

Astoria's Hunt signs with Evergreen

The Daily Astorian

Her mom was a Duck, and now Astoria's Chloe Hunt will be a "Geoduck," as in, the Evergreen State College Geoducks.

Hunt, a senior at Astoria High School, signed a letter-of-intent last week to play volleyball next year at Evergreen, a public liberal arts and sciences college in Olympia, Washington. Hunt signed her letter at a school pep assembly Friday.

Hunt's mom — and volleyball coach — Angee (Henderson) Hunt, played volleyball at the University of Oregon from 1991 to 1994.

She posted on Facebook, "So proud of what (Chloe) has accomplished and looking forward to watching her begin the next chapter."

The Geoducks are coached by Angela Spoja, a three-time NWAACC Coach of the Year. Evergreen was 5-15 in the Cascade Conference last season, 5-20 overall.

The conference includes schools with other players from the Lower Columbia region, including Northwest Christian, whose roster includes Seaside graduates Danielle and Kelly Williard; and Multnomah College, with Kayti Nelson of Naselle.



Submitted Photo

Astoria senior Chloe Hunt signed her letter-of-intent last week during a pep assembly at Astoria High School. Parents Angee and Chris stand behind her at the signing.

Tide Turner: Gutsy play helps Alabama get past Clemson, 45-40

Onside kick a bold move from Saban

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

GLENDAL, Ariz. — The last step toward making Alabama's run of championships under Nick Saban the greatest in college football history was the toughest.

The Crimson Tide needed all its power and speed. It needed all its talent and steely resolve. When that alone couldn't do it, it was up to one gutsy trick to help win the fourth national title of the Saban dynasty.

Derrick Henry, O.J. Howard and Kenyan Drake hit No. 1 Clemson with long touchdowns, and No. 2 Alabama outlasted the dynamic play Deshaun Watson to win the College Football Playoff championship 45-40 on Monday night.

The Crimson Tide (14-1) won its three previous championship game appearances in runaway fashion. This game was an instant classic — a relief for fans who sat through the blowouts that turned the New Year's Six lineup into a dud.

It finally broke open on perhaps the boldest call of Saban's career.

With 10:34 left in the fourth quarter and Alabama having just tied the game at 24-24, Saban took a gamble to try to keep the ball away from Watson. He called for an onside kick called Pop Kick from Adam Griffith and Alabama defensive back Marlon Humphrey caught it over the shoulder at midfield.

Tide turned.

"It was tough. It really was," said Saban, who now has more national titles than every other coach but Bear Bryant, the man who first made Alabama synonymous with college football greatness.



Butch Dill/AP Photo

Alabama running back Kenyan Drake (17) returns a kick off for a touchdown during the second half of the NCAA college football playoff championship game against Clemson on Monday in Glendale, Ariz. Alabama won 45-40.

"I made the decision to do it because the score was (tied) and we were tired on defense and weren't doing a great job of getting them stopped and felt like if we didn't do something or take a chance to change the momentum of the game that we wouldn't have a chance to win," Saban said.

Moments later, Alabama took back the lead for good. For the second time, Clemson (14-1) lost track of the tight end Howard in coverage and Jake Coker hit him in stride deep for a 51-yard touchdown to make it 31-24 with 9:45 left.

Clemson and Watson proved to be every bit Alabama's equal. The Tigers just kept coming.

Watson led Clemson to a field goal to make it 31-27, and boom! Another Alabama big play. Drake broke free and streaked down the sideline for a 95-yard kickoff return touchdown, diving the last 5 yards to the pylon.

Watson threw his third

touchdown pass to make it 38-33 with 4:40 left, and then Alabama went back to its workhorse Heisman Trophy winner. Henry plunged into the end zone for his third touchdown of the game to make it 45-33 with 1:07 left.

"We stand toe-to-toe with everybody in the country," coach Dabo Swinney said. "This program doesn't take a backseat to anybody."

Watson threw another touchdown pass to cap a wild 40-point fourth quarter, but would not get another chance. Clemson's onside kick went out of bounds. Coker took a knee and after a two-year drought that felt like eternity in Tuscaloosa, Alabama was back on top.

After a loss to Ole Miss in mid-September, there were doubters. Saban used them to fuel his team.

"There weren't many people earlier in the year who thought they could do it," he said.

The Crimson Tide became the second team in college

football's poll era, dating back to 1936, to win four titles in seven seasons.

Alabama joins Notre Dame, which won four titles from 1943-49, but those Fighting Irish never even played in bowl games, nevertheless two playoff games. For Saban, it is his fifth national championship — four in his nine seasons at Alabama — leaving him only one short of Bryant for the most titles in history.

Watson gave the Tide all it could handle, throwing for 405 yards and four touchdowns, and conjured up memories of Vince Young's miraculous performance for Texas in the 2006 Rose Bowl that derailed Southern California's dynasty.

The sophomore, who finished third in the Heisman Trophy voting, had 478 total yards against a loaded Tide defense and bested Young's 467 yards against the Trojans. But Watson couldn't finish the job the way Young did in Pasadena, California, and win the national title.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE

TODAY

Girls Basketball — Astoria at Molalla, 7 p.m.; Estacada at Seaside, 5:30 p.m.; Warrenton at Rainier, 6 p.m.; Knappa at City Christian, 6 p.m.; Falls City at Jewell, 5:30 p.m.; North Beach at Ilwaco, 7 p.m.

Boys Basketball — Molalla at Astoria, 7 p.m.; Estacada at Seaside, 8 p.m.; Warrenton at Rainier, 7:45 p.m.; Knappa at City Christian, 8 p.m.; Falls City at Jewell, 7 p.m.; North Beach at Ilwaco, 5:45 p.m.

Wrestling — Knappa at Vernonia, TBA

WEDNESDAY

Wrestling — Seaside/Scappoose at Astoria, 5:30 p.m.

THURSDAY

Girls Basketball — Faith Bible at Knappa, 6 p.m.; Ilwaco at Rainier, 7 p.m.

Boys Basketball

— Faith Bible at Knappa, 8 p.m.; Ilwaco at Rainier, 5:45 p.m.

Swimming

— Valley Catholic at Astoria, 4 p.m.

FRIDAY

Girls Basketball — Astoria at Yamhill-Carlton, 6 p.m.; Seaside at North Marion, 5:30 p.m.; Clatskanie at Warrenton, 6 p.m.; Jewell at St. John Bosco, 5:30 p.m.

Boys Basketball — Astoria at Yamhill-Carlton, 7 p.m.; Seaside at North Marion, 7:15 p.m.; Clatskanie at Warrenton, 7:45 p.m.; Jewell at St. John Bosco, 7 p.m.

Wrestling — Oregon Classic, at Redmond, 10 a.m.

SATURDAY

Girls Basketball — Nestucca at Knappa, 4 p.m.

Boys Basketball — Nestucca at Knappa, 6 p.m.

Wrestling — Oregon Classic, at Redmond, 10 a.m.

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