

SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 1
Boys basketball: Toledo at Perrydale, 7 p.m.
Girls basketball: Central at Silverton, 7 p.m. Lebanon at Dallas, 7 p.m. Toledo at Perrydale, 5:30 p.m.

Wrestling: Central at Lebanon, 6 p.m. Dallas at Woodburn, 6 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEB. 2
Boys basketball: Falls City at Livingstone Adventist, 7 p.m. Jewell at Perrydale, 7 p.m.
Girls basketball: Falls City at Livingstone Adventist, 5:30 p.m. Jewell at Perrydale, 5:30 p.m.

Men's basketball: Saint Martin's at Western Oregon, 7 p.m.
Women's basketball: Western Oregon at Alaska Fairbanks, 6:30 p.m.

Wrestling: South Albany at Dallas, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEB. 3
Boys basketball: Central at South Albany, 7 p.m. Crescent Valley at Dallas, 7 p.m.
Girls basketball: South Albany at Central, 7 p.m. Dallas at Crescent Valley, 7 p.m.

Wrestling: Central at Junction City High School Duals, TBA.

SATURDAY, FEB. 4
Boys basketball: Perrydale at Mapleton, 2:30 p.m.
Girls basketball: Perrydale at Mapleton, 1 p.m.

Men's basketball: Seattle Pacific at Western Oregon, 5 p.m.
Women's basketball: Western Oregon at Alaska Anchorage, noon.

Wrestling: Dallas at Tod Surmon Tournament, TBA.

TUESDAY, Feb. 7
Boys basketball: Central at Crescent Valley, 7 p.m. Corvallis at Dallas, 7 p.m. Willamette Valley Christian at Falls City, 7 p.m. Damascus Christian at Perrydale, 7 p.m.

Girls basketball: Willamette Valley Christian at Falls City, 5:30 p.m. Damascus Christian at Perrydale, Feb. 7.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 8
Boys basketball: Dallas at Milwaukie, 7:15 p.m.
Girls basketball: Crescent Valley at Central, 7 p.m. Dallas at Corvallis, 7 p.m.

Schedules Subject to Change

QUICK HITS

Dallas wrestlers excel at tourney

SALEM — The Dallas Mat Club's middle school wrestlers competed at the Oregon Kids Folkstyle Championships in Salem on Saturday and Sunday.

Haydn Millard (cadet 94) placed first for Dallas. Ashton Brecht (cadet 285) also finished first. Dillon Stuhr (cadet 120) and Kadin Thorsted (cadet 132) placed fourth.

WOU track and field earns honor

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon's track and field team was named the Red Lion/Great Northwest Athletic Conference Team of the Week on Monday.

WOU set five school records at the University of Washington Invitational in Seattle and set two GNAC records.

Junior David Ribich broke the GNAC mark in the men's mile with a time of 4 minutes, 2.30 seconds.

The distance medley relay team of Ribich, Dustin Nading, AJ Holmberg and Josh Dempsey also set a new conference mark in 9:45.45.

Ribich was named the GNAC Male Track and Field Player of the Week for his performance in Seattle.

It's the second week in a row Ribich earned the honor.

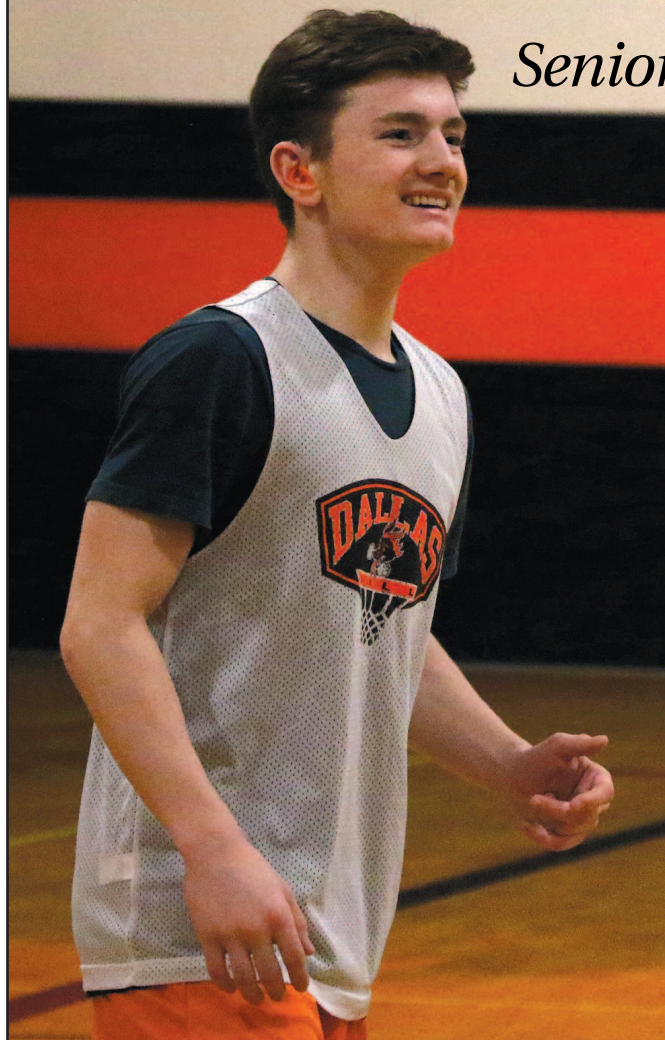
Ribich was also named the U.S. Track and Field and Cross-country Coaches Association's male athlete of the week for Division II on Tuesday.

For more information: www.wouwolves.com.

DALLAS BOYS BASKETBALL

Collins breaking out

Senior making noise for Dallas



By Lukas Eggen

The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The roar of the crowd. The unified chants. The infection energy that can turn even the quietest fan loud.



Collins

The rumble from the stands can cause issues for any team by making it harder for players to communicate.

The crowd noise presents a little bigger challenge for Dallas senior basketball player Jake Collins.

Collins was born with severe-to-profound hearing loss.

Playing a sport where communication is key, a hearing impairment may seem detrimental to finding success — but Collins doesn't let it hold him back.

"I've never let my hearing stand in the way of anything," Collins said.

From a young age, Collins never looked at his hearing impairment as a setback.

With his hearing aids, Collins said in most circumstances he can hear at normal levels.

Over time he found ways to complement them and moved on with his life.

See COLLINS, Page 14A

LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Dallas senior Jake Collins is one of the Dragons' best defenders.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Taking it one goal at a time

By Lukas Eggen

The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Before each women's basketball game, Western Oregon sophomore Ali Nelke takes a Sharpie to her wrist and writes a goal.



Nelke

"Before each game in high school, my team would pick a goal or mindset for that game and we would all write the initials of it on our wrist," she said. "I have continued the tradition because it keeps me focused, especially on one of my most recent goals."

Lately, she has been writing M.T.D. — make them defend.

See GOAL, Page 15A

CENTRAL WRESTLING

Crow ready for his final act at Central

By Lukas Eggen

The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Central senior wrestler Sam Crow isn't sure how many times he's replayed the match in his head — but it's been a lot.

As a junior, Crow appeared headed for a spot in the finals in the 195-pound class at the Mid-Willamette Conference district wrestling championships when he was upset in the semifinals.

Crow would finish third, but the loss stung.

"It said third on my sleeve, but I knew it probably should have said first," Crow said. "I think about that match all the time."

It was a reminder that if you're not at your best at all times, anything can happen out there on the mat.

The senior is hoping for a happier ending this season — though he knows a path to a district title may come down to beating Dallas senior wrestler Tanner Earhart.

"The big focus right now

Wrestling

• Central's wrestling team finished sixth at the Robert Paul Invitational on Saturday.

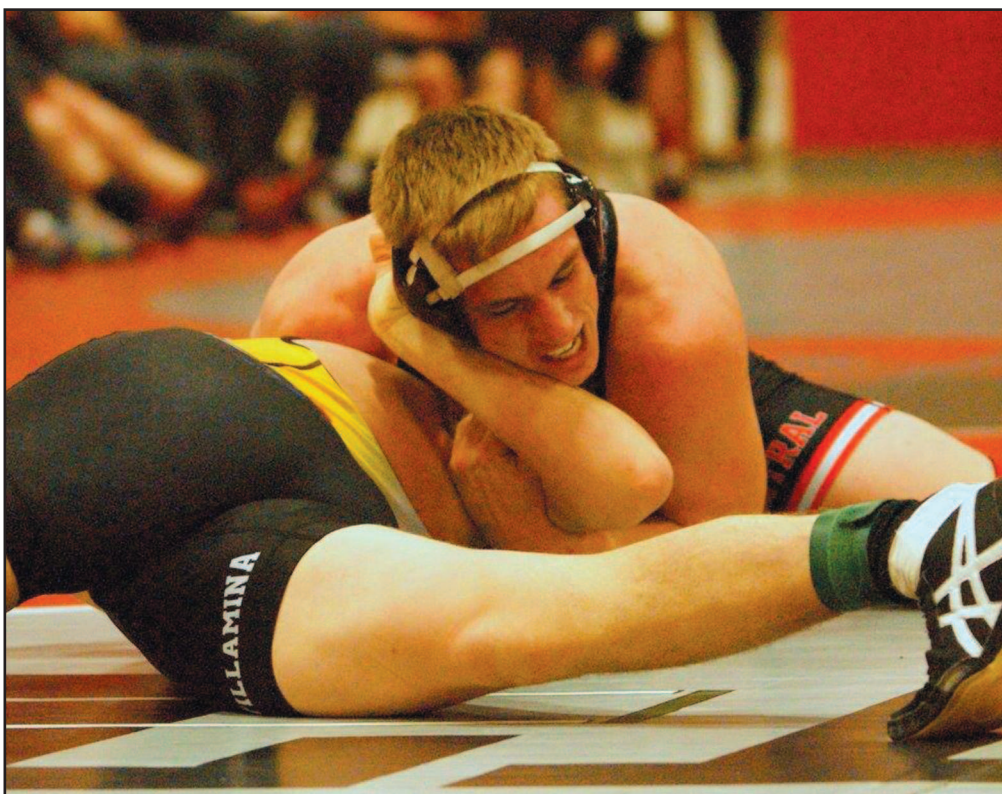
• Noah Worthington (106 pounds) and David Negrete (220) finished first. Sam Crow (195) placed second and Luis Martinez (106) finished fourth.

• Central travels to Lebanon Wednesday (today) and will compete at the Junction City Duals on Friday.

is on Tanner (Earhart)," Crow said. "I've lost to him twice already in two very close matches that were winnable. That's where the focus is right now."

Crow, who finished second at the Robert Paul Invitational on Saturday, is fine tuning ahead of the district championships Feb. 10-11.

As Crow prepares for his final run at districts — and hopefully state — he's been recharged and ready to go — though the reason may surprise.



NEAL OLSON/for the Itemizer-Observer

Central senior Sam Crow hopes to win a district title.

Crow missed nine matches while snowboarding at Mt. Hood during much of Central's winter break.

At first glance, it may seem like a strange choice, but for Crow, who also played on the Panthers'

football team last fall, it was a much-needed chance to relax.

See CROW, Page 14A

Oregon faces dwindling referee numbers

By Lukas Eggen

The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — Throughout the state of Oregon and across all sports at the high school levels, finding enough referees is proving to be a big challenge.

"It's all across the country, not just Oregon," Jack Foliard, executive director of the Oregon Athletic Officials Association, said.

Oregon has seen its pool of referees decrease significantly.

Foliard said during the 2010-11 school year, there were 3,407 individual officials. Last school year, that number shrunk to 2,866 — a decline that has affected sports across the board.

Foliard said ideally the number of referees across all sports would be 3,500-4,000.

"We always have a specific amount of attrition each year," Foliard said. "The difference is we're not filling the bucket so to speak."

Foliard said it's hard to pinpoint just what has caused the decline — though he does have his theories on what may be contributing to it.

"Society has changed," he said. "I think people are much more active with families and other things. Refs



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Oregon has seen a decline in referees across all sports, according to Oregon Athletic Officials Association executive director Jack Foliard.

have to start at the freshman level. That means mostly 4 p.m. games, so they'd have to get off work earlier.

Another reason, frankly, is I think there's more abuse of officials by parents and fans. It's not over-

Get involved

• Anyone over the age of 18 can become a referee.

• Oregon Athletic Officials Association Executive Director Jack Foliard said interested parties should check at least one to two months ahead of time of the sports season they want to ref to begin the registration process.

• For more information: www.oreofficials.org.

whelming, but it's certainly out there."

There will always be enough refs to cover varsity games, Foliard said, but it's the earlier games that see the biggest strain.

"If you think about basketball for example, there's a varsity game of course," Foliard said. "But there's also a junior varsity game. Some schools have two JV squads and a freshman team. You can have two or three sub varsity games in one night."

Dallas athletic director Tim Larson said they have not had to cancel games due to a shortage of available refs, but have had to stack soccer matches or move to a different day.

See REFS, Page 14A