

## SCHEDULE

**SATURDAY, JUNE 3**  
**Softball:** OSAA 5A State Playoffs, Championship (at Oregon State Softball Complex): TBA.

Schedules Subject to Change

## QUICK HITS

### WOU pitcher earns all-region honors

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon freshman Kade Mechals was named to the American Baseball Coaches Association/Rawlings NCAA Division II All-west region second team.

Mechals, a relief pitcher, posted seven saves during the 2017 season. Mechals recorded a 1.59 ERA in 22.2 innings with 37 strikeouts.

Mechals held opponents to a .173 batting average.

Mechals was named first team all-region by the National College Baseball Writers Association and the American Baseball Coaches Association.

Justin Wakem and Brady Miller received second team honors by the NCBWA.

Wakem hit .368 at the plate. Miller went 5-2 on the pitcher's mound, throwing 57 strikeouts over 54 innings.

Western Oregon finished the season with a 31-15 record overall and won the Great Northwest Athletic Conference regular season and tournament titles.

### YMCA to hold family fun run

INDEPENDENCE — The Monmouth-Independence YMCA will hold a family fun run June 10 in celebration of Olympic Day.

Registration and check-in begins at 8:30 a.m. The start will take place at the Independence Dog Park, but parking at Riverview Park is recommended. There will be a long course (5-kilometers) and short course (one mile) available.

"We are excited to take part in Olympic Day and inspire kids and families in the Monmouth and Independence communities," said Kathy Martin-Willis, the event coordinator. "The Monmouth-Independence Family YMCA is proud to support the Olympic Movement and encourage children and families to lead healthy, active lives."

For more information: 503-838-4042.

### Cross Creek men's club results

DALLAS — Cross Creek's men's club results for May 23:

Two Man Best Ball  
 Gross: 1 (tie), Eldon Rivers-Brian Reed and Lee Gamaney-Rocky Kygar, 37.  
 Net: 1, Wayne Weathers-John Mangini, 29; 2, David White-Vern Smith, 30; 3, Dave Voves-Ken Ross, 31.

## STAT SHEET

**2** The number of national titles that Western Oregon runner David Ribich won during the track and field season. Ribich was part of the distance medley relay team that took first at the NCAA Division II Track and Field Indoor Championships, and he placed first in the 1,500-meter run at the outdoor championships on Saturday. Ribich, a junior, also runs cross-country for the Wolves.

## COLLEGE TRACK AND FIELD

# Ribich wins national title

## Junior places first in the men's 1,500-meter run

By Lukas Eggen  
 The Itemizer-Observer

BRADENTON, Fla. — There was no dive to the finish this time, but Western Oregon junior David Ribich showed he has a flair for the dramatic.



Ribich

Ribich added an individual national title to an impressive resume, taking first in the men's 1,500-meter run at the NCAA Division II Outdoor Track and Field National Championships on Saturday.

Ribich finished in 3 minutes, 49.64 seconds. Kyle Medina of Chico State took second in 3:49.86.

The race started out with a slow pace, going out in a 67 for the first lap, but Ribich was content to stay situated in the lead group.

By the time they started the final 400 the pace had picked up considerably — finishing the final lap in a 55, Ribich said. The junior had been at or near the lead throughout the race and had the field right where he wanted them.

"I knew I had the fastest PR in the field," Ribich said. "I also knew I had the fastest 800 time in the field, so I was confident in my kicking ability."

Ribich held off Medina for the win. And finally, after months of nonstop training that began last August, Ribich could exhale and take in the moment.

"It's surreal to get the title," he said. "This win it's like relieving pressure off my shoulders."

The pressure he felt didn't come from coaches or teammates.

Rather, it was the self-induced pressure to take advantage of a chance to give back to the sport he's fallen in love with — and to inspire others that they can do the same.

Ribich's ability to handle pressure started young.

Ribich wanted to be in the spotlight in junior high — just not as an athlete.

"I wanted to be an actor," Ribich said. "My mom and I took acting classes when I was in junior high. We would drive an hour and a half from Enterprise to La



TYLER PATTERSON AND GENEVA REINHEARDT/for the Itemizer-Observer

Western Oregon junior David Ribich won the men's 1,500-meter final on Saturday.

### Track and field

- Western Oregon's track and field team competed at the NCAA Division II Outdoor Track and Field National Championships Thursday through Saturday in Bradenton, Fla.
- Wesley Gray placed 17th in the men's triple jump final (48 feet, 11¾ inches). Sheila Limas De La Cruz took 21st in the women's javelin (126).
- Teammates David Ribich and Dustin Nading took first (3:49.64) and sixth (3:51.50) in the men's 1,500 final.
- Olivia Woods took third in the women's 800 final with a time of 2:07.38.

Grande to take classes."

The peak of his acting career was when he played a king — although probably not the take the director of the play originally envisioned.

"The king was supposed to be this macho role and I was maybe 4-foot-5," Ribich said. "The queen was a senior in high school and

around 5-foot-10, but I just embellished the role. It was more like Lord Farqua from Shrek."

The acting career never took off, but his belief that small-town life doesn't mean you have to have small-time dreams foreshadowed what would drive him throughout his running career.

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GENEVA REINHEARDT/for the Itemizer-Observer

Dustin Nading and David Ribich celebrate after taking sixth and first in the men's 1,500-meter run on Saturday.

## PREP SOFTBALL

# Dragons advance to state semifinals



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Dallas' softball team celebrates during its 3-2 victory over Lebanon in the state quarterfinals on Friday.

By Lukas Eggen  
 The Itemizer-Observer

*Editor's note: Dallas' semifinal game against Silverton was Tuesday after press time. Visit [www.polkio.com](http://www.polkio.com) for updated results.*

DALLAS — Beating a league opponent once can be a challenge. Twice is even more difficult.

How about four times? "It's hard to play anybody three times," coach Brandi Jackson said. "Four times almost never happens."

But that's exactly the situation Dallas' softball team faced in the state quarterfinals on Friday against Lebanon. Just like the first three times, the Dragons came out on top, defeating the Warriors 3-2 to advance to the semifinals against Silverton.

The win didn't come easy.

With two outs in the first



Simmons

inning, Dallas misplayed a pop out, allowing a Lebanon batter to reach first. The next batter hit a two-run home run to put Lebanon up early.

"I told the girls that they (Lebanon) are going to hit the ball better in the past and they are going to put pressure on our defense," Jackson said. "That blooper behind second base was catchable. We would have been out of the inning, but the next batter hits that home run."

Finding themselves in an unfamiliar spot — playing from behind — the Dragons never got antsy.

"There was a sense of calm," pitcher Kaelynn Simmons said. "We've played and practiced so

much and we've worked so hard that we remembered to keep calm. Coach kept telling us to play to win and not to play not to lose."

Dallas chipped away at the lead.

An RBI single from Hannah Locke in the second inning cut the deficit to 2-1. Jayden Wynia scored from third and then Simmons drove in what turned out to be the winning run with an RBI single in the fifth inning.

"We haven't played from behind a lot," Jackson said. "That takes a special team to come back and not get down, especially when they haven't faced that in a while."

The turning point on defense came in the top of the sixth. With a runner on base and one out, Lebanon hit a ball to center field.

Dallas made the catch and Lebanon's base runner took off toward third.

See DALLAS, Page 12A