

SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

Baseball: Central at Yamhill-Carlton, 4 p.m. Corban at Western Oregon, 2 p.m.

Softball: North Marion at Central, 4:30 p.m.

Track and field: Crescent Valley at Central, 3:45 p.m. South Albany at Dallas, 3:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 16

Baseball: Central at Stayton, 4 p.m.

Boys tennis: Dallas at Central, 4 p.m.

Girls tennis: Central at Dallas, 4 p.m.

Softball: Dallas at Philomath, 4:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 17

Baseball: Central at Elmira, 4:30 p.m. Dallas at Gladstone, 7 p.m.

Boys tennis: Dallas at Cascade, 4 p.m.

Softball: Marist Catholic at Dallas, 4:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 18

Baseball: Central Washington at Western Oregon (DH), 1 p.m.

Softball: Western Oregon at Montana State Billings (DH), 11 a.m.

Track and field: Falls City at Estacada Small School Invite, 10 a.m. Western Oregon at Lewis & Clark Spring Break Open, all day.

SUNDAY, MARCH 19

Baseball: Central Washington at Western Oregon (DH), noon.

Softball: Western Oregon at Central Washington (DH), 1 p.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 20

Boys golf: Central, Dallas at Trysting Tree (Corvallis), 11 a.m.

Girls golf: Central, Dallas at Mallard Creek (Lebanon), noon.

Baseball: Perrydale at Kennedy, 4:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 21

Baseball: Corvallis at Central, 4:30 p.m. Dallas at Woodburn, 4:30 p.m.

Boys tennis: Woodburn at Central, 4 p.m. Dallas at Crescent Valley, 4 p.m.

Girls tennis: Woodburn at Central, 4 p.m. Crescent Valley at Dallas, 4 p.m.

Softball: Central at Silverton, 4:30 p.m. Lebanon at Dallas, 4:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

Baseball: Central at Corvallis, 4:30 p.m. Woodburn at Dallas, 4:30 p.m. Waldport at Perrydale, 4:30 p.m.

Softball: South Albany at Central, 4:30 p.m. Dallas at Crescent Valley, 4:30 p.m. Waldport at Perrydale, 4:30 p.m.

Track and field: Central at Woodburn, 3:45 p.m. Dallas at Silverton, 4 p.m.

Schedules Subject to Change

QUICK HITS

Middle school basketball team wins state title

BEND — Dallas' eighth-grade boys basketball team defeated Keizer 54-52 to win a state title on Sunday in the Silver division.

Dallas also had wins over Crook County (51-48), Bend (38-27), Jefferson (59-51) and Summit (65-57).

WOU softball games postponed

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon's softball team postponed home games against Simon Fraser and Western Washington due to weather.

The Wolves were scheduled to play Simon Fraser last Saturday and Western Washington on Sunday.

The games have been rescheduled.

Western Oregon will host Simon Fraser for a doubleheader at 2 p.m. on April 17.

WOU will play in Bellingham, Wash. for a doubleheader against Western Washington at 1 p.m. on April 21.

The Wolves will be the designated home team in both games.

2016-17 ITEMIZER-OBSERVER ALL-REGION BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Sharp Shooter

Barba grows into complete player

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — The jump shot. It's a part of every basketball game and something every player does at one point or another.

But when you fancy yourself a shooter, like Central senior Alec Barba, the jump shot isn't just a part of your game — it's a part of who you are as a player.

"I hate missing," Barba said. "I don't like missing shots because that could have been two or three points for your team."

Luckily for the Panthers, misses didn't come too often for Barba. The senior led Central in scoring,

averaging 13.5 points per game, while shooting 50 percent on two-point field goals and 41 percent from three.

But it's his growth in other areas that made Barba such a critical piece of the Panthers' puzzle — and the *Itemizer-Observer's* Boys Basketball Player of the Year.

Shooting just came naturally for Barba. Some of the earliest home videos of Barba as a young child feature Alec shooting baskets alongside his dad.

Prior to high school, relying on his shooting was good enough to get by.

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By The Numbers

13.5

The number of points per game Barba averaged. The senior led the Panthers in scoring.

41

Barba's shooting percentage on 3-point shots. Barba led Central in 3-pointers with 67.

2.8

The number of rebounds per game Barba averaged for the Panthers during the season.

COLLEGE BASEBALL

Wakem, Wolves off to fast start



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Western Oregon's Justin Wakem leads the Wolves in total hits.

By Lukas Eggen

The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Justin Wakem was ready for his moment.

The Beaverton High graduate was participating in a college recruiting camp, and he was ready to show off his skills as a catcher. He was about to take part in a drill that required him to track down a baseball to throw to second base.

"It was my first time and I wanted to impress them and record a fast time," Wakem said.

He took off — before his cleat got stuck in his shin strap.

"I just fell forward," he said with a chuckle. "It wasn't my best showing."

But, as baseball can tend to do, learning to deal with the bad is all part of the intrigue.

"It's humbling," Waken said. "It's a game of failure. Baseball helps me so that when I do fail, it allows me to stay calm, regroup and try again, whether that's in baseball or in life. I'm not afraid of failure because of this game."

Things have turned out alright

Home, sweet home

• Western Oregon's baseball team will host Central Washington for a pair of doubleheaders. First pitch will be 1 p.m. Saturday and noon on Sunday.

since then. Wakem, a redshirt sophomore, plays catcher for Western Oregon's baseball team and appears to be in the midst of a breakout season.

Wakem played in 15 games as a redshirt freshman and put up pedestrian numbers — a .278 batting average with 10 hits.

"Last season, I was a little bit jittery," Wakem said. "They were my first college at-bats. I think I've matured since then and I want to be a veteran leader. You can't do that by being out of control at the plate."

Through 10 games this season, Wakem has recorded more hits (13) and is batting .433 — a team-high among batters with at least five plate appearances.

See WAKEM, Page 13A

COLLEGE TRACK AND FIELD

Distance medley relay edges out Adams State by .001

Wolves win a national title

By Lukas Eggen

The Itemizer-Observer

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — They say that every second counts.

Western Oregon's distance medley relay team of Dusting Nading, AJ Holmberg, Josh Dempsey and David Ribich found out every tenth, hundredth and even thousandth of a second can make a world of difference at the NCAA Division II Indoor Track and Field Championships on Friday.

"When we came in with a 9 minute, 45 second (qualifying time), we ran that one time and we only did one



Nading

relay all year, we said each of us can easily take two seconds off our split, and we planned to come out and run a 9:40," Ribich said. "But the problem was we didn't expect other teams to come out here and run 9:40."

The distance medley relay, consisting of a 1,200-meter first leg, 400-meter second leg, 800-meter third leg and 1,600-meter anchor, became a battle of wills between the Wolves



Holmberg

Ribich from WOU and Oliver Aitchison — crossed the finish, they were in a virtual dead heat.

Both teams finished with a time of 9:40.14 — setting a new NCAA Division II indoor record.

But the Wolves finished in 9:40.144. Adams State crossed in 9:40.145.

"I'll be sitting in a retire-



Dempsey

ment home reminiscing and telling the story about the time we won a national championship and set the national record," Dempsey said.

Nading ran the first leg, followed by Holmberg, Dempsey and Ribich.

"I couldn't, in any scenario, have chosen a better group of guys to win a national championship with," Nading said.

The quartet's success was the culmination of



Ribich

Holmberg said. "It was earned in December when campus was empty and we were the only ones there."

With all four members of the relay team set to return next year, the Wolves figure to be in a prime position to defend their title, but that will be a challenge for another day.

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