

CENTRAL SWIMMING

Thornton embraces role as leader

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — During his middle school years, it appeared Central senior August Thornton was destined to be a freestyler for the Panthers' swim team.

It was the stroke he liked the most and felt most confident doing, and the one he saw himself succeeding in the most.

Three years ago, his swimming plans took a drastic turn.

"I was riding my bike to swim at the YMCA," Thornton said. "I hit a rock on a gravel road and flipped over the bike."

Thornton's right arm was broken, and needed screws and plates installed.

For Thornton, who also runs cross-country and track, the recovery was difficult.

"I wasn't allowed to go in the water or even really move it for six months,"

Thornton said.

He was able to run cross-country that fall, but when he returned to the pool, he discovered his favorite stroke caused pain in his right arm — enough that he decided to find a different stroke to specialize in.

"That pushed me toward the breaststroke," Thornton said. "I could do it without (my arm) hurting as much."

He's excelled in his new stroke, and as the years have gone by he has returned to compete in the freestyle again.

"You have to have the motivation to keep on going," Thornton said. "There are times when you're tired and you don't want to finish a workout and it sucks in the moment, but you remember you're going to get better and training for something bigger."

Though he's chasing a trip to state, that bigger goal is to become a true leader among Central's swim team.



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Central senior August Thornton is a team captain.

"When I was a freshman and I was the youngest one on the team, I didn't really know what I was doing at first," Thornton said. "You become a senior and you re-

alize I can actually help out some of the younger people."

Thornton is one of the Panthers' captains. He takes that title seriously.

"I've seen him become

more of a leader," coach Jennifer Tress said. "If I'm saying something and the team isn't paying attention, he'll tell the guys to listen. He encourages his teammates and makes sure they understand what's going on. He's not afraid to take the lead."

Beyond that, his desire to make the most of his final high school season and his work ethic serve as an example for his teammates to follow.

"He's great about asking for feedback," Tress said. "He'll say things like, 'my dive is feeling off, can you look at it for things to improve on.'"

With the district swimming championships just weeks away, Thornton, like the rest of his teammates, is focused on fine tuning and preparing to swim his best at the right time.

But he's not putting any extra pressure on himself or his team. Instead, he reminds everyone to focus on

Swim meet

• Central's swim team competed at Corvallis on Jan. 17.

• Lynze Bradley won the girls 50-yard freestyle in 30.76 seconds. Grace Holstad took first in the 100 butterfly in 1:05.55 and Annie Taylor won the 500 freestyle in 6:43.15 and the 100 backstroke in 1:14.35.

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the simple things — doing what they can to be at their best.

"It's about taking it one thing at a time," Thornton said. "You're trying to get a personal record, not necessarily beating the guy next to you. You have to be focused on improving yourself. If that lets me go to state, that would be awesome. But knowing I'm pushing myself is a fulfilling feeling."

PERRYDALE ROUNDUP

Pirates move into first place

Itemizer-Observer staff report

PERRYDALE — Perrydale's boys basketball team had showdowns with two of the top teams in the Casco League and emerged from those tests with a pair of convincing victories.

Perrydale defeated Crosshill Christian 58-38 on Jan. 18 and Willamette Valley Christian 54-39 on Friday.

The Pirates (11-3 overall, 7-1 Casco League) handed Crosshill Christian its first league loss of the season as Perrydale moved into first place in the league standings. "We put Cooper (Butler) on their best scorer," Pirates coach Brian Domes said. "Whether it was Haylen (Janesofsky) or Daniel (Domes) or David (Domes) off the bench, we had play-

ers step up and showed growth on the defensive side."

Perrydale defeated C.S. Lewis on Monday.

The Pirates play at Crosshill Christian Wednesday (today) at 7 p.m. Perrydale hosts Falls City Friday at 7 p.m. before playing at St. Paul Saturday at 3:30 p.m. and at Falls City Monday at 7 p.m.

GIRLS BASKETBALL DROPS TWO: Facing the Casco League's top two teams, Perrydale's girls basketball team fell to Crosshill Christian 38-28 on Jan. 18 and to Willamette Valley Christian 37-30 on Friday.

But the Pirates showed promise.

"We competed really well and had a chance to win both games," coach Terry Newton

said. "Both games we were within three to six points in the final three to four minutes of the game. We couldn't close it out."

In both games, Perrydale outscored its opponents over the final three quarters, but couldn't overcome slow starts in the first quarter, Newton said.

"We have to be ready to play from the very beginning," Newton said. "I think the other teams were a little bit bigger and older than us, and came out a little readier than we were."

The Pirates play at Crosshill Christian Wednesday (today) at 5:30 p.m. Perrydale will host Falls City Friday at 5:30 p.m. before traveling to St. Paul Saturday at 2 p.m. and playing at Falls City Monday at 5:30 p.m.

Dallas: Foster wins an individual title at Reser's

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Joseph Foster (126 pounds) won an individual title. Tanner Earhart (170) finished second. Clay Coxen (182) took third.

"We're very proud of Joe Foster," Olliff said. "He beat a top-seeded kid. We've had four Reser's Champions: Josh Christenson, Cody Bibler, Matt Hofenbredl and now Joe joins them. It's a special thing to be in that category."

Ryan Bibler (106) and Dawson Barcroft (113) placed fourth. Jacob Jones (132) and Treve Earhart (195) took fifth, and Cody Janssen (160) finished sixth.

The results were promising against some of the state's top wrestling talent from all classifications.

"It's the best of the best," Bibler said. "If you place at Reser's, you get a good look at what you're going to face at state."

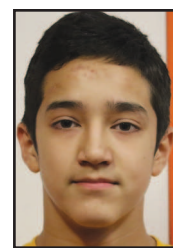
Tanner faced Travis Wittlake from 4A school Marshfield in the final. Wittlake is considered one of the top wrestlers in the state.

"Tanner did an exceptional job," Olliff said. "The only way people aren't going to get beat up pretty bad by the guy he faced in the finals is if they're smart enough not to come out for wrestling."

That didn't mean Tanner



Ta. Earhart



Barcroft

was OK with losing.

"I know he's really good, but I don't like how much stronger he was than me. I need to keep getting better and stronger. That's what my focus will be on," Tanner



Bibler

even bigger fire under Dallas' wrestlers.

The Dragons host Central Wednesday (today) at 6 p.m.

It's a rare chance to see Dallas wrestle at home. The Brunner Invitational was canceled earlier this season due to weather, and wrestlers are eager to compete in front of a home crowd.

"Wrestling at home is always fun," Tanner said. "We have some pretty passionate fans. I like it."

Dallas will travel to compete in the Robert Paul Invitational in Sandy on Saturday and to Woodburn on Feb. 1. But the Dragons also are keeping their eyes on a bigger prize: getting ready for state. If the Reser's Tournament of Champions showed them anything it's that Dallas could be a major player if wrestlers continue to work hard.

"I think to me, and it should for all of us, show that we have something special right now," Tanner said. "We can't take this for granted and we have to make the most of the rest of the season."

FALLS CITY BASKETBALL

Girls defeat Mapleton

Itemizer-Observer staff report

FALLS CITY — Falls City's girls basketball team defeated Mapleton 27-21 on Friday. The Mountaineers opened the week with a 53-32 loss to Crosshill Christian on Jan. 17.

Against Mapleton, the Mountaineers overcame a five-point deficit entering the fourth quarter, outscoring Mapleton 14-3.

Emma Burgess led Falls City with 12 points and nine rebounds. Gracie Tadlock added 11 points.

Amara Houghtaling scored a team-high 17 points against Crosshill Christian.

The boys basketball team lost to Crosshill Christian 60-38 on Jan. 17 and to Mapleton 41-29 on Friday.

Jared Curry scored a

team-high nine points against Crosshill Christian. Austin Burgess led the Mountaineers against Mapleton with 12 points.

Falls City hosts Jewell Wednesday (today) before playing at Perrydale on Friday and hosting Perrydale on Monday. The girls tip off at 5:30 p.m. on each night with the boys following at 7 p.m.

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