

## SCHEDULE

### THURSDAY, AUG. 24

**Boys soccer:** Dallas at Century Jamboree, 3:30 p.m.

**Girls soccer:** Dallas at Century Jamboree, 10:30 a.m.

**Volleyball:** Central at Stayton, 6 p.m. Dallas at Jamboree (at Lebanon), TBA.

### FRIDAY, AUG. 25

**Football:** Dallas at Cascade Jamboree, 7 p.m.

**Volleyball:** Southwest Christian at Falls City, 6 p.m. Perrydale at 1A Season Preview (at Country Christian), 10 a.m.

### SATURDAY, AUG. 26

**Boys soccer:** South Albany at Central, 1 p.m.

**Volleyball:** Perrydale at 1A Season Preview (at Country Christian), noon.

### TUESDAY, AUG. 29

**Boys soccer:** Dallas at Stayton, 3 p.m.

**Girls soccer:** Stayton at Dallas, 4 p.m.

**Volleyball:** Falls City at Perrydale, 6 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY, AUG. 30

**Boys soccer:** Central at Thurston, 4:30 p.m.

**Schedules Subject to Change**

## QUICK HITS

### Hole in one

DALLAS — Jack Cramer recorded a hole in one at Dallas Golf Club on Aug. 18. Cramer's ace came on the eighth hole using an 8-iron.

### Cross Creek

#### men's club results

DALLAS — Cross Creek's men's club results for Aug. 15:

Low gross/low net  
Gross: 1 (tie), Paul Disney and Bob McCleery, 38; 3, Don Seth, 39; 4, Rocky Kygar, 40.

Net: 1, Jason Fahlman, 32; 2, Al Fahlman, 33; 3 (tie), Chuck Woodbeck and Jack Duncan, 34; 5, Rich Dominick, 35; 6 (tie), Terry Reed, Wayne Baughman, Bob Hughes, Mike Largent and Roy Speelman, 36.

### WOU football picked fourth in GNAC

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon's football team was picked fourth in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference preseason coaches poll.

The Wolves finished 4-6 overall in 2016.

Azusa Pacific was chosen to repeat as champions. Central Washington was picked to place second, and Humboldt State was chosen third.

Western Oregon opens the 2017 season at Idaho State on Aug. 31. The team's first home game is Sept. 23 against Humboldt State.

### Soccer predicted to finish eighth

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon's women's soccer team was picked to finish eighth in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference's preseason poll.

WOU received 23 points, ahead of only Saint Martin's.

Reigning NCAA Division II national champions Western Washington was picked to repeat as conference champs.

Western Oregon went 5-11-1 in 2016.

The Wolves open the 2017 season by hosting Biola on Aug. 31 and San Francisco State on Sept. 2.

### Fall sports section

The Fall Sports section will be coming in the Sept. 6 issue of the *Itemizer-Observer*.

### Online

Be sure to check out [www.polkio.com](http://www.polkio.com) for more stories and photos. Also, follow the *Itemizer* on Twitter @PolkiOSports and like us on Facebook.

# Wolves ready to run

By Lukas Eggen

The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Western Oregon senior Kennedy Rufener enters the 2017 season as the Wolves' top women's cross-country runner.

But it wasn't always that way — far from it, in fact.

When Rufener graduated from high school, she figured her running career was over.

Her senior year of high school, her season best in the 5-kilometer race was 24 minutes, 38 seconds.

"I always loved running, but I was just so bad that when (high school) was over, I was like, there's no hope for me," Rufener said.

She attended Southern Oregon University for a term and was approached about running — she turned them down.

"I basically said 'no, you don't know how bad my times were,' and I just walked away," she said.

And yet, the desire to run never fully disappeared.

She transferred to Clackamas Community College, where she was convinced to try running competitively again.

"It was very slow progress," Rufener said. "But I knew I wanted to continue to run at a different school."

That school was Western Oregon.

"Almost two years ago, I talked to coach Johnson and asked him if I could join the team," Rufener said. "He told me, 'well, your times aren't very quick, but we'll give it a try.'"

Since that moment, Rufener has seen steady



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer file

Western Oregon senior David Ribich placed fifth at the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Championships in 2016.

progress — and realized the sport she was ready to walk away from was actually what she wanted to do for as long as she could.

"Through all the training, I realized I really love this," Rufener said. "It's what I want to do after college. The more coach stuck with me and the people around me stuck with me, I loved it more."

Last season, Rufener was the women's team's top finisher at the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Championships.

She's got her eyes set on qualifying for nationals this year.

But she has newfound

confidence that she has what it takes to make it happen.

"When I first got here, coach would give me a workout and I would be really negative about it and think, 'I can't do this,'" Rufener said. "In the last year or so, he's proven to me — and I've proven to myself — that I can do this."

The work has paid off. As a junior, Rufener took ninth at the GNAC Championships — finishing the 6-kilometer race in 22:41.3.

She's out to take the next step this fall.

"My personal goal is to qualify for nationals," she said.

Rufener will see some returning faces, including junior Grace Knapp and senior Suzanne Van De Grift.

With seven freshmen joining the team, competition will be stiff among the runners.

"We have quite a few new faces," Rufener said. "I think we'll be stronger."

The men's squad returns all scoring runners from the GNAC Championships in 2016, led by senior David Ribich, who took fifth at the GNAC Championships.

Joining him are junior Dustin Nading, sophomore Justin Crosswhite and junior Tyler Jones, among others.

As a team, the men placed fourth in 2016. The Wolves have even bigger goals for this fall.

"We're chomping at the bit to get things underway," Ribich said. "... Pressure is a really interesting word. I don't think we feel pressure as much as we're excited about the opportunity."

The key will be trusting that their preparation will shine when it matters most.

"I think ultimately it comes down to confidence," Ribich said. "We have to trust in each other and the workouts and stay consistent. I'm not sure what we can achieve this year, but I'm not setting any limits on it."

## Eclipsing the competition



Top: Conrad Farmer takes a shot during the Dallas, Oregon Recreation Inc. disc golf tournament at Dallas City Park on Saturday morning.



Left: Two runners sprint to the finish of the Dallas Family Night Out 5K run on Sunday evening.

The event drew more than 100 runners and walkers.

LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer