

WESTERN OREGON ROUNDUP

Wolves defeat Vikings for first time in nine years



Kennedy Corrigan, left, tries to use a screen to drive past a Western Washington defender on Saturday.

LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Itemizer-Observer staff report

MONMOUTH — For the first time in nearly a decade, Western Oregon University's women's basketball team defeated Western Washington 54-50 on Saturday.

The Wolves had lost to the Vikings 18 times in a row — a streak dating back nine years. Kennedy Corrigan scored 11 points in the first quarter, helping WOU jump out to a 21-14 lead. Western Washington pulled to within one at the half.

The score was tied at 50 late in the fourth before free-throws by Savannah Heugly and Corrigan sealed the win. Corrigan finished with a game-high 18 points.

Sydney Azorr added 13 points and Heugly recorded 11 points and six rebounds. Western Oregon lost to Simon Fraser 81-67 on Thursday.

WOU (6-6 overall, 2-4 Great Northwest Athletic Conference) plays at Alaska Anchorage Thursday at 8

p.m. and at Alaska Fairbanks Saturday at 2 p.m.

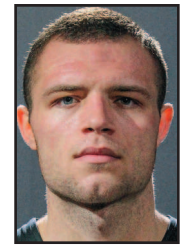
MEN'S BASKETBALL OPENS YEAR WITH WINS: Western Oregon University's men's basketball team defeated Concordia 71-60 on Jan. 2 and Montana State, Billings 92-68 on Saturday.

Vince Boumann had 17 points and nine rebounds

against Concordia. Malik Morgan added 17 points and three steals, and Ali Faruq-Bey recorded 12 points and six steals.

Six different players scored in double figures against Montana State, Billings, including Riley Hawken, who had 12 points and nine rebounds, and J.J. Chirnside, who recorded 10 points, six rebounds, five assists and two blocks.

The Wolves (13-1 overall, 5-1 GNAC) play at Saint Martin's Thursday at 7 p.m. and at Seattle Pacific Saturday at 7 p.m.



Boumann

Central: Panthers opened league against Lebanon

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"He brings varsity experience," Kreta said. "He gives us a spark and we get that much stronger with him."

Lesmeister was originally a wing entering high school, but has converted to a post player for the Panthers.

The transition was originally difficult — requiring a change in thinking and approach — but one that Lesmeister has fully embraced.

"You have to be strong

and have a quick move," he said. "You can't wait. Once you hesitate, you'll have people on you. You have to know what you're doing."

Lesmeister's willingness to change his playstyle stemmed from a desire to help his team, regardless of what it meant doing.

"I think it's that mentality," Kreta said. "We're not very tall. We have to have someone take ownership and be willing to go bang in the paint."

Lesmeister's return gives Kreta depth in the paint, and someone who isn't afraid to get physical and is always looking to improve.

"He's a student of the game," Kreta said. "He watches and learns. He pulls coaches aside. Getting to watch guys when he was younger, he got to see what happens when you do things the right way."

Central has seen other players step up in big ways. Senior Peter Mendazona is a

consistent scoring threat, while Isaiah Abraham brings a physical presence who takes pride on defense and grabbing rebounds.

"I'm a bit of a bruiser," Abraham said. "I like getting low and getting boards and helping where I can."

His energy is infectious, Kreta said.

"Isaiah is a fantastic athlete," Kreta said. "He's jumping over people to get rebounds. That kind of energy, you can't coach that. He

knows what his role is on the floor and plays phenomenal defense."

Players now turn their attention to MWC play.

"We always want to look forward to who is next," Kreta said. "The guys want to know what it's like to defend and hold off and continue to be hungry. We know if we take a night off, we're going to get stung, and that could come back to haunt you."

The Panthers opened

league play against Lebanon Tuesday after press time.

Central plays at Woodburn Friday at 7 p.m. and at South Albany Tuesday at 7 p.m. South Albany entered league play with a 7-3 record.

"Our start gave us the confidence we needed," Abraham said. "Knowing people will be looking to knock us off gives us more pride and makes us work harder. We love the competition."

DALLAS ROUNDUP

Girls basketball drops close game

Itemizer-Observer staff report

PENDLETON — Dallas' girls basketball team lost a close game to Pendleton 49-42 on Jan. 2.

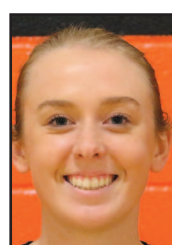
The Dragons led for most of the game before Pendleton rallied during the final four minutes. Jordan Dippel led Dallas with 13 points. Mikayli Laizure and Emma Classen scored nine points each.

"We were up by six headed into the fourth quarter, but we had a little foul trouble and could not control their inside post player, Kalan McGlothan," coach Tim Ehlers said.

McGlothan finished with 25 points.

The Dragons also failed to make a field goal over the final two minutes of the game.

"It was another tough loss, but being in tough and close games will hopefully help us get ready to start league play," Ehlers said.



Dippel

opened league play against Corvallis Tuesday after press time. Dallas plays at Friday at 7 p.m. and at Woodburn Tuesday at 7 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL FINISHES NONLEAGUE PLAY WITH LOSS: Dallas' boys basketball team dropped its final nonleague game of the season, falling to Pendleton 57-47 on Jan. 2.

Evan Courtney scored a career-high 21 points, and the Dragons forced 27 Pendleton turnovers.

"Our full-court pressure looked the best it has all season, and we were able to come back from a 16-point deficit to make it a seven-point game early in the fourth

quarter," coach Trent Schwartz said. "I was happy with how the kids stuck with it getting down and battling back, but we just couldn't get over the hump."

The Dragons finished non-league play 1-8.

Dallas opened Mid-Willamette Conference play at Corvallis Tuesday after press time.

Dallas hosts Crescent Valley Friday at 7 p.m. and Woodburn Tuesday at 7 p.m.

"We learned we need to play good team defense for 32 minutes every night to have a chance to win when we aren't shooting the lights out. That must be something we do each night," Schwartz said. "... We're learning that, during stretches of the game when we have struggles scoring, that we must have excellent shot selection, offensive execution, defense, and confidence. I think we played a tremendously tough pre-season schedule ... I guarantee we will not be intimidated against any opponent the rest of the way."

SWIM TEAM COMPETES AT PHILOMATH: Dallas' swim team competed at Philomath on Friday.

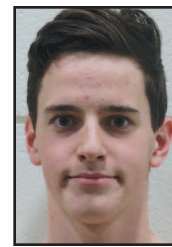
Gabe Applegate placed first in the boys 200-yard freestyle with a time of 2 minutes, 26.04 seconds. Teammate Jakob Lloyd placed second in

2:29.09. Lloyd also took second in the 50 freestyle (28.38).

Isaiah Dressel finished second in the boys 100 breaststroke in 1:28.51 and third in the 100 freestyle (1:03.88). Hans Garrison took seventh in the 100 freestyle (1:14.77) and eighth in the 100 backstroke (1:24.72).

Guinevere Bagnall took fourth in the girls 50 freestyle (49.61) and seventh in the 100 backstroke (2:27.06).

Dallas will compete at Taft on Jan. 18 at 3:15 p.m.



Dressel

CENTRAL ROUNDUP

Panthers enter league play with 9-1 record

Itemizer-Observer staff report

INDEPENDENCE — Central's girls basketball team defeated West Albany 72-58 on Jan. 3.

The Panthers finished nonleague play with a 9-1 record and the top ranking in the OSAA's power rankings.

Central's lone loss came against Stayton on Dec. 20.

The Panthers opened Mid-Willamette Conference play against Lebanon Tuesday after press time. Lebanon entered league play undefeated.

Central plays at Woodburn Friday at 5:30 p.m. before hosting South Albany Tuesday at 7 p.m.

WRESTLING COMPETES IN LEAGUE MATCHES: Central's wrestling squad competed against South Albany, Woodburn and Crescent Valley on Thursday.

The Panthers lost to South Albany 41-29 and Woodburn



Ca. Sedlacek

38-28. Results against Crescent Valley were not available. Noah Worthington (113 pounds), Alan Vargas (145), Cael Matta (152), and Caleb Sedlacek (285) picked up wins against South Albany. Corbin Sedlacek and Angel Huerta picked up wins by forfeit.

Ty Pearson (126), Xander Hall (195), and Corbin Sedlacek (285) earned wins against Woodburn. Worthington and Caleb Sedlacek won by forfeit.

Results from the Aloha Dual Challenge on Friday were not available.

The Panthers will compete at Corvallis Thursday at 6 p.m. before traveling to the Nick Lutz Invitational at Siuslaw High School in Florence on Saturday.

Falls City: Mountaineers look to continue growth

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For the seniors, this season is as much about teaching their younger counterparts giving advice that, while things may seem difficult now, they will get better.

"It was really awkward at first (for me last season)," Potts said. "I didn't know anybody. I hadn't played basketball since, like, seventh

grade. Everything was hard. I was out of shape, I was trying to learn how to shoot right and work on my footwork. I got the hang of it, but it was difficult that first day."

Making that learning process more difficult is the lack of a junior varsity team, but players have seen steady progress.

"We have really good en-

ergy," Houghtaling said. "That win streak was kind of a turning point in our season. We saw a different energy. We're a young, but experienced team. Every team has its setbacks, but we're learning how to face them and grow."

The team has made significant strides. What started as a more disjointed offense

has evolved into a smoother flowing system, and as players gain experience and confidence, Falls City has shown it can hang with some of the league's best, playing Crosshill Christian and Jewell, the Casco League's second- and third-place teams entering the week, close.

The team's next step is knocking off the Casco

League's top teams. The Mountaineers host Perrydale, the league's first-place squad, Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

"We have a couple of hard games coming up, but we're not going to get anywhere without facing them," Houghtaling said.

Most importantly, the Mountaineers want to see continued growth and de-

velopment and to not be afraid to stay aggressive, regardless of the score.

"Instead of saying do this instead of that, we're telling each other, 'you got this,'" Houghtaling said. "We're thinking about the way we talk to each other to stay positive. Playing with this team is fun. We have good times. I've enjoyed it."

Dallas: Dragons focused on chasing greatness

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"A lot of (my focus) is about the team," Earhart said. "It's improving a little bit every day. It's seeing that improvement and doing whatever I can to help the team and help others improve. ... I'm always adding little things. We're working on a move until we can do it without even thinking about it."

Earhart is one of several wrestlers who is making his

presence felt.

Joseph Foster is ranked third at 132 pounds, while Jacob Jones is third at 138 pounds. Cael Morrison is ranked fourth at 106 pounds, and Ryan Bibler (fourth) and freshman Haydn Miller (fifth) are ranked at 113 pounds.

"We didn't know what we could be (at the start of the season)," Earhart said. "But we start to find it in ourselves, push each other and start to

get a sense that we can compete with other teams. That pushes us even harder to be a little bit above them."

Finding that extra level can be challenging.

Practices test wrestlers on a daily basis. The bond teammates share is strong, but once practice begins, friendships are put aside and the focus is on perfecting a move, learning something new and build-

ing endurance.

"You can't be buddies with everyone," Earhart said. "It's not time to be nice with everybody. It's not beating each other up, but we get after it."

While that can lead to intense experiences, the desire to improve drives them forward.

"Our mindset is wanting to be great," Earhart said. "If you're mentally weak, you'll

have trouble getting through a tough practice. You won't win those close matches. The successful programs, they have that mental strength."

All the work is rewarding when they triumph after a tough match, and despite the challenges, Earhart is taking special care to approach each day with a smile.

"I try and enjoy this every day," Earhart said. "It only lasts for so long. For most of

the seniors, this will be our last time wrestling. I don't want to take anything for granted."

Dallas will compete at South Albany Thursday at 6 p.m. before traveling to the Oregon Classic on Friday and Saturday in Redmond.

"We just need to keep improving," Earhart said. "We want to keep that upward slope, keep pushing and everything will take care of itself."