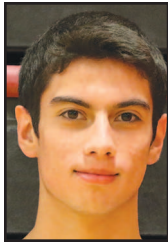


2016-17 ITEMIZER-OBSERVER ALL-REGION PREP BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM



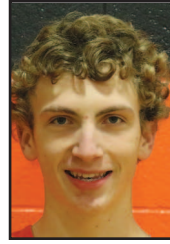
GUARD
ALEC BARBA
Central

The senior was a critical part to Central's offense during the 2016-17 season. He led the team in points per game (13.5), shot 50 percent on two-point field goals and 41 percent from beyond the arc. Barba also led the team in 3-pointers made (67). "Alec is a great spot up shooter," Central coach Tim Kreta said. "When Alec is on the court, he makes our team offense run a lot better." Barba also made great strides on defense and was more willing to crash the boards than in years past, averaging 2.8 rebounds per game. On offense, Barba became more potent at driving to the hoop, making him a difficult offensive threat to stop. "Guards and wings have to honor him, which allows our posts to have better matchups," Kreta said. Barba earned first team all-Mid-Willamette Conference honors.



GUARD
PETER MASON
Central

The senior point guard was tasked often with stopping the opposing team's biggest threat. Mason reveled in that challenge. "Peter was the heart of our defense this year," Kreta said. "Many times, we asked him to guard our opponents' best player. He was the energy behind our defense." On offense, Mason averaged 8.8 points per game, but his true impact came in distributing and creating chances for his teammates. "Peter was not a shoot-first point guard," Kreta said. "He took pride in finding shooters and making the extra pass to help our offense run. On more than one occasion, he led the team in rebounds, assists and steals." Mason averaged five assists, 2.8 rebounds and two steals per game and earned an all-league honorable mention.



GUARD
JASON RICHEY
Dallas

Richey formed the heart and soul of Dallas' offense. Richey was the Dragons' leading scorer, averaging 16.6 points per game — about a third of the 49.8 points per game Dallas averaged as a team. He also led the team in rebounds (103) and steals (41) and was second in assists (44), despite defenses keying in on him. Although the Dragons' season didn't go as planned, Richey provided a bright spot and earned second team all-MWC honors.



GUARD
AARON WHITE
Dallas

The senior point guard brought a steady hand to Dallas' offense throughout the season. White led the Dragons in assists with 74 and was second in steals (31). And, despite standing at 5-foot-9, White was also second on the team in rebounds (61). White earned all-league honorable mention for his performance.

POST
Haylen Janesofsky
Perrydale

The Casco League Player of the Year had another stellar season during his senior campaign. Janesofsky was the focal point of a Pirate offense that averaged 59.4 points per game — top in the Casco League. Janesofsky averaged 16.4 points, 8.0 rebounds and 3.1 blocks per game dur-



COACH
BRIAN DOMES
Perrydale

The 2016-17 season was a special one for Domes. He not only got to coach his two sons, Daniel and David, but helped lead the Pirates to their first-ever trip to Baker City and a third-place finish at the 1A state championships. The finish was Perrydale's best in boys basketball. The Pirates reeled off 15-straight wins from Jan. 18 to March 1 en route to a 25-4 record overall. Of the team's four losses, two came against Sherman, the 1A state champions. Domes was named the Casco League's Coach of the Year.

The 2016-17 Itemizer-Observer all-region boys basketball team was selected by Sports Editor Lukas Eggen, along with heavy input from area coaches.

Barba: Senior led Central in scoring, 3-pointers

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"In middle school and elementary school, it's a lot different," Barba said. "You don't really have to play defense. In high school, it's a different ballgame. There are a lot of good players who will try and take your strength away from you and exploit your weaknesses."

Barba played on junior varsity his freshman year.

"I was kind of lost, just getting to know things," Barba said. "I started to realize that hey, I can shoot with the best of them, but what else can I

do? I started to get better at those other things."

He added a new dimension to his game on offense and became a better defender.

"My sophomore year, when people tried taking away my shot, I started pump faking and driving," Barba said. "On defense, I started to anticipate better to get a steal and get fast break points. I saw that good things happen when I scored."

Barba also became craftier with his jump shot. Under the tutelage of his father and Central High graduate Kaj

Bansen, Barba became deadlier from long range.

"My junior year, I started getting fouled on my 3-pointers more," Barba said. "Kaj helped me learn some veteran tricks like how to make my shot quicker so some of those fouls turned into four-point plays."

But it wasn't until his junior and senior seasons that he started to break out.

"I always had the height to rebound, but I never really did it," Barba said. "Last year and this year, I would always do it a lot more. On defense, I

kept my hands active and starting using my length to poke the ball away. I've also gotten better at finishing layups — getting used to contact and finishing your shot."

All of a sudden, there was much more to Barba's game than just the jump shot. The attention he demanded from opponents opened up opportunities for his teammates.

"When Alec is on the court, he makes our team offense a lot better," coach Tim Kreta said.

Barba plans to play at Willamette University next school year and, whenever his playing career is over, wants to become a coach — something he's already had experience in with youth camps and basketball leagues.

"I like to coach," Barba said. "I like helping them prepare for high school. I have two younger brothers. I make new friends all the time, and I teach them and give them advice and tips. I think to come back and watch them

playing for Central one day and seeing some of the tips I gave them in action will be fun."

As Barba prepares for the next part of his basketball adventure, he will have fond memories of his time as a Panther and how it shaped him into the player he is today.

"I'll miss the home games and the student body," he said. "It's just so much fun. You're only in high school once, and there may be frustrations and not so fun parts, but it's all worth it."

ROBOTICS

Eighth-grader competes with high schoolers in robotics

Murdock headed to World Championships

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Kahl Murdock loves sports. He loves playing them, watching them, competing and being part of a team.

But when he injured his ankle his sixth-grade year of football, he needed something to do. That turned out to be robotics.

"I've always loved building things," Murdock said. "I built things using K'Nex and Erector Sets. I have all these structures I built like the Eiffel Tower and helicopters."

Kahl's mom picked him up a VEX IQ robot kit (which uses plastic parts) and he immediately got to work.

By his seventh-grade year, Kahl won state and advanced to worlds, where he finished 90th out of 400 competitors.

Now in eighth grade,

Kahl has made the change to VEX EDR robotic kits which uses metal parts and has begun competing for Dallas High School's robotics team.

"I thought I was going to do terribly," Kahl said.

Instead, he won multiple tournaments where alliances try and outscore their opponents by scoring stars and cubes in zones on the playing field.

"I spend about 20 hours a week working on my robot," Kahl said. "It went through multiple stages until I arrived at this design, and this is the third or fourth version of that."

Kahl competed at the state championship on Friday and Saturday at Chemeketa Community College, but failed to grab one of the automatic berths to the world championships.

He did, however, earn a

robotic skills berth on Monday for the VRC World Championships held in Louisville, Ken.

It's an opportunity Kahl is grateful to get to experience, especially after seeing what the World Championships can be like last year.

"Robotics doesn't sound like fun until you go to a competition and you see the crowds and how many hours people spend working on it," Kahl said. "At Worlds, you walk into the arena and thousands of people are chanting and cheering. It was super cool."

Now, he'll get another chance to compete against robotics teams from around the globe. Not bad for something he only discovered two years ago.

"In football, if you play against a better kid, you learn and improve," Murdock said. "This is kind of the same thing."



LaCreole Middle School student Kahl Murdock works on his robot on March 4.

Wakem: Wolves off to a 6-0 start in GNAC play

Continued from Page 12A

"I relax myself at the plate," he said. "I slow everything down and relax my eyes. It allows me to see more opportunities at the plate. ... I want to reach base every game. I have a mentality that I'm never going to get out. It gives me that confidence and I can calm myself down."

Wakem's ascension has coupled with a hot start for the Wolves. WOU defeated Concordia 6-3 on Saturday, and 2-1 and 9-2 on Sunday to improve to 6-0 in Great Northwest Athletic Conference play — the league's lone undefeated squad in conference play. From finding success at the plate to pitchers stepping up in key moments, the Wolves are getting contributions up and down their lineup.

"Everyone is clicking," Wakem said. "We're doing the little things right and everyone is doing their job.

We're in a great spot and we have a lot of momentum."

Wakem's emergence at the plate bolsters a strong lineup. With reigning GNAC Pitcher of the Year Brady



Wakem

"I know it's cliché, but anything I can do to help my win is all I care about," Wakem said. "If we get that W, that's all I want."

With a strong start, the Wolves have taken the first steps toward a GNAC title. As is always the case with baseball, there will be challenges and stumbles ahead. How WOU reacts and recovers will determine how good they can be.

"I'd say having energy,"

Sweep!

- Western Oregon's baseball team defeated Concordia 6-3 on Saturday and 2-1 and 9-2 on Sunday.
- Pitcher Craig Grubbe threw six shutout innings in the first game on Sunday with five strikeouts and allowing only two hits.
- WOU improved to 6-0 in conference play.

Wakem said. "Last year, sometimes with this weather, it can affect you in a way where it's hard to come out and play to the best of your ability. We need to continue feeding off each other's energy and playing for the guy next to you."

Western Oregon hosts Corban Wednesday (today) at 2 p.m. before hosting Central Washington for a pair of doubleheaders at 1 p.m. Saturday and noon on Sunday.

Wolves: WOU hangs on for victory over Adams

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WOU also saw success in individual events on Saturday. Ribich took third in the men's mile final, while Nadine finished fourth.

Dempsey placed sixth in the 800 final. The women saw Suzanne Van De Grift and Olivia Woods take fifth and sixth in the 800 finals. Each athlete competing earned

All-American honors.

Western Oregon's track and field teams will kick off its outdoor season at the Lewis and Clark Spring Break Open on Saturday.

Sudoku
Difficulty: ★★★★★

Solution on Page 6A

8			6					
6			8			3	7	
		3						
		4	9			1		5
5				1		2		
	8				6			
1		9		5				
7	5			6			9	
			7				3	1

How to do Sudoku
Fill in the grid so the numbers 1 through 9 appear just once in every column, row, and three-by-three square. See example above.

Row →

4	3	2	8	1	6	7	5	9
5	6	9	3	7	4	8	1	2
1	7	8	9	5	2	4	6	3
3	4	7	2	8	5	6	9	1
2	1	6	7	4	9	3	8	5
9	8	5	1	6	3	2	7	4
7	9	1	4	3	8	5	2	6
8	5	3	6	2	1	9	4	7
6	2	4	5	9	7	1	3	8

Column ↓

Three-by-three square →

By Ben Arnoldy

The Christian Science Monitor