by Nora for a bike ride in 2014.
Her goal remains simple. "The research towards new medications and potentially a cure is advancing rapidly," Shannon said. "The more participants we get; the more money we will raise to keep that research going."



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHANNON SNAIR/for the Itemizer-Observer
Shannon Snair participates in Bike MS every year. She first started riding in the event in 2013.

Course: Trail offers variety of workouts to try



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Once completed, Independence will offer a variety of workouts to try during a run or a walk on the trail.

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He reached out to a small group in the community to figure out what they wanted to see in the fitness course.
"I specifically worked with the folks at Crossfit Kiowa, PT Northwest and Independence Curves to refine ideas for the course, and are still working with them to get the course completed," Hedlund said.
That feedback continues to help Hedlund as the project nears its completion.
"I would love to say it will be done by the end of August, but it has been a project that has taken considerably longer than I had anticipated on both the construction as well as the administrative portion of the project," Hedlund said.
Once completed, the trail will offer a workout that can change each time you try it, and Hedlund can't wait for the community to see the finished project.
"I would have to say that probably my favorite part isn't even out there yet, and it would be the tire flip station," he said. "I'm not sure what it is, but grabbing a hold of a big tractor tire and flipping it over is just fun."
Hedlund's hope is the course can be part of a bigger movement to make Independence — and Polk County — a more attractive place to live.
"I think it's important to the city to showcase what we have to offer and to make our city and the surrounding communities a better, healthier place to live and work," Hedlund said.
The goal is to get people out more and finding ways to get them to become more active than before.
"I hope this course gets people of all ages and abilities out and enjoying fitness," he said. "I know that for me, running on a treadmill or using an elliptical is one of the worst fitness experiences imaginable. ... You can do as many or as few of the stations as you want and you can run around it as many times as you want, while mixing up the stations to keep your workout interesting."