

## *Pioneer Athletes Inspire Young Basketball Players*

A group of first and second-grade basketball players recently experienced an unforgettable boost in confidence and skills thanks to two Western Oklahoma State College basketball players. The young team began their season with enthusiasm but little experience—five had never touched a basketball before, and only two had played a season. Despite their determination, wins remained out of reach, and a tough 28-0 loss discouraged the players. Their coach reached out to the athletic director and assistant men's basketball coach, who connected them with Western men's basketball players Stephen Semey from Ghana and Ryo Nagahama from Japan for a special practice session. During the session, Stephen and Ryo worked with the kids on skills, drills, and game fundamentals, but more importantly, they provided encouragement and inspiration. For the young players, it was like training with NBA players, and the excitement was evident. Parents also attended, making it a great opportunity to engage with the college community.

The impact was immediate. Since the session, the team secured the first two wins of the season, but beyond the scoreboard, they gained confidence, resilience, and a renewed love for the game. One player, Cason Manos, still talks about the experience and now makes it a priority to attend Western basketball games whenever possible. Cason's mother, coach, and Vice President for Student Affairs at Western, Dr. Keila Manos, said, "I just appreciated the guys so much for taking their time to do it. The boys were in awe as if they were playing with NBA players. The kids were just so happy." Western Oklahoma State College appreciates Stephen and Ryo for their generosity and mentorship. Their willingness to invest in these young athletes highlights the power of community and the importance of fostering a love for the game at every level. Who knows? This may have been the first step for a future Pioneer.



Stephen Semey and Ryo Nagahama working on skills with team



Stephen Semey and Cason Manos



Front Row: Isaiah Clouse, Matthew Cadena, Cason Manos, Grant Hooper, Ryker Frizzell, Seth Hooper, Dominic Avil  
Back Row: Stephen Semey and Ryo Nagahama



Stephen Semey and Ryo Nagahama working on skills with team

## UPCOMING AT WESTERN

March 14 | 2nd 8 Weeks Classes Start

March 14 | Nursing Applications Due

March 17-21 | Spring Break | Campus Closed

March 24 | Enrollment Opens | Summer and Fall

March 26 | Queso Competition | 11:30 AM | SSC Activity Center

March 27 | Bingo Night | 7 PM | PHC

April 1 | WINDS Grant Aid Opens

April 2 | WINDS Roaming Financial Literacy Workshop

April 3 | Enrollment Event | 1 PM - 6 PM

April 7 | Student Senate Meeting | 12:30 PM

April 9 | Destress with STEM | 12 PM | WINDS lab



## College Rodeo Kicks Off Spring Season with Success

The Western Oklahoma State College rodeo team had a strong showing at the Ft. Scott Rodeo March 7-9, highlighted by Cale Morris claiming the heeler championship title in team roping after winning both the short round and average.

In team roping, Caleb Miller and his partner secured a second-place finish in the short round and finished third in the average, while Brandt O'Connor and Nick Lovins placed third in the short round and fourth in the average. In tie-down roping, Jate Saults finished third in the short round and fourth in the average.

Additionally, Riley O'Rourke took home the steer roping championship at the MM Fisher Jr. Memorial College Steer Roping. O'Rourke currently leads the national rankings for the Steer Roping College Division, with teammate Jate Saults sitting in fifth place.

The Pioneers continue to build momentum as the season progresses and will look to carry this success into their upcoming competitions.



Cale Morris, Heeling Champion at Ft. Scott Rodeo



Left to right back row: Members of the Fisher family, Riley O'Rourke and Coach Jesse Tierney



Caleb Miller



Jate Saults



Brandt O'Connor



Nick Lovins

## Pioneer Basketball Recognizes Outstanding Performance



Tazhia Watson



Jeremiah Littlejohn



Yanis Mahoundo

The 2024-25 regular season has come to a close, and the Pioneers are set to compete in the Region 2 DI Basketball Tournament in Muskogee, OK, from March 12-15. Several standout players earned recognition for their performances this season.

For women's basketball, Tazhia Watson was named to the NJCAA All-Region 2 Second Team.

On the men's side, Jeremiah Littlejohn was honored as the Region 2 Player of the Year, while Yanis Mahoundo earned a spot on the All-Region 2 Third Team. Additionally, Coach Rolando De La Barrera was recognized as the Region 2 Men's Co-Coach of the Year.

Congratulations to our Pioneers on an outstanding season, and best of luck in the tournament!



Coach Rolando De la Barrera

For tournament information and live streaming visit [region2athletics.com/information/2025\\_DI\\_Basketball\\_Tournament](https://region2athletics.com/information/2025_DI_Basketball_Tournament)



# HALEY EMERSON

Liberal Arts/Graphic Design Major  
Spring 2026 Expected graduation date

## What are your career goals?

I want to have at least 10 years of experience in graphic design (printing and digital) before I open my own print shop. I currently have 3 years of experience.

## How has WINDS helped you succeed at Western?

WINDS has helped me with academic counseling, and really, anytime I have a school-related question they help me find the answer. I also love the little community that WINDS has.

## What advice would you give your peers to succeed in college?

Make sure not to overload your schedule and make sure you manage your time well. College can be a lot at times, but the great community here will help you in anyway possible.

## What has been your favorite class so far? Why?

So far, English Comp 1 because the teacher I had made the class really fun, and I was able to write about interesting topics.

## What do you love about Western?

I love the close-knit community and how accepting everyone is. I also love how close I am to my family here.



APRIL 3, 2025 | 1:00 - 6:00 PM  
PIONEER CENTRAL

- Campus tours at 2 PM & 4 PM
- Enroll for the summer and fall semester
- Visit with advisors, faculty, staff, and current students
- Scholarships available for those qualifying for Reach Higher
- All who enroll will receive a FREE t-shirt, Chick-fil-a, and have a chance to win prizes!
- Brand new to Western? Make sure you apply for admission by April 1st and bring all required documents.

A poster for Spring Graduates. It features a green background with a photo of graduates in caps and gowns. The text 'SPRING GRADUATES' is in large, bold letters. Below it, it says 'You must order your cap and gown online by April 1'. There is a large 'W' logo in a yellow circle and a URL 'Visit wosc.edu/commencement'.

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