

WESTERN OREGON ROUNDUP

Softball headed to conference tournament

Itemizer-Observer staff report

CORVALLIS — Needing two victories to clinch a spot in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference softball championship, Western Oregon won three of four games last weekend.

The Wolves split with Saint Martin's, winning 9-5 before losing 5-4 on Saturday, and sweeping Central Washington 5-1 and 4-0 on Sunday.

In game one against SMU, Mercedes Green hit a three-

run home run in the second inning to give WOU the early lead. Destiny Kuehl added a solo home run in the third inning, and Green added a three RBI double in the fifth inning.

Against Central Washington, the Wildcats loaded the bases in the first and third innings, but pitcher Chandler Bishop held them to one run.

Hailee Watilo hit a home run in the second game.

WOU enters the GNAC

championship in Lacey, Wash., in fourth place. WOU plays top-seeded Central Washington Thursday at 2:30 p.m. The winner plays the winner of Saint Martin's/Western Washington. The loser plays the loser of that matchup in an elimination game. The championship game will be held on Saturday.

BASEBALL WINS FOUR OF SIX: Western Oregon's baseball team won four of six GNAC games last week. The Wolves

defeated Saint Martin's 5-3 and 5-1 on April 26, and Central Washington 6-4 and 11-7 on Friday. WOU lost to Central Washington 13-11 and 8-6 on Saturday.

In game one against Saint Martin's, Joey Crunkilton hit a triple in the bottom of the eighth inning.

Nyles Nygaard followed with an RBI double, and Justin Wakem hit a sacrifice fly to break a 3-3 tie.

Pitcher Brady Miller threw a complete game in the second contest, throwing eight strike-

outs over seven innings of work.

Wakem went five for seven against Central Washington, including a two RBI single in the ninth inning of the first game of the series, helping the Wolves break a 3-3 tie.

WOU found itself trailing 7-4 in the seventh inning in game two before the Wolves reeled off seven unanswered runs to end the game.

Western Oregon played Saint Martin's Tuesday after press time. The Wolves are scheduled to host Northwest

Nazarene for a pair of double-headers Thursday at 1 p.m. and Friday at noon in the team's final regular season games.

WOU (25-13 overall, 24-10 GNAC) entered the week in first place. The top four teams in the conference advance to the GNAC Championships May 10-12 in Portland.

AVGI SIGNS WITH RAIDERS: Former Western Oregon tight end signed with the Oakland Raiders on Sunday.

Avgi, an undrafted rookie, will compete in a rookie minicamp later this spring.

Wolves: Softball last played at home April 20, 2016

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"It affects time spent in the classroom," Sargent said. "It affects relationships with professors. It affects their evenings because they have to spend time trying to get back on track with school. I think it's kind of taking a toll this year on our relationship with our faculty. Our faculty have been, for the most part, really wonderful in handling this and helping our student-athletes handle this, but this is a crazy way to go about it."

Student-athletes already must deal with missed classes. Adding in unexpected absences just makes balancing school work and prac-

tice/game schedules even more difficult.

There is extra time making up missed assignments or tests and having to work with professors so that missed classes have the least amount of impact possible on student-athletes.

Shuffling the schedule around has also taken a toll on the field of play.

"We've had six games during a week sometimes," Walker said. "That put some strain on us physically. It puts extra stress on the pitching staff. We have to move guys around a little bit, but we are doing everything we can to be successful."

Extra travel, late nights

getting caught up on school work, and injuries have made an already grueling schedule even more difficult.

"They're tired," Sargent said. "They're exhausted from traveling and having to make up school work. It's draining on them. That's hard to watch as a coach because there's nothing you can do to help that. You're helpless in that situation. They're working so hard at everything but they don't get that return on their work with a chance to compete at home."

A SIMPLE SOLUTION?

Given current facility conditions, the baseball and softball teams are complete-

ly at the mercy of weather conditions, a fact coaches aren't particularly pleased with.

"I hope (the weather) isn't something we just have to deal with because it's not the best student-athlete experience," Sargent said.

There is a possible solution — one that coaches say would rid the programs of many of the issues its facing: Turf.

"I think that's the ultimate answer," Walker said. "Being in the northwest, you get tough weather. This allows you to get games."

Installing turf — and lights — would allow Western Oregon to handle Oregon's weather.

"I believe it's almost in-

evitable that most of the programs will go to turf or partial turf to make sure students aren't missing classes because they have to, all of a sudden, reschedule a game," Sargent said. "If we have lights for our fields, we could practice at night so students wouldn't have to miss any classes and our players could stay for a whole practice. We could play games later in the day so they don't have to miss classes while we're at home."

Walker also said drainage issues would need to be addressed as well.

While coaches agree turf seems to be the future, there is one hurdle to clear: Money.

Coaches said there have been discussions in the past about installing turf. Whether those discussions lead to action is up in the air.

The baseball team has one final chance to play at home — with scheduled games against Northwest Nazarene on Thursday and Friday.

If those games happen as planned, at long last, it will be home sweet home for the Wolves.

"Our players have done a great job sticking with it, dealing with all the time on the road," Walker said. "They deserve a chance to play in front of people on campus, whether that be friends or family."

FALLS CITY TRACK AND FIELD

Kempfer leads Falls City track and field

Itemizer-Observer staff report

TAFT — Falls City senior Nathan Kempfer finished first in the boys 1,500-meter run on April 25 at the Tiger Invitational to lead the boys track and field team.

Kempfer finished with a time of 4 minutes, 49.36 seconds.

Junior Madelyn Hendrick-

son won the girls long jump with a leap of 13 feet, 10 1/4 inches.

Amara Houghtaling took second in the 100 in 14.62.

The Mountaineers will compete at Dayton High School Wednesday (today) at 3:30 p.m. and at Sheridan Thursday at 3:45 p.m.

PERRYDALE ROUNDUP

Lux leads track team

Itemizer-Observer staff report

PORTLAND — Perrydale's track and field team competed at the Portland Christian Invitational on Saturday. Alyssa Lux took fourth in the girls long jump with a leap of 14 feet, 11 inches.

Jacob Pope led the boys with an eighth-place finish in the javelin (139-1 1/2).

The Pirates will compete at Sheridan Thursday at 3:45 p.m.

BASEBALL DROPS TWO: Perrydale's baseball team lost to

Kennedy 13-3 on Friday and Western Mennonite 12-6 on Saturday.

"You have to be consistent and we have been trying to get to that point," coach Steve Mabry said. "Dan and David Domes have led the offensive attack. J.J. Avila has been picking up his production. Dustin Silver pitched four strong innings."

Perrydale hosts East Linn Christian Thursday at 2:30 p.m. and Western Mennonite Friday at 4:30 p.m. before playing at Santiam Monday and returning home to host St. Paul Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.

CENTRAL ROUNDUP

Baseball sweeps Woodburn

Itemizer-Observer staff report

INDEPENDENCE — Central's baseball team swept Woodburn, winning 11-0 on April 25 and 9-0 and 10-4 on Friday.

"We (used) a lot of young pitchers last week and I thought overall they competed very well," coach Reed Rainey said. "Brendan Lesmeister and Ruben Cedillo were good, and Josh Rodriguez pitched a complete game shutout on Friday. We played good defense the entire week. Peter Mendazona was terrific at shortstop."

Central also found success at the plate. Jackson Holstad hit two home runs, and Mendazona had five hits during the series.

The Panthers (11-7 overall, 8-7 Mid-Willamette Conference) entered the week in a tie for fourth in the MWC.

Central played South Albany Tuesday after press time.

The Panthers play at South Albany Wednesday (today) before hosting the Rebels Friday at 4:30 p.m.

"This week will be a very



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Central pitcher Erin Cole throws against Silverton on Friday afternoon.

important week for a lot of teams," Rainey said. "We need to have a good week to keep pace with everyone else, but I like how our pitching is lined up this week and we are swinging the bats much better now."

SOFTBALL DEFEATS CORVALLIS: Central's softball team defeated Corvallis 12-6 on Monday.

The Panthers lost to Silverton 7-5 on Friday.

Central entered the week with an 11-7 record overall and 7-5 mark in MWC play, good for third place.

The Panthers hosted South Albany Tuesday after press time. Central hosts Crescent Valley Wednesday (today) at 4:30 p.m. before hosting Lebanon Friday at 6:15 p.m. and Dallas Tuesday at 4:30 p.m. in the team's final home game of the regular season.

GIRLS TENNIS FALLS TO CRESCENT VALLEY: Central's girls tennis team lost to Crescent Valley 5-0 on Thursday. Three singles matches (Julia Hamar, Kylie Smith and Ana Martinez) were not finished due to rain.

Central hosts Silverton

Thursday at 4 p.m. in the team's final match of the regular season.

The boys tennis team lost to CV 8-0 on Thursday and fell to South Albany 8-0 and 7-1 on Monday. The two teams finished a match that was postponed on April 23 due to weather.

Chris Polanco earned the team's lone victory.

The boys tennis team plays at Silverton Thursday at 4 p.m.

The MWC district championships begins May 10 at Timberhill Tennis Club in Corvallis.

Track: Burgett hopes to crack 50 seconds in the 400

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He finished 10th and, though he also placed fifth as part of the 4 x 400 relay, state left a sour taste.

"I'm a year smarter and more experienced this year,"

he said.

Burgett has his sights set on returning to state — and wants to crack the 50 second mark in the process.

"He's a cerebral kid in terms of the way he ap-

proaches things," Cirino said. "He likes to talk race strategy and discuss the different possibilities that can happen during a race. He's close to mastering the mental part of race."

That race strategy can be seen right from the starting gun.

"Last year, I was more conservative with my starts," Burgett said. "This year, I'm starting out faster and learn-

ing to control myself during the race so I can have a strong finish as well."

Returning to state in the 400 will be difficult, but Cirino knows that Burgett is capable of surprising.

"This league has some of the fastest 400 runners in the state," Cirino said. "But if we can see improvement like we saw at the end of last year, we could be in for something special."

DALLAS ROUNDUP

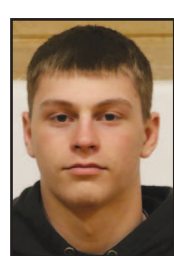
Baseball takes two of three from Silverton

Itemizer-Observer staff report

SILVERTON — Dallas' baseball team took two of three games from Silverton. The Dragons lost 7-5 on April 25 before winning 8-7 and 9-3 on Friday.

"Jaret Stewart, Clay Coxen and Josh Sherman were great on the mound," coach Scot McDonald said. "Tanner and Treve Earhart and Cody Kessler each had three hits in the final game."

Dallas entered the week one game behind Crescent Valley for first place in the Mid-Willamette Conference. The Dragons and Raiders opened a three-game series



Coxen



Earhart

Tuesday after press time. Dallas plays at Crescent Valley before hosting the Raiders Friday at 4:30 p.m.

The Dragons open a three-game series at Corvallis,

which entered the week tied with Dallas, Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.

"This is a big week for us," McDonald said.

SOFTBALL EXTENDS WIN STREAK: Dallas' softball team remained unbeaten in league play, defeating Lebanon 8-6 on Friday, Corvallis 14-1 and Woodburn 20-6 on Saturday and South Albany 14-1 on Monday. The Dragons entered the week on a 11-game win streak and have outscored opponents 114-30 during that stretch. Dallas (11-0 MWC) played at Crescent Valley for a doubleheader Tuesday after press time. The Dragons play at Corvallis Wednesday (today)

before hosting Silverton Friday at 4:30 p.m. Dallas plays at Central Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.

GIRLS TENNIS FALLS TO CORVALLIS: Dallas' girls tennis team lost to Corvallis 6-2 on Monday. Karlie Dalke won in singles play while the pair of Kloe Totten and Makayli Laizure earned a doubles point for the Dragons.

Dallas played South Albany Tuesday after press time.

The Dragons host Lebanon Thursday at 4 p.m. in the team's final match of the regular season.

Boys results were not reported.

Dallas will compete at the MWC District Tennis Championships at Timberhill Tennis

Club in Corvallis beginning on May 10.

BOYS TRACK WINS ROB ALLEN TWILIGHT INVITATIONAL: Dallas' boys track team took first at the Rob Allen Twilight Invitational at Lebanon High School on Friday.

The girls placed third.

Cody Webb won the boys 100-meter run in 11.24

seconds and the 110 hurdles in 15.01.

Trevor Cross took first in the 1,500 (4:13.63) and Jacob Dem-



Webb

ing placed first in the 300 hurdles in 39.74. Deming also won the pole vault (14 feet, 6 inches) and the long jump (22-

4 3/4).

Jennifer Webb won the girls 100 hurdles in 16.23.

Hailey VanWell took second in the high jump (4-8) and triple jump (35-6 1/2).

Dallas' varsity athletes are off until the MWC Championships May 12-13 at Lebanon High School. First event begins at 3 p.m.



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