

Saints shine bright on stormy night

Bright future for Comets with 18 coming back

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

NASELLE, Wash. — After playing their finest first half of the season, the Naselle Comets could only watch as Seattle Lutheran erupted for 30 points in the third quarter Friday night, on its way to a 44-22 win over Naselle in a Class 1B state playoff game at Rueben Pentilla Field.

Saints' running back J.J. Young — who had 94 yards rushing in the first half — finished with 303 yards on 17 carries (nearly 18 yards per run), and also completed two key passes in the victory.

He ran for four touchdowns and threw for a fifth, to help Seattle Lutheran advance to the state quarterfinals.

Naselle coach Jeff Eaton said Young was one of the best athletes his team has faced all season.

"Him and the kid from Tulalip Heritage (Robert Miles, Jr.) — they're both really good," Eaton said. "They're faster than anyone we have."

Still, the Comets' defense controlled the game in the first half, stopping the Saints on four fourth down plays. Naselle held an 8-6 lead at the break, courtesy of a 19-yard touchdown run by Comet quarterback Hayden Gudmundsen with 3:05 left in the first quarter.

The teams battled through a scoreless second period, and



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Naselle's Donnie Edwards tackles Seattle Lutheran's Brandon Lulow in the third quarter of the football game at Naselle High School Friday.

Naselle took its 8-6 lead — which didn't last long — into the third quarter.

Young, a 6-foot-2, 175-pound junior, highlighted the second half with his first three carries of the third quarter.

After a partially blocked punt, Young's first run of the half went for 34 yards, and gave the Saints a 14-8 lead.

The Saints forced another Naselle punt, and Young ran 62 yards out of the Wildcat formation for a touchdown. His second straight two-point conversion run made it 22-8.

And after the next Comet drive ended at the Saints' 36-yard line, Young's first down carry covered 64 yards for his fourth touchdown of the night (he had a 56-yard TD run in the first half).

Three one-play drives to start the second half, three straight carries by Young for a combined 160 yards, and the Saints had a lead they would not relinquish, 28-8.

"We played the best first half of football that we've played all year," Eaton said after the game. "Especially defensively."

He continued, "We had seen the Wildcat formation with (Young) in the backfield, but it was usually just used on the goal line for two-point plays.

"With how wet it was, our kids didn't wrap up real well. They hit him, they just didn't wrap up and take him to the ground."

Still, the Comets didn't exactly cave in.

After Young's 64-yard scoring jaunt, Naselle answered quickly with a 65-yard touchdown return on the ensuing kickoff, as Donnie Edwards took a pitch on the return and went the distance, helping the Comets close to within 28-14.

But the Saints just kicked it into another gear, responding with a six-play, 84-yard drive that was capped by

SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL	
Seattle Lutheran 44, Naselle 22	
Seattle L. 6 0 308—44	
Naselle 8 0 68—22	
First Quarter	
SL: J.J. Young 56 run (run failed) 4:52	
NAS: Hayden Gudmundsen 19 run (Jacob Scrobeck run) 3:05	
Third Quarter	
SL: Young 34 run (Young run) 9:32	
SL: Young 62 run (Young run) 7:40	
SL: Young 64 run (pass failed) 3:31	
NAS: Donnie Edwards 65 kick return (run failed) 3:18	
SL: Isaiah Dowding-Albrecht 11 pass from Young (Young run) :30	
Fourth Quarter	
NAS: Scrobeck 3 run (Scrobeck run) 8:15	
SL: Brandon Lulow 15 run (Young	

run) 3:24

Team Statistics	
SL	Naselle
First Downs	16 12
Total Offense	430 179
Rushing yards	331 157
Passing yards	99 22
Comp-Att-Int	10-18-0 3-11-1
Fumbles-lost	4-0 5-1
Turnovers	0 2
Penalties-yards	6-45 3-15

Seattle Lutheran Statistics
Rushing: Young 17-303, Lulow 13-45, Dowding-Albrecht 6-(-17). Passing: Dowding-Albrecht 8-15-67-0, Young 2-3-32-0. Receiving: Young 7-68, Lulow 2-20, Dowding-Albrecht 1-1.

Naselle Statistics
Rushing: Scrobeck 28-143, Gud-

mundsen 9-23, D.Wirkkala 1-3, Edwards 1-1, Lund 3-(-13). Passing: Gudmundsen 3-11-22-1. Receiving: Smith 2-24, Lund 1-(-2).

OSAA State Playoff Scores

Class 4A
Cascade 35, Philomath 34
Banks 28, Mazama 21
Scappoose 48, Marshfield 46
North Bend 37, North Marion 7
Class 3A
Scio 70, Salem Academy 36
Vale 48, Cascade Christian 38
Blanchet Catholic 36, Coquille 14
Santiam Chr. 19, Harrisburg 13
Class 2A
Stanfield 27, Central Linn 26
Kennedy 42, Burns 28
Regis 44, Imbler 14
Heppner 52, Reedsport 14

Young's 11-yard TD toss to Seattle Lutheran quarterback Isaiah Dowding-Albrecht.

Naselle's Jacob Scrobeck capped the scoring for the Comets with a three-yard run with 8:15 left in the fourth quarter. Scrobeck ran in the two-point conversion, bringing Naselle to within 36-22. Scrobeck finished with 143 yards rushing on 28 carries.

The Saints put it away, however, on their next possession, keyed once again by Young.

Facing a fourth-and-12 from midfield, Young took the snap and found Brandon Lulow over the middle for a first down to the Naselle 29.

Five plays later, Lulow ran in from 15 yards out, pushing the lead to 22 points. The drive took five minutes, 54 seconds off the clock.

A driving rain marked the final three minutes of the game, with an interception

by Hawkins Ehret ending Naselle's next drive.

The weather did not play a "huge part," Eaton said, "but we made more mistakes coming out in the third quarter. We had a hard time making snaps, and fumbled a few and that slowed things down.

"But I'm not sure a dry night would have helped 23 (Young) get going a little more."

A forecast of heavy rains and strong winds brought with it a "high turnover advisory" for Friday's game.

Yet the Saints did not have a turnover, and Naselle had two — one on a fourth down play which would not have resulted in a first down, and the late interception.

Both teams were held well below their scoring average. The 22 points was a season-low for the Comets, who had not been held under 40 points since Sept. 11; while

the 44 points was Seattle Lutheran's third lowest output of the season.

The Comets came in unbeaten at home, and having beaten Seattle Lutheran in state playoff games in both 2007 (42-7) and 2008 (34-7), when both schools played 11-man football. Naselle also pounded the Saints in the 2009 regular season, 57-6.

The dark and stormy night finished with a bright future for the Comets.

"We lose five players, with 18 coming back," Eaton said. "All the skill position guys besides Hayden are coming back, so I'm looking for big things next season.

"And we have a class of 11 to 13 eighth graders coming in. We're going to have a huge team coming in next year. We just need a few more linemen, and we'll get ready to go in the weight room. We should be good."

Naselle netters fall in state play

Coach says Comets should focus on stellar season, not weekend results

By PATRICK WEBB
For EO Media Group

YAKIMA, Wash. — There was no fairytale ending for Naselle volleyball's stellar season.

The Comets came up against a buzz saw Friday, losing to Oakesdale in the opening round of the WIAA state tournament in three sets. Scores were 25-11, 26-24, 25-10.

The team then moved into the consolation bracket the same evening and fell to Neah Bay, 26-24, 25-23, 25-22.

Despite a season in which the Naselle won its league and was District IV champions, the team could not replicate the same level of successful play at the Sundome Stadium.

With six matches from three high school tournaments happening simultaneously in the early stages, Naselle played both its games in the center of the arena amid a

booming roar of shouts and applause echoing around the dome.

As in prior years, the 1B tournament highlighted strong teams from Eastern Washington. Oakesdale breezed to the final where it defeated Pomeroy, the defending champions 22-25, 25-19, 25-16, 25-22. Since the 1B division was created 10 years ago, the two teams have been champions six times.

In Naselle's first game, No. 2-ranked Oakesdale established early momentum in the first and third sets and the Comets just couldn't catch up the lost points.

In the first set, the Nighthawks had 8 points on the board before Naselle senior Kendra Leeland scored with a kill. Junior Kyrin Jacot made a diving dig during one rally, but Naselle still lost the point.

Junior Ellie Chapman made a diving dig and a spectacular point when the ball rolled over the net and hit the court to make it 18-9 to Oakesdale. But the Nighthawks stretched their lead, thanks to some resolute blocking. A good return from senior Haley Footh and a kill by Leeland couldn't win the set.

In the second set, Amelia Tutu'u tipped the ball over

the net to add an early point. Fellow junior Tayler Ford, back from injury, made another clever tip-over to bring the scores closer early on then made a diving dig. Senior Taylor Eaton blocked well at the net and Chapman served two aces which tied the score at 17-17.

Then Eaton set up Tutu'u for a kill. Leeland tied the scores at 22-22 with a block as her grandmother, Kaye Weimer, at courtside, yelled, "One more! One more!"

The set ended 26-24 after long rallies that Naselle lost.

The third saw Oakesdale score nine points before Naselle responded. Tutu'u and Eaton combined well to get a difficult ball back over the net, then Chapman leaped for a decisive kill and punched the air with joy.

The Nighthawks gathered momentum, though, and added to their points. Leeland replied with a kill and a cleverly placed soft shot that hit the floor. Eaton served an ace to bring the Comets up to 10, but it was their last point earned in the first-round game.

Head Coach Kim Eaton was disappointed. "They were not able to show how they are capable of playing," she said. "We spent a lot of time on

our heels playing defense and we didn't play a lot of our offense."

The consolation bracket game followed Neah Bay's loss to Sunnyside Christian in three close sets.

The Red Devils took an 11-1 lead in the first set before Naselle came back with solid work at the net by Tutu'u and an ace by Ford. Footh had a kill and an ace to add points and junior Ashley Muessig blasted a ball over the net which Neah Bay could not return. Two kills by Chapman and one full-length diving dig brought the score to 20-18. Naselle added points with Eaton serving an ace. The Comets were briefly ahead, then tied at 24-24 until they lost a long rally then hit a kill attempt into the net.

The Comets led in the early stages of the second set, went behind and caught up, thanks in part to an ace by Jacot. A good combination play between Eaton and Chapman put them ahead 15-16, and the score went back and forth. The Comets' best play of the tournament was next with Leeland rescuing the ball from the back court to Eaton who set for Tutu'u to hit the ball over to make the score 22-19 in their favor. However, the Red Dev-

NASELLE SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS

(awarded by the officials):
vs. Oakesdale: Taylor Gudmundsen, freshman
vs. Neah Bay: Ashley Muessig, junior.

2015 CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Oakesdale
- Pomeroy
- Christian Faith, Federal Way
- Mount Vernon Christian
- Almira Coulee Hartine
- Sunnyside Christian
- Quilcene
- Odessa-Harrington

ils regrouped with some good blocking and a missed Comet serve gave them the set.

The third began promisingly with an ace served by senior Emma Fauver. The teams traded points and the lead all the way up to 18-18 when a couple of Comet players' returns bounced out. Leeland made a kill to reduce the deficit to 23-21 and Eaton's next serve earned a point when Neah Bay could not return it. A lost opportunity gave the ball back to the Red Devils for match point and a diving effort by Leeland could not return the ball.

As the winners celebrated, the Naselle bench gathered into a tearful group hug before forming the traditional handshake line.

Afterward, Naselle Coach Eaton told her players to focus on the successful season, rather than the two state losses.

"Their state play was not what we have seen them do — they have played better," she said. "But they prepared well. . . . They went through league

undefeated, and were district champions.

"I am proud of the girls for what they have done as a team for all the season."

The second loss ended the high school playing careers of four Naselle seniors, Fauver, Footh, and captains Leeland and Taylor Eaton. They have played volleyball together since seventh grade.

"We all worked hard and achieved our goals together," said Fauver. "We played as a team and as a family."

Footh agreed. "I am proud of us because we gave our all," she said. "We are so much more of a team this year than we have ever been before. We really trust our teammates to have our backs as we have their backs."

Amid the tears and hugs outside the locker room, junior Raja Estes focused on the positive. "We made it to state, we won league and we were district champions," she said. "We are winners, in my opinion."

I Am Thankful
This is the time of year when we reflect on our lives and our blessings

There are many that list something they are thankful for each day in November on social media.

On Thanksgiving Day, The Daily Astorian will dedicate a full page in our classified section to the community, allowing a time to share something you are thankful for.

There is a 20 word maximum for each submission. This allows more people to participate.

How to participate:
email your "I am thankful" to- hlarkins@dailyastorian.com
or mail to- The Daily Astorian, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103,
Attn: Holly Larkins
Deadline: November 20th at 5pm.

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