

2017 ITEMIZER-OBSERVER ALL-REGION PREP FOOTBALL TEAM

QUARTERBACK Peter Mendazona Central

The senior quarterback directed the Panthers' offense to success during the 2017 season. Mendazona threw for 1,341 yards and 16 touchdowns, but was also a threat to scramble, rushing for 218 yards and two touchdowns. Mendazona earned an all-Mid-Willamette Conference honorable mention for his performance.

RUNNING BACK/LINEBACKER Cooper Butler Perrydale

The senior running back/linebacker was a leader for the Pirates during the 2017 season. Butler gained 956 yards on the ground and had 268 receiving yards with 13 total touchdowns. On defense, he had 78 tackles, four forced fumbles and three interceptions and earned second team all-league honors at running back and linebacker. "Cooper was the unsung hero for the team," coach Steve Mabry said. "He is a tough runner with breakaway speed, has great field vision and can make defenders miss repeatedly. He is a selfless player."

DEFENSIVE BACK/RECEIVER Isaiah Abraham Central

Abraham made the most of his senior season. He led the Panthers in receiving with 22 catches for 435 yards and six touchdowns, but Abraham was a star on defense. He was third on the team in tackles with 58 and was tied for first with four interceptions. He also had 10 pass defenses and two fumble recoveries. Abraham was named first team all-league at defensive back and received an honorable mention

at receiver.

OFFENSIVE/DEFENSIVE LINE Caleb Sedlacek Central

Sedlacek, a senior, was an anchor on both the offensive and defensive lines. He could always be counted on to fire up his teammates on the sidelines and was a leader any time he was on the field. Sedlacek recorded 48 tackles on defense and was tied for second on the team in sacks with three. The senior was named first team all-league on the offensive line and second team all-MWC on defense.

TIGHT END/LINEBACKER Treve Earhart Dallas

The senior was a dual threat for the Dragons. Earhart earned first team all-MWC honors at linebacker and received honorable mention as tight end. The four-year starter was a critical piece on both sides of the field and was a leader throughout his career. "He was a big boost for the defense," coach Tracy Jackson said.

RUNNING BACK Hunter Chase Central

The junior running back came on strong during league play. Chase finished the season as the team's leading rusher with 961 yards and eight touchdowns. During MWC play, Chase averaged 8.9 yards per carry. He also rushed for more than 200 yards in each of the Panthers' final two games. Chase received second team all-MWC honors.

SAFETY/RECEIVER Marcos Cedillo Central

The senior was a key player on both sides of the ball for the Panthers. On offense, Cedillo had 21 catches for 295 yards and two touchdowns. On defense, Cedillo led the team in tackles with 81 and recorded two interceptions and one sack. Cedillo was named second team all-MWC on defensive and earned an honorable mention on offense.

RUNNING BACK/DEFENSIVE BACK Jeremy Labrado Falls City

Labrado, a senior, was one of the Mountaineers' most versatile athletes. Labrado made plays as a running back, receiver, quarterback and defensive back. His speed and elusiveness made him tough to bring down and helped Falls City's offense score 58 or more points in all but three of the team's games.

RECEIVER/LINEBACKER Jesse Cable Central

Cable made his presence felt no matter where he was on the field during the 2017 season. Cable had 26 catches for 390 yards and six touchdowns as a receiver on offense and 78 tackles and four interceptions on defense. The senior earned second team all-league honors at both receiver and linebacker and played a critical role in Central's success on both sides of the ball during the 2017 season.

RUNNING BACK/DEFENSIVE BACK RANDELL CANFIELD Perrydale

The junior transfer had never played football prior to this fall. It didn't take long for Canfield to catch on. Canfield led the Pirates in rushing with 1,098 yards and 11 rushing touchdowns. He also had 289 receiving yards and four scores. As a defensive back, Canfield recorded 57 tackles and three interceptions and earned all-league honorable mentions on both offense and defense. Not bad for his first season.

DEFENSIVE LINEMAN Justin Ingram Dallas

The senior helped anchor the Dragons' defensive line. "He's big, physical, and strong," Jackson said. Ingram not only put constant pressure on opposing running backs and quarterbacks, he was a dependable worker, Jackson said. Ingram earned second team all-league honors for his efforts.

COACH Laric Cook Falls City

Cook has helped transform Falls City's football program during his tenure. The Mountaineers lost their first game of the season before reeling off nine wins in a row and advancing to the OSAA 1A state semifinals, despite only having 13 players.

The All-Region football team was selected by the Itemizer-ObsERVER Sports Editor Lukas Eggen along with heavy input from area coaches.

Abraham: Senior led Panthers in receiving

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Abraham led the Panthers in receiving with 22 catches for 495 yards and three touchdowns.

On defense, he had 58 tackles, four interceptions and two fumble recoveries. But more than stats, it was his leadership and perseverance that made Abraham the *Itemizer-ObsERVER's* Player of the Year.

Entering his junior season, things were looking up for Abraham. As a sophomore, he became a starter on varsity.

He was ready to play an even bigger role as safety on defense and as a receiver on offense.

He was also receiving interest from numerous colleges — including some Division I schools.

During the summer, he worked with his dad on training and entered

stronger, quicker and smarter than ever before.

On Sept. 30, the Panthers played rival Dallas when Abraham injured his ankle.

"After the injuries, the DI schools kind of dropped away," he said. "That was tough. Junior year is your biggest year for recruiting, especially for DI schools. That left me devastated."

Abraham attempted to return later in the season, but coaches pulled him out because of the pain, he said. In the immediate weeks after, Abraham could barely move his ankle.

Those closest to him — his teammates, family and friends — wouldn't let him stay down for long.

"I had a great support system," Abraham said.

He began the long road back, working on movement in his ankle, before being able to walk without a boot, then jog and run. It was hard

and frustrating at times, but Abraham stayed the course. Slowly, he regained strength and balance in his ankle.

When the Panthers took the field this year, he was ready to be one of Central's leaders.

"Isaiah can be a game-changer with his knowledge of football and his physical prowess," coach Shane Hedrick said. "He has a unique style of being in position to make plays and take advantage of the opponents weaknesses."

Abraham has drawn interest from a few Division II and Division I universities, including Portland State and an Ivy League school. He's not sure where he'll end up.

He just knows every snap he plays, every class he takes, and everything he does honors his hero.

"Let's hope I can do some good in the future for him," Abraham said.



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-ObsERVER file

Isaiah Abraham was a leader on offense and defense for the Panthers.

WESTERN OREGON ROUNDUP

Ribich places 30th at nationals

Itemizer-ObsERVER staff report

EVANSVILLE, Ind. — Led by a 30th-place finish by senior David Ribich, Western Oregon University's men's cross-country team finished 21st at the NCAA Division II National Cross-country Championships on Saturday.

Ribich finished the 10,000-meter course in 31 minutes, 47.1 seconds. Josh Dempsey finished 88th (32:37.9), followed by Tyler Jones (118th, 33:09.9), Justin Crosswhite (186th, 34:12.4), Dustin Nading (202nd, 34:31.7), Hunter Mosman (240th,



Rufener

6,000-meter course in 22:27.2.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL IMPROVES TO 3-0: Western Oregon University's women's basketball team defeated Notre Dame de Namur 81-62 on Friday. The Wolves are 3-0 for the first time in 19 years. Central High graduate Maddy Pape scored a game-high 18 points. Shelby Snook added 16 points, and Kaylie Boschma recorded eight points and 10 rebounds.

35:30.3) and Parker Marson (285th, 36:08.6).

Ribich earned All-American honors for his performance.

Kennedy Rufener finished 97th in the women's race. The senior completed the

The Wolves played Humboldt State Tuesday after press time.

VOLLEYBALL ENDS SEASON WITH WIN: Western Oregon University's volleyball team finished its season with a 25-19, 23-25, 25-19, 25-18 win over Saint Martin's on Senior Night on Saturday.



Bettinson

Jenna Compton led the Wolves with 15 kills and four blocks. Alisha Bettinson added 13 kills and four blocks.

WOU lost to Seattle Pacific 25-22, 18-25, 25-21, 23-25, 15-11 on Thursday. Western Oregon finishes the season with a 7-20 record overall and 3-18 mark in Great Northwest Athletic Conference play.

Wolves: Western improves to 4-0

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The focus will be on ball security, Omlid said — something Western Oregon struggled with at times against Azusa Pacific.

"I think we were a little overwhelmed with their length at times," Omlid said. "But, aside from that game, I think our ball security has improved."

WOU plays at Holy Names Friday at 5 p.m. and at Notre Dame de Namur on Saturday at 7 p.m.

While winning a confer-

ence regular season and tournament title remain high on the Wolves' list of goals, Omlid said they have a much larger goal in mind — undefeated.

"We're trying to win every game," Omlid said. "It's nice to beat teams like Azusa and Dixie State who are usually in the tournament every year. Last year, we needed to win our (conference) tournament to advance. This year, we want to step it up so we don't have to worry about that."

Falls City: Mountaineers finish 9-2

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The Mountaineers had a chance to score early in the second half to close the gap, but a dropped pass on fourth down stalled the drive.

"That's a touchdown if he catches it," Cook said. "That broke our back a little bit."

The Rangers added three more touchdowns to stretch their lead to 52-22 before the Mountaineers scored their final touchdown of the game in the fourth quarter.

"I'm prouder than heck of the guys," Cook said. "They never quit and kept playing hard. We just didn't execute as well as Dufur."

Falls City finished the season with a 9-2 record. Both of the team's losses came to Dufur.

"We're glad to have had



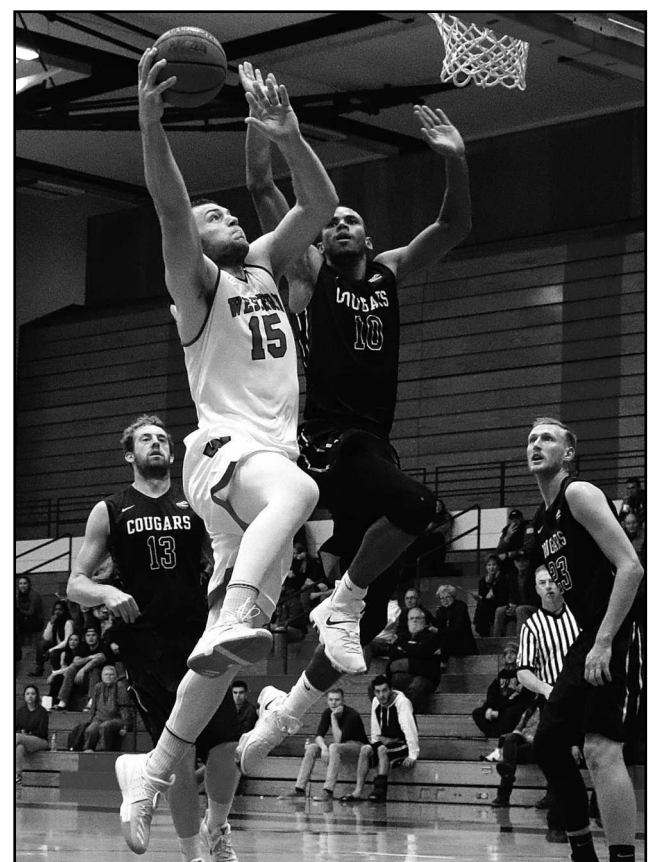
LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-ObsERVER

Falls City's Jeremy Labrado, left, escapes a tackle against Dufur on Saturday.

this opportunity and hopefully we can turn this into something that happens every year," Cook said.

Sickles believes the groundwork has already been laid for sustained success.

"I think the younger guys saw that anything is possible, no matter what," Sickles said.



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-ObsERVER

Vince Boumann drives to the hoop for a basket against Azusa Pacific on Friday night.