



A sight that most hitters will fear in 2015: Facing Knappa lefty Chase Rusinovich.

GARY HENLEY — The Daily Astorian

Watch out! Loggers aim high

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

If there's one sure thing in Oregon high school baseball this season, it's the Knappa Loggers. They're going to score a lot of runs, win another league title and advance deep into the state playoffs. Guaranteed.

No Oregon team — at any level — scored more runs last season than the Loggers, who opened 2014 with a loss to Clatskanie, then won 28 in a row before a 3-2 loss to Weston-McEwen in the 2A state semifinals.

In those 28 wins, Knappa scored 414 runs (averaging nearly 15 per game), topping 20 runs eight times. The Loggers finished with 422 runs in 30 games. State champion Monroe was the next-closest, with 358 runs.

Knappa already has nonleague wins this season over 3A power Clatskanie and Monroe.

So it's all there for the taking for the Knappa Loggers, who have their best chance at winning a state title for the first time since 2010.

THE LOGGERS

The defending league champions were loaded with talent last year, and they've added even more to the lineup this season.

Senior Justin Dragoo is back in a Knappa uniform, and the Logger roster is full of athletic freshmen, en-

suring more league titles for at least the next four years.

"Some of the freshmen won't see the varsity field, but some will have a big role with the varsity," said Knappa coach Jeff Miller. "Mason Hoover, Reuben Cruz, Dale Takalo ... Colton Weirup has been outstanding and a huge plus. We have some really quality freshmen; it's more depth than we've had in a long time."

Nearly every one of the Knappa seniors is a potential all-state player, including Dragoo, Tyson Burnard, Andy Miller, Chase Rusinovich and Nate Truax.

Miller is slowly working himself back into shape, after offseason arm surgery and an ankle sprain in basketball.

"It's an unknown right now," said his coach and father, Jeff. "He's working hard and wants to play some role at some point. He will find a way to contribute. I highly doubt he will pitch, but I guess you never say never on anything."

KNAPPA BASEBALL

Coach: Jeff Miller, 14th year

2014: 28-2 (21-0 NWL)

State Playoffs: Defeated Lost River (25-1) and Portland Christian (5-3); lost state semifinal to Weston-McEwen (2-3).

All-League Losses: Austin Palek

All-League Returners: Tyson Burnard, Sr.; Noah Kinney, Jr.; Andy Miller, Sr.; Jason Miller, So.; Chase Rusinovich, Sr.; Nate Truax, Sr.

One thing is certain — no team is as strong as Knappa up the middle, with Truax behind the plate, Burnard in center field, a strong middle infield, and Rusinovich, one of the top pitchers in Class 2A.

Junior Noah Kinney is a three-year starter in the infield; with more all-league talent in the sophomore class — Austin Dragoo, Michal Goodman, Andrew Goozee and Jason Miller.

And even if Andy Miller does not pitch, the Loggers still have one of the deepest pitching staffs in the state.

"Michal Goodman will be in the mix; Dale Takalo will throw some innings; Colton Weirup, Mason Hoover can pitch; the younger Dragoo can pitch, and the we'll try to get some innings out of the older Dragoo," coach Miller said. "Reuben Cruz is a good pitcher; Andrew Goozee has shown some promise early. I tell them all when they come in, 'You're all pitchers.'"

THE NW LEAGUE

"Competitive," is how coach Miller describes Northwest League Baseball, 2015.

"There were very few seniors in our league last year," he said. "Some teams had no seniors on their roster. I expect a lot of competitive games, no matter who's playing. Faith Bible and Neah-Kah-Nie are off to great starts."

It may be competitive for second place, but don't expect the Loggers to give up the top spot.

While the rest of the league beats up on itself, Knappa could wrap up a league title by midseason, which would give the Loggers league championships in football, basketball and baseball.

The only team that gave Knappa a challenge in baseball last year was Portland Christian. The Loggers beat the Royals four times, three in league play and again in the state playoffs.

Portland Christian has moved on to the 3A level, leaving Faith Bible, Gaston, Neah-Kah-Nie, Nestucca, Portland Lutheran and Vernonia as the returners.

The Loggers outscored those six teams last season, 305-26. Needless to say, it will be a major upset if anybody beats Knappa in league play this year.

The battle for second place in league could be between Faith Bible, Neah-Kah-Nie and Portland Lutheran.



Daily Astorian File
Devin Lewis Allen is heading into the home stretch for another great season.

Knappa track team is on the young side

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

The Knappa Loggers enter the 2015 track season with one state champion, a second-year coach, and a very young roster.

Knappa's most recent meet was the Pacific League meet at Ilwaco, in which the Loggers competed against several small schools in Washington.

Coached by Brittany Ferguson, Knappa finished fifth out of five teams on the boys' side, and fourth in the girls' standings.

Individually, the Loggers have one returning state champion, as Devin Lewis Allen enters his senior season, after placing third in the 200 meters and winning the 400 meters in last year's state meet.

Allen won the 100 meters in the Pacific League meet, as well as the 400, showing that he will be the favorite to repeat in the Class 2A state meet in May.

Another positive from the early-season meet was junior Chris Montano, who won the long jump (18 feet, 11 inches) and took second in the triple jump (39-4 1/4).

The Knappa girls appear to be strong in the sprints and middle distance events, where sophomore Devin Vandergriff ran the lead leg in the winning 400-meter relay in last week's meet, teaming with Alisha Geisler, Meranda Godwin and Chelsea Sapp.

A state qualifier in the 400 last year (where she finished seventh in the final), Vandergriff also won the 400 in last week's meet in 1:04.81.

Vandergriff may also run the longer distance races, as she competed in the 800 and 1,600-meter races in the Pacific League meet.

Geisler took third in both the 100 and 200 meters, and is one of just two seniors on the Knappa roster.

THE LOGGERS

GIRLS

Alisha Geisler, Sr.
Meranda Godwin, So.
Sophia Hansen, Fr.
Mikayla Morton, Fr.
Chelsea Sapp, So.
Devin Vandergriff, So.

BOYS

Noah Bagnall, So.
Braedon Eltagonde, Fr.
Spencer Fulton, Fr.
Noah Gothro, So.
Cody Hobbs, So.
Devin Lewis Allen, Sr.
Chris Montano, Jr.
Samual Nauha, So.
Elijah Patterson, Jr.

Lady Loggers in search of a state playoff win

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

If Knappa Lady Logger softball is going to break the "state playoff jinx," this would be the year.

Over the last six years, Knappa is 6-for-6 in making the state playoffs — but the Loggers are 0-6 once they get there.

As they enter the 2015 season, the Loggers have the league's best pitcher (Pitcher of the Year Kacie Cameron), with experienced seniors and a load of promising, talented newcomers.

THE LOGGERS

True, the Lady Loggers lost four all-league players (Maddy Pitts, Iris Rankin, Jasmine Reynolds, Haley Rubus) — but they've got plenty back to be competitive.

Stacey Aho and Cameron



Daily Astorian File

Knappa senior Kacie Cameron, left, will be throwing lots of strikes and scoring lots of runs for the Lady Loggers in 2015.

are in the senior year of their stellar careers, both having made all-league last season. Cameron has already looked dominating in the circle in nonleague games this season.

The only other returning senior on the roster is Alyson Olheiser.

After that, the Loggers get very young, in a hurry.

Chloe Little is the only junior, while the sophomore class includes returners Alisha Murphy, Hailey Murray and Emilee Olson, with newcomers Desiree Andrade and Ellie Smith.

KNAPPA SOFTBALL

Coach: James Nichols, 3rd year

2014: 18-10 (9-6 NWL)

State Playoffs: Lost at Bonanza, 3-6

All-League Losses: Maddy Pitts, Iris Rankin, Jasmine Reynolds, Haley Rubus

All-League Returners: Stacey Aho, Sr.; Kacie Cameron, Sr.

The rest of the roster is made up of freshmen, eight to be exact: Ryain Killion, Jaden Miethe, Mikayla Rethati, McKailyn Rogers, Mackenzie Strain, Emma Taggart, Kaitlyn Truax and Paris Vanderburg.

THE NW LEAGUE

At one point last year, the Lady Loggers appeared headed for a certain Northwest League championship, as they opened league play with a 7-1 record.

After a 13-0 win over sec-

ond-place Vernonia in a crucial league showdown, Knappa was 8-2.

But Vernonia bounced back with two wins over Knappa, and Knappa lost five of its last six league games. Vernonia went on to win the league title with a 13-2 record to Knappa's 9-6.

Finishing in the top three in the league standings should be no problem for Knappa this year, especially with Portland Christian now out of the league, which is down to five teams.

Go Loggers!

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