

Seaside's senior class ready for big year

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

It's the "last lap" around the track, so to speak, for a very talented senior class of athletes at Seaside.

The Gulls enter the 2015 track season with a good mix of youth and experience, as the "new era" athletes prepare to replace the old guard.

But the seniors aren't finished yet.

Several senior athletes have high hopes, and are set to finish their prep careers in Eugene, May 22 and 23.

"Danielle, Kelly, Allison, Charlotte, Amber Nofield — that group is very strong," said Seaside coach Jeff Kilday, referring to Danielle and Kelly Willyard, Allison Kilday and Charlotte Blakesley.

Those athletes were already winning events in the early season meets.

"Behind that, we have Josie Smith, Lizzy Barnes, and junior Bridgette Malone was third in the hurdles last year," coach Kilday said. "We should have good relays, and we'll compete. The girls have a very strong senior class, with a couple real good juniors and a sophomore — it should be a great team."

Overall, he said, "our numbers are down a little. Not very many freshmen this year. We have 63 altogether, a little bit lower than we normally have, but I think they're all great athletes."

For the Seaside boys, "We lost a couple great distance runners, but we have a sophomore and junior class that's working its way up," Kilday said. "They're a lot stronger. The boys should compete this year; with



Seaside's Allison Kilday clears a hurdle during the 100-meter hurdles event at the Seaside track meet March 19. Kilday placed first among girls in the event.

JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

the girls it's about numbers."

Valley Catholic has joined the Cowapa League, and the Valiant boys "will make a huge difference," Kilday said. "They have a great team

— they won the (3A) state meet last year."

But make no mistake — the Gulls will be scoring lots of points in the big meets.

"We have some new blood in there for the distance team — a lot of 400-meter runners — so I think our 4x4 team will be good," Kilday said. "Taylor (Barnes), Juneau (Mey-

er), maybe Rafi (Sibony), Marshal (Ferre) ... some great runners. Jackson (Januik) and Hunter (Thompson) will also be there. From the 400 on, we look very strong."

New coaches take over Seaside softball

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The ups and downs of Seaside softball. Unfortunately for the Gulls, it's been mostly down for the last decade.

After 0-15 league seasons in 2007, 2009 and 2012, Seaside softball appeared to be on its way back up following a 4-11 record in 2013.

But last year, it was back to 0-15.

The Lady Gulls have changed coaches, as Jon Hotchkiss and Bill Westerholm take over.

Even with a couple of freshmen pitchers, the new-look Lady Gulls believe they can compete in the new-look Cowapa.

"I think we'll be competitive this year," Westerholm said. "In the past, it just seemed like they were one player short, or one position short. We have 11 or 12 girls who can fill a position and push each other to get better."

THE LADY GULLS

The coaches are still figuring out who will play where, but the Gulls should have a good starting nine when the lineup is complete.

The list already includes four all-league returners: Senior catcher Allison Bussert; junior center fielder Paige Ideue; junior infielder Brittany West and sophomore Emma Dutcher.

And the Gulls have talented, well-qualified players elsewhere, including senior infielders Brianna Babbitt and Shelby Miller; and junior shortstop Whitney Westerholm.

The sophomores include Lucy Bodner, Mica Parnell and Sydney Villegas, with freshmen pitchers Jetta Ideue and Sequoia Shand, along with freshman infielder/outfielder Bryre Babbitt.

"Jetta (Ideue) has seen a



Seaside's Jetta Ideue, No. 3, pitches against Ilwaco during their softball game at Broadway Field March 24.

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SEASIDE SOFTBALL

Coaches: Jon Hotchkiss, Bill Westerholm, 1st year
2014: 5-20 (0-15 Cowapa)
All-League Losses: None
All-League Returners: Allison Bussert, Sr., Emma Dutcher, So., Paige Ideue, Jr., Brittany West, Jr.

lot of time on the mound," coach Westerholm said. "She's played a lot with this group, and she throws the ball well. The main thing will be to throw strikes and let your fielders do the work. And Bussert can be one of the better catchers in the league."

THE COWAPA

When your league record over the last eight years is just eight wins and 111 losses, the concern isn't with the top teams in the league.

"We'll just worry about ourselves," said coach Westerholm. "Banks is going to be strong because they've

got pitching, and they had a lot of youth players last year who saw time. Yamhill's out of the league, so that helps; the Scappoose softball program has been strong for the last four or five years, and they've got good pitching."

With that being said, Westerholm said, "I think we could fight for that third spot."

It's a change in the league lineup should provide some immediate relief for the Gulls, as Valley Catholic joins the Cowapa.

Before they went on their 15-game losing streak

in league play last year, the Gulls beat Valley Catholic 7-6 April 12, for their last win of the 2014 season.



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