

State: Dirtbags fall to Medford twice during tourney

Continued from Page 12A
 “Jaret Stewart pitched a complete game for us and retired the last 13 batters of the game,” McDonald said. “He was tough.”
 The Dirtbags, which featured players from Dallas and Central high schools, as well as others in the Willamette Valley, received key experience that will serve them — and their high school teams — well.
 “Some of these kids had not been a situation like that before,” McDonald said. “It’s a great experience to take to their teams. You give up a big inning then you have a big inning. It can be really tough, and it makes you learn how to handle things.”
 For Dirtbags players returning to Dallas, the experience gained competing against the state’s best players will be invaluable.
 “Jaret didn’t lose all sum-

mer,” McDonald, who also coaches Dallas’ baseball team, said. “He wants the ball. He’s a guy you can go out and know you can win with him on the mound because he’s going to perform. Eric Kessler got an opportunity to pitch a lot. We’ll be able to incorporate that more next year. Treve (Earhart) is a leader behind the plate. He also had some big, clutch hits for us.”
 While the Dirtbags’ trip to state didn’t end with a title, the team advanced to the championship round for the first time in program history.
 “I think that’s a pretty awesome accomplishment,” McDonald said. “Obviously you want to win it, but it is what it is. We had tons of compliments about how we played the game. I think we demonstrated what a true Dirtbag player is.”



JEREMY MCDONALD/for the Itemizer-ObsERVER
The Demarini Dirtbags advanced to the title round in the American Legion state tournament in Klamath Falls.

Bike MS returns to Monmouth



By Lukas Eggen
 The Itemizer-ObsERVER

MONMOUTH — Come for the fun; persevere for the cause.
 Bike MS returns to Monmouth on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to bring cyclists together to ride for a cure.
 “It’s gorgeous here,” Bike MS manager Amy Harris said. “The roads are beautiful. Western Oregon is an amazing host to us. The campus is beautiful. There’s plenty of room for everything we need. When you pair the beauty of the Willamette Valley with the friendliness of the community, it’s a no-brainer.”
 Money raised from the event goes to the National MS organization to fund research.
 Multiple Sclerosis is an often disabling disease that affects the central nervous system by disrupting the flow of information within the brain and between the brain and the body, according to the National MS Society.
 Any last-second cyclists can sign up through Friday. There is \$250 minimum fundraising amount, but that can be paid out of pocket, Harris said.
 On Saturday, there are a number of different routes ranging from a mile to more than 100 miles. All

rides begin and end at Western Oregon University.
 “We like to say it’s a ride anyone can do,” Harris said.
 Each route has support vans and rest stops along the way stocked with ice, drinks, neck wraps and water misters.
 There will also be events for participants, including karaoke, a family movie night, food and drinks.
 All the fun creates a sense of community, Harris said. And although everyone has a blast, the reason they are there is never far from their minds.
 “The majority of our folks do it because we know and care about someone who lives with MS,” Harris said. “We use the weekend to highlight and celebrate those people. We’ve seen some real successes. When this event started 30 years ago, there weren’t any treatments for MS. Not one. Just this year alone, the FDA approved an MS medication, which is the 15th one, and it attacks the most severe form. Fundraising is work, but when you meet these folks and hear their stories, it brings it all home that what you’re doing is changing lives.”
 For more information about MS or to get involved: www.nationalmssociety.org/.

Bike MS returns to Western Oregon University this Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

COURTESY PHOTO/Itemizer-ObsERVER file

Summerfest Kids’ Triathlon



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-ObsERVER

Talenea Heil swims during the annual Summerfest Kids’ Triathlon at the Dallas Aquatic Center.



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-ObsERVER

Joshua and Caleb Heil get ready for the start of the Kids’ Triathlon on Friday morning.

Central volleyball camp coming

Itemizer-ObsERVER staff report
 INDEPENDENCE — Central High School will host a youth volleyball camp Aug. 7-10 from 5 to 8:30 p.m. at the Central High School gym.

Cost is \$30. Campers will be split into two age groups: Fourth through eighth grade and ninth through 12th grades.
 The fourth through eighth graders’ camp will run from 5 to

6:30 p.m. each day; the high school students’ camp will run from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
 For more information: Claudine Mendazona, cmendazona@central.k12.or.us.

What’s YOUR neighbor up to?
 Find out in the Itemizer Observer. You may find your neighbor, your boss, your friend or yourself in the pages of the Itemizer-ObsERVER.
 Local stories on local people—that’s our specialty.