

CENTRAL BASKETBALL

Panthers pull away from Dragons

Itemizer-Observer staff report
INDEPENDENCE — Central's boys basketball team was looking to make a statement at home.

Mission accomplished. The Panthers defeated Lebanon 63-51 on Jan. 18 before earning a win over Dallas 51-38 on Friday.

Peter Mendazona scored 18 points to lead the Panthers against Lebanon. Peter Mason added 14 points; Alec Barba scored 12 points; and Andrew Barry recorded 10 points.

All but six of Central's points against Dallas came from three players. Mendazona scored a game-high 17 points — despite leaving in the fourth quarter with an ankle injury. Barba scored 16 points, and Mason scored 12.

"People can talk about getting excited for rivalry games," coach Tim Kreta said. "Unless you've experienced it and gone through it, it really doesn't mean anything. I think both communities came out and fully supported their teams. It was a great battle, and I think our kids got a taste of some very competitive basketball. Dallas always brings everything."

Against the Dragons, late in quarters Central was content to wait until a Dallas defender challenged them when Central's guard would drive in and either dish it out or drive to the hoop.

"That's the way we want to finish quarters and



Players watch a loose ball during Central's 51-38 win over Dallas on Friday night. LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

halves," Mendazona said. "We let them come get us and we drive to the middle. It spreads the defense out. We can get to the free-throw line if they foul us. It's a tough offense to guard."

It's an offensive scheme that gave Dallas trouble in the second half.

"Peter (Mason) has matured as a point guard," Kreta said. "He knows what

his job is. If he gets by, he only has one guy to beat."

With strong offensive performances from Mason, Mendazona and Barba, the team buckled down and grabbed rebounds at a high clip in the second half.

The Panthers (7-6 overall, 3-1 Mid-Willamette Conference) hope to continue making a statement. Central plays at Corvallis Wednesday

(today) at 7 p.m. The Spartans enter the matchup with a 4-1 mark in league play. The Panthers play at Woodburn Friday at 7 p.m. before hosting Silverton Tuesday at 7 p.m.

"Every game gets tougher from here on out," Kreta said. "You enjoy a win for a night, then you prepare for the next game. We're going to see what we're made."

Central: Learns from past losses

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Central still has work to do. The Panthers, which played Corvallis Tuesday after press time, entered the week tied for fifth place in the conference with Lebanon and South Albany with a 2-3 mark in Mid-Willamette Conference play.

Each game becomes more important to qualify for the postseason, McDonald said. Players hope the win over Dallas helped them turn an important corner in their development.

"We had faith in each

other and learned to trust ourselves and our coaches," Hyre said. "We saw that we can win these tough games."

The Panthers know they can't savor the victory for too long. They must continue to learn and build to keep pace in a difficult league, McDonald said. But all that could wait at least for a night. On Friday, Central enjoyed the thrill of victory against a big rival.

"It's always a great time when we play (Dallas)," McDonald said. "I couldn't be more proud of the girls."



Central's Elizabeth Chavez (12) drives to the basket against Dallas on Friday night. LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS ROUNDUP

Dragons defeat Silverton

Itemizer-Observer staff report
INDEPENDENCE — Dallas' boys basketball team defeated Silverton 47-44 on Jan. 18 before falling to Central 51-38 on Friday.

The Dragons rallied from an early 10-5 deficit against Silverton to take a 26-17 lead into halftime. Jason Richey scored a team-high 17 points.

Jake Collins scored eight points, and Evan Courtney added seven points, including five in the fourth quarter.

Dallas kept it close with Central, trailing 29-24 after the second quarter, but some cold shooting allowed the Panthers to pull away in the second half.

"I'm not too happy with our composure in the third quarter," coach Trent Schwartz said. "I think we panicked a little bit and started to not execute. We got a little impatient in our offense when we should have waited for better shots, and it snowballed on us a little bit."

The Dragons scored four points in the third quarter.

Aaron White scored a team-high nine points.

Dallas played Woodburn Tuesday after press time.

The Dragons host South Albany Friday at 7 p.m. before playing at Lebanon Tuesday at 7 p.m. Dallas entered the week with a 2-2 record in Mid-Willamette Conference play and 6-7 overall.

"This league is extremely tough," Schwartz said. "There's a tremendous amount of parity. When we miss a shot, we have to go get a stop on defense. If you start thinking about missing shots, it's all mental. You'll miss your next shot more than likely. You have to get fired up on the defensive end, get a stop and go execute on offense to get a better shot the next time down."

FORD, DRESSEL LEAD SWIM TEAM: Dallas senior swimmer Jolie-Rae Ford took first in the girls 100-yard backstroke during the Dragons' dual meet at Lebanon on Jan. 10. Ford finished with a time of 1 minute, 8.32 seconds. Ford

also won the 50 freestyle in 26.94 seconds.

Isaiah Dressel won the boys 200 individual medley in 2:58.87. Ryan Kennedy took second in the 200 freestyle (2:10.82) and 50 freestyle (26.31).

"I am pleased with the progress of our swimmers," coach David Morelli said. "The swimmers are improving as we move closer to districts."

Lebanon's boys and girls teams defeated Dallas.

The Dragons hosted Central Tuesday after press time. Dallas travels to South Albany Tuesday at 4 p.m. for the team's final meet before the district championships Feb. 10-11 in Corvallis.

GIRLS BASKETBALL DROPS TWO: Dallas' girls basketball team lost to Silverton 34-21 on Jan. 17 and to Central 42-40 on Friday. The losses snapped a five-game win streak.

The Dragons (7-6 overall, 2-2 MWC) played Woodburn Tuesday after press time. Dallas plays at South Albany Friday at 7 p.m. and Lebanon on Feb. 1 at 7 p.m.



White



Ford



Dallas' Jason Richey goes up for a shot against Central on Friday. Richey scored eight points against the Panthers. Richey scored a team-high 17 points during the Dragons' 47-44 win over Silverton on Jan. 18. LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Breaking through



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer
Dallas sophomore Emma Classen attempts to shoot over Central sophomore Meagan Mendazona on Friday night. The Panthers defeated the Dragons 42-40. Dallas dropped to 7-6 overall and 2-2 in Mid-Willamette Conference play. The Dragons also lost to Silverton 34-21 on Jan. 17. Dallas played Woodburn Tuesday after press time. The Dragons play at South Albany Friday at 7 p.m. before hosting Putnam Monday at 7 p.m. and Lebanon on Feb. 1 at 7 p.m.

WESTERN OREGON ROUNDUP

WOU holds on for thrilling victory

Itemizer-Observer staff report
NAMPA, Idaho — Western Oregon's women's basketball team held on for a 78-75 victory over Northwest Nazarene on Saturday.

The Wolves rallied from a 14-point deficit in the fourth quarter to earn the victory.

Sydney Azorr led WOU with 17 points and 10 rebounds. Kennedy Corrigan added 14 points; Savannah Heugly recorded 12 points; five assists and four rebounds; and Jasmine Miller scored 10 points.

"I'm so proud of our focus from start to finish," coach Holli Howard-Carpenter said.

WOU opened the week with a 77-63 loss to Central Washington on Thursday.

Western Oregon hosts Western Washington Thurs-

day at 7 p.m. and Simon Fraser Saturday at 7 p.m.

MEN'S BASKETBALL DROPS ALASKA FAIRBANKS: Western Oregon's men's basketball team split its Alaska road trip, falling to Alaska Anchorage 81-73 on Thursday before defeating Alaska Fairbanks 83-51 on Saturday.

Demetrius Trammell led WOU with 17 points against Alaska Anchorage, but WOU couldn't rally for the victory.

Against Alaska Fairbanks, WOU rolled to an easy victory. Bryan Berg scored a career-high 22 points. Tanner Omlid added 19 points and five rebounds. Trammell scored 15 points, and Akil Reese posted a career-high 14 points. JJ Chirnside added seven rebounds and four steals.

WOU plays Northwest Nazarene Thursday at 6:30 p.m. and Central Washington Saturday at 7:30 p.m.