

Braves rally to beat Seaside, 44-37

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

HILLSBORO — The Seaside Lady Gulls had to be feeling pretty good midway through the first half of Friday's consolation semifinal game vs. Banks, in the Class 4A state girls basketball tournament.

Not only had the Gulls beaten the Braves four times in four games over the last two years (including a 29-point thumping just over a month ago), Seaside held a 17-6 lead early in the second quarter of Friday's state playoff.

But somewhere in the dimly lit gymnasium at Century High School, the Gulls lost their shooting touch, the lead, and ultimately the game, as their season came to a premature end.

A 10-0 run by Banks late in the first half put the Braves within striking distance at halftime, and they completed their comeback in the second half for a 44-37 win over the Gulls.

"Four times in a row that they got us, so we knew it was going to be tough," said Banks coach Brandon Bagley. "The last time we played they beat us by 29 at their place. But we saw some things that we could be successful with, and we felt like the way we've been playing lately, anything was possible."

And "anything" came true, as the Braves were finally able to beat Seaside. Their luck ran out, however, in Saturday's consolation final, in which Gladstone beat Banks, 54-31.

Sutherland — riding a 55-game win streak — won the 4A state championship for the second year in a row, with a 51-46 win over Henley Saturday night.

Seaside's season ends at 20-7 overall, which included losses to both Henley and Sutherland.

After winning the Cowapa League title and racking up a combined 3-1 record against Valley Catholic and Banks in the regular season, the Gulls were 0-2 against the same two teams in the state tournament, losing to the Valiants in a Thursday quarterfinal and to the Braves Friday.

Banks was coming off a record-setting loss to Henley in the quarterfinals, where the Hornets beat the Braves 39-18 (the 18 points set a new 4A tournament record for fewest points in a game).

The Gulls did not fare much better in the quarterfinals, losing to Valley Catholic 61-30.

"Unfortunately, we had our two worst games of the season, back-to-back," said Seaside coach Wally Hamer, whose team had not scored under 40 points in a game since Jan. 6, then were held to 30 and 37 points, respectively, in the state tournament.

"It's no excuse. We just didn't play as well as we would have liked. That was disappointing," he said, adding, "we're really proud of the kids for the season. They did a good job."

And the Gulls appeared to be well on their way to their 21st win of the year, as Whitney Westerholm, Haylee Dundas and Sydney Villegas all knocked down jump shots, with Maddi Utti and Dundas both hitting 3-pointers in the closing minute of the first quarter for a 13-4 lead.

Utti scored twice on break-aways following turnovers for the 17-6 advantage. From there, Banks outscored Seaside 38-20 the remainder of the game.

Banks senior Madison Soper hit back-to-back 3-pointers off the bench late in the second quarter, capping a 10-0 run.

The Braves rode the momentum wave into the third period, where junior Megan Bunn made four straight free throws to start the quarter, Cassie Streblov and Jojo Wren both hit jump shots, and Soper scored on an offensive rebound and a minute later made her third 3-point to give Banks a 29-26 lead.



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian

The Banks Braves put the clamps on Seaside's Maddi Utti and the Seagulls to overcome a first-half deficit and take control of the game in the second.



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian

From left, Seaside's Jetta Ideue, Alie Zagata, Paige Ideue, Jesse Trott, and Allison Bussert carry their warm-ups and water bottles off the court following a 44-37 season-ending loss to the Banks Braves during consolation play in the state tournament Friday at Century High School.



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian

After picking up her dribble, Seaside's Whitney Westerholm tries to create some breathing room and ward off Banks' defender Ariel Slifka.



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian

Seaside's Sydney Villegas applies some on-the-ball pressure in the back court against Banks as the Seagulls look to turn defense into offense.

Anna Klein scored on a layup with 1:02 left in the third, which sparked a 7-0 run for the Braves.

Seaside rallied midway through the final period, as Utti made four straight free throws and Paige Ideue hit a 3-pointer that had the Gulls within 38-36 with three minutes left.

But Banks would close by making 6-of-10 free throws in the final 2:13 to seal the win, while Seaside managed just one point in the final 2:30.

Bunn made just one field goal, but was 8-for-8 from the free throw line and pulled down nine rebounds for the Braves, while Soper finished with a team-high 11 points.

Utti poured in a game-high 15 points with five steals and

four assists, but the Gulls struggled from the field for the second straight day.

After shooting 26 percent (12-of-46) against Valley Catholic, the Gulls finished 12-for-41 (29 percent) in Friday's loss.

Seaside was a combined 6-for-34 from the 3-point line in the two games.

Both coaches agreed that the turning point came with the 10-0 run by the Braves in the second quarter.

"It seemed like the end of the second quarter, the last three or four minutes," Hamer said. "(Soper) kept them in the game. And then we got stagnant on offense and just didn't score."

Bagley said, "Madison Soper's two 3-pointers were huge

for us. It got our momentum going. We've been struggling to score lately, so getting those two 3-pointers was huge.

"It's the biggest win we've had in a while," he said. "Megan Bunn played on the last team that made it to the final site, but other than that, this is the biggest game that these girls have been in."

"Megan hurt her ankle on Tuesday and Anna Klein hurt her shoulder (Thursday), and they both came out and battled," Bagley said. "It just shows the heart that these girls have."

Seaside loses just three seniors, Allison Bussert, Dundas and Shelby Miller.

"We appreciate them so much, because they worked really, really hard," Hamer said.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE

MONDAY

Baseball — Astoria at Gladstone, 5 p.m.; Nestucca at Warrenton, 4:30 p.m.; Clatskanie at Knappa, 4:30 p.m.

Softball — Gladstone at Astoria, 5 p.m.; Ilwaco at Warrenton, 4:30 p.m.; Clatskanie at Knappa, 4:30 p.m.

TUESDAY

Baseball — Seaside at Molalla, 4:30 p.m.

Track — Lewis & Clark League Ice-Breaker, at Clatskanie, 3:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Baseball — Corbett at Astoria, 4:30 p.m.

THURSDAY

Softball — Estacada at Astoria, 4 p.m.; Molalla at Seaside, 5 p.m.

Track — Astoria/Warrenton at Seaside, 3:30 p.m.

Girls Golf — Astoria at Scappoose, 12:30 p.m.

FRIDAY

Baseball — Seaside Tournament: Woodburn vs. Warrenton, 1:30 p.m.; Estacada vs. Seaside, 3:45 p.m.

Softball — Tillamook at Warrenton (2), 3:30 p.m.; Knappa at Willamina, 4:30 p.m.

Boys Golf — Seaside at The Dalles Invitational, 10 a.m.

SATURDAY

Baseball — Seaside Tournament: Hoquiam vs. Warrenton, 12:15 p.m.; Woodburn vs. Seaside, 2:30 p.m.

SUNDAY

Baseball — Seaside Tournament: Hockinson vs. Warrenton, 2:30 p.m.; Fort Vancouver vs. Seaside, 4:45 p.m.

BASKETBALL

HIGH SCHOOLS

Girls

Class 4A State Tournament

Banks 44, Seaside 37

BANKS (18-11): Madison Soper 4-6 0-0 11; Megan Bunn 1-9 8-8 10; Ariel Slifka 2-5 2-2 6; Jojo Wren 2-4 1-2 5; Cassie Streblov 1-3 2-2 4; Hannah VanDomelen 0-1 4-9 4; Anna Klein 2-3 0-1 4; Karlie Gerlinger 0-1 0-0 0; Jamie Borchers 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 12-33 17-24 44.

SEASIDE (20-7): Maddi Utti 5-12 4-6 15; Haylee Dundas 2-9 4-6 10; Whitney Westerholm 2-12 0-0 4;

Sydney Villegas 1-1 1-2 3; Paige Ideue 1-2 0-0 3; Allison Bussert 1-4 0-0 2; Brittany West 0-1 0-0 0; Shelby Miller 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 12-41 9-14 37.

Banks 4 12 15 13-44

Seaside 13 8 6 10-37

3-Point Goals: Banks 3-7 (Soper 3); Seaside 4-17 (Dundas 2-5; P.Ideue, Utti). **Fouled out:** None. **Rebounds:** Banks 30 (Bunn 9); Seaside 26 (Utti 5, Villegas 5). **Assists:** Banks 10 (Soper 2, Slifka 2, Streblov 2, VanDomelen 2, Bunn 2); Seaside 9 (Utti 4). **Fouls:** Banks 13, Seaside 18. **Attendance:** 350.

Players of the Game: Megan Bunn, Banks; Maddi Utti, Seaside.

Scores

Class 4A State Tournament

Girls

Championship

Sutherland 51, Henley 46

Third Place

Cascade 47, Valley Catholic 34

Fourth Place

Gladstone 54, Banks 31

Boys

Championship

Scappoose 51, North Marion 48

Third Place

North Bend 47, Philomath 40

Fourth Place

Cascade 51, Madras 49