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SEAGULLS SOAR TO WIN STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

First Clatsop County cross country team to win since 1992



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Seaside's Bradley Rzewnicki, center, receives his medal after winning the 4A boys OSAA Cross Country State Championship at Lane Community College in Eugene Saturday. See more photos from the state championship online at www.dailyastorian.com

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

EUGENE — “Perfect and gettin’ better.” That’s the greeting you get any time you meet Seaside cross country coach Neil Branson.

Now, however, Branson can shorten that to just “perfect,” because his Gulls can’t get any better. They are No. 1.

“Branson’s Boys” won their first-ever state championship Saturday in Eugene, as the Gulls — with no seniors among their top five runners — finished with 49 points to top the field of Class 4A teams. Phoenix was second with 65, with Tillamook (78) third.

And while he’s heard his last name pronounced more than a few different ways when he’s on the awards stand, there’s no denying the fact that Seaside junior Bradley Rzewnicki is a winner.

Rzewnicki led the charge for the Gulls, crossing the finish line as the individual state champion, finishing the 5,000-meter course in 16 minutes, 13 seconds, well ahead of Sisters senior Tony Hooks (16:18).

Seaside’s next finisher was junior Hunter Thompson (fifth, 16:34), followed by junior Jackson Januik (ninth, 16:40) and sophomore Rafi Sibony (12th, 16:59).

“We had the same plan we did at districts, with Bradley going out and

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Helping fish flow

Workshop helps landowners find best practices for fish restoration

By KATHERINE LACAZE
EO Media Group

Across the state, there are more than 28,000 artificial barriers to fish passage through waterways, leading to fish population declines, damaged habitats and affecting watershed health.

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute hosted a workshop Tuesday to give landowners information about voluntary projects to improve fish passage and habitat in forested streams.

About 40 people participated in the free workshop. The goal was to edu-



Katherine Lacaze/EO Media Group

Jim Hunt, of Greenwood Resources, talks about a project completed at Hawley Creek in the Lewis and Clark Tree Farm in 2007 during a Fish Passage and Habitat Workshop held in Seaside Tuesday.

cate small-forest landowners on best practices for restoring and enhancing fish habitats and provide tools to do the job, said Julie Woodward, the institute’s senior manager of forestry education.

The fish-passage dilemma is systemic and pervasive across the state,

said Greg Apke, fish passage program coordinator for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Human-made obstructions, such as culverts at road and stream crossings, dams, tidegates and other artificial structures, are to blame.

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Truant students in Clatsop County

In some schools, up to a third of students are chronically gone

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

More than 700 students K-12 in Clatsop County were reported as chronically absent last year in a recent report from the Oregon Department of Education, out of more than 94,000 chronically absent students statewide.

The department of education defines chronic absenteeism as missing at least 10 percent of scheduled days between the start of the school year and May 1. This is the first year the state has released detailed attendance data on its own, after the “Empty Desks” series by the Oregonian last year revealed Oregon, with 17.7 per-

cent of its students chronically absent, had one of the biggest attendance problems in the country in the 2012-13 school year. The situation hasn’t notably improved this year, with 17.4 percent statewide considered chronically absent this year, while the county’s rate has increased from 13 to 15 percent over two years.

Absenteeism starts high in kindergarten, dips as students advance through grades and perks back up among upperclassmen in high school. In Astoria and Seaside, nearly a quarter of kindergartners were chronically absent last year, part of a similar historic trend. Meanwhile, more than a quarter of seniors in Seaside were chronically absent last year at Seaside High School, along with a third of juniors and seniors at Astoria High School.

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All on the line: Football’s unsung heroes

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Identify heroes on a football team.

The quarterback and those speedy fellows who run the ball into the end zone?

True. But without these teammates doing their job, the backs would be seeing stars, not being stars.

Like the infantry in warfare, offensive linemen are key to the success of any football team.



It’s a philosophy shared by Ilwaco and Naselle football programs that’s taught from Day 1 by head coaches Kevin McNulty and Jeff Eaton.

Both attended Naselle High School in the early 1980s when lineman Eaton blocked for fullback McNulty. The two men grew up as next-door neighbors and leaned their craft, in part, from a professional.

“Linemen are not well-publicized, they don’t have the

notoriety that the other positions do,” said McNulty, referring to the professional game where quarterbacks and the speed men are paid millions more than the big men who block for them. “And yet if you don’t have a good line, you don’t have a

great offense. In order for the backs and receivers and the quarterback to get their names

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Left to right are Allyn Bauer, Carston Bergeson, Cody Kirkman and Ramzi Estes. Bergeson is a defensive specialist who steps into the three-man line when the Comets execute an offensive play called “jumbo,” in which Bergeson switches to fullback.

PATRICK WEBB/For the Observer

