

Gulls top Astoria in Holiday Classic final

By Gary Henley
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The Seaside Gulls were just tuning up Saturday night, Dec. 19, on their home floor.

Tuning up their game, tuning up for the Cowapa League season, and tuning up for whatever team picture they may be posing for March 12.

Because from the looks of it, the Gulls could be reaching some lofty heights come state tournament time.

It's still early in the season, but Seaside was hitting on all cylinders late Saturday, in a 61-40 win over Astoria in the boys' title game of the annual Seaside Holiday Classic.

The Fishermen are expected to be the main challenger for the Gulls once Cowapa League play begins, Jan. 19.

"All our kids played well," said Seaside coach Bill Westerholm. "Astoria is going to be one of the top contenders in the state. They got off to a good start, and they were ready to play."

And Astoria held an early 14-8 lead, following a three-point play by Kyle Strange. Morgan Fruiht scored six of his team-high 14 points in the opening quarter to help the Fishermen to a 16-15 lead.

But the Gulls quickly found their quick game, quickened the pace and outscored Astoria 20-4 in the second period. Attikin Babb drained a pair of 3-pointers, and Jackson Januik added a third to highlight the rally.

Jaxson Smith scored 10 of his game-high 18 points in the first half.

The Gulls were knocking down shots from inside and outside (20-for-42 overall), from the 3-point line (5-of-12) and from the free throw line (16-for-21), as they maintained a 15- to 20-point lead for most of the second half.



The Seaside boys basketball team shows off the tournament bracket following Saturday's championship in the Holiday Classic.

Januik and Smith shared the tournament's MVP award.

It was Seaside's defense, however, that earned Westerholm's praise.

"We just did a good job defensively," he said. "(Fruiht) is a tough guy to defend, and Austin Eagon did a nice job defending him. And Zach Marston did well in getting out and defending Astoria's pick and roll stuff. It was our best defensive effort we've had all season."

The victory came almost one year to the day that the Gulls lost the championship game of the 2014 tournament, when Madras rallied for a 45-41 win.

"Our kids are more mature and they respond to adversity a lot better," Westerholm said.

And despite having two more league games with Astoria, the Gulls weren't holding anything back.

"What you saw from us is just what you're going to get," he said. "We like to full-court press and speed up the game."

In Friday's semifinal round, the Gulls trailed Sisters 15-11 early in the second quarter, then caught fire and led 25-17 at halftime.

Sisters put up a brief rally in the third period, pulling to within 30-24, but Hunter Thompson drilled a 3-pointer at the buzzer to end the third, and the Gulls finished the game with a 21-8 run.

Januik had 15 points and Smith added 12.

Astoria defeated Newport 54-38 in the other semifinal.

Lady Gulls take third

The shocker of the tournament came Friday night in the girls' semifinals, where Class 2A Lost River held on for a 30-28 upset win over Seaside, ending the Gulls' hopes for a third-straight Classic title.

Seaside bounced back, however, in Saturday's third-place game, where the Gulls pounded Newport 63-25.

After a poor shooting night in Friday's loss, Sea-

side came out hot against the Cubs and led 27-6 after one quarter.

A 10-2 run in the second period had the Gulls ahead 37-8 at halftime.

Seaside was 25-for-48 on two-point field goals. Tournament MVP Maddi Utti was 11-of-15 from the field and finished with 25 points, to go with six assists, four rebounds and four steals.

The Gulls provided plenty of support with balanced scoring from Jetta Ideue and Sydney Villegas (eight points each), with seven points and five assists from Whitney Westerholm. Seaside had 14 team steals.

Madras 65, Astoria 58

Call it a "hard-fought loss" for the Astoria girls basketball team Saturday afternoon.

The Lady Fishermen are vastly improved and played well enough to win Saturday's consolation final in the Seaside Holiday Classic

... but "vastly improved" doesn't always show up in the win column.

Madras rallied from a 15-point, third quarter deficit to beat Astoria, 65-58, to take fifth place in the Classic.

The Lady Fishermen looked great and played great, but a 16-0 run by the White Buffaloes midway through the second half — coupled with 17 second-half turnovers by Astoria — helped Madras score the victory.

The Lady Fish were running and gunning in the first half, forcing turnovers and hitting shot after shot (11-for-14 in the first quarter) to build a 23-11 lead.

Chloee Hunt highlighted a 13-0 Astoria run with a 3-pointer and two mid-range jump shots. Teammate Taylor Mickle scored all 10 of her points in the first half, which ended with Astoria holding a 35-24 lead.

Astoria's largest lead was 39-24, following scores by Hunt and Alexis Wallace to open the second half.



Seaside's Jaxson Smith, who shared tournament MVP honors with teammate Jackson Januik, goes up and under for two points in Saturday's win.

Madras senior Leah Suppah — scoreless in the first half — caught fire in the third quarter, hitting five 3-pointers. Sophomore teammate Lynden Harry finished with 23 points, 14 in the second half.

Despite sitting for much of the second half in foul trouble, Hunt poured in 27 points, with 12 rebounds. Wallace added 15 points and 11 boards.

With the Lady Fishermen leading 50-49 midway through the fourth quarter, Madras scored on a steal and layup by Harry, and another score by Kaliyah Iverson for a 53-50 lead.

With 1:44 left, Astoria was called for a foul, followed by a technical foul, and Madras pushed the lead to 55-50.

Astoria outrebounded Madras 35-24, with Hunt pulling down 12 rebounds,

Astoria bounced back from an opening round loss to Elma with a 61-37 win over Corbett in Friday morning's consolation game.

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