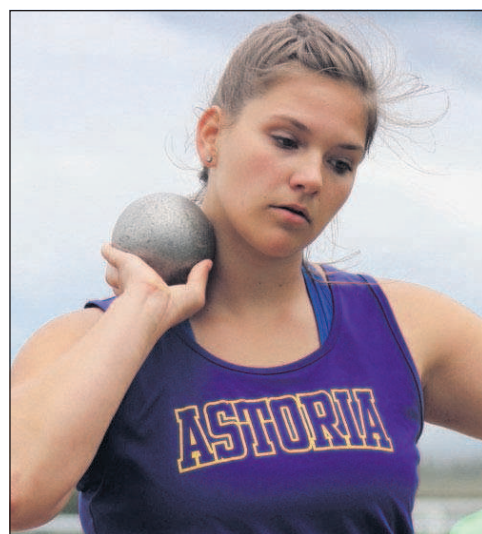




Astoria's Kaylee Mitchell competed in the OSAA 2015 Track and Field State Championships.



Darian Hageman competed in multiple events at last year's OSAA Track and Field State Championships.



Senior Halie Korff returns as a state-placer in the discus, shot put and javelin.

Photos by Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Astoria girls looking to make track and field history

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

At the very least, the Astoria girls track team will be a state title contender. If everyone remains healthy (and even if they don't), the Lady Fishermen will be setting school records all season, and scoring points at the state meet that haven't been seen for years.

Scenario No. 2 sounds better, and a LOT more realistic.

In all likelihood, the Astoria girls track team will be posing with another state championship trophy on the infield of Hayward Field in Eugene, the afternoon of May 21.

The Lady Fishermen are the big favorites to repeat as the Class 4A state champs. The only question is: How many points will they score? Astoria could be racking up historic numbers at Historic Hayward.

The target number will be 151 — the points scored by the Summit girls in last year's 5A meet. If Astoria can't reach that, then it's 87.5 — the record for the most points in a state meet at the 4A level (Philomath girls, 2010).

Either way, "their ability is somewhat limitless," Astoria coach Garrett Parks said. "It's a great group of girls, first and foremost. They're incredibly coachable, and they put a lot of time in during the off-season."

"At this point, the name of the game is just keeping them healthy and progressing."

AHS GIRLS

It's no secret where the Lady Fish will score most of their points.

The No. 1 producer will be sophomore Darian Hageman, a

converted softball player who competed in track for the first time last year, and finished as the state triple jump champion, ahead of six seniors.

If she's healthy, Hageman could be unbeatable this season. She was already setting unofficial school records in the indoor season, and is ranked No. 1 in the state in the high jump, long jump and triple jump.

Kaylee Mitchell returns for her sophomore season, when it was first thought she would just have one year at Astoria.

Instead, Mitchell gives Astoria state title points in any event she decides to run. She is ranked No. 1 in the 800 meters, after placing second in both the 800 and 1,500 at state (and helping the 400-meter relay to second) in 2015.

The sprints are covered with the Cummings sisters, Natalie and freshman Gracie, who is No. 2 in the state in the 200 meters. Natalie placed fourth at state in the 100 (top three were seniors), fifth in the 200 (top four were seniors).

Basically, every area on the track is covered, with state champion-caliber athletes in all the throwing and jumping events.

Said Parks, "We have slots across the board that are looking pretty strong."

Astoria's 400-meter relay of Victoria Kee, Mitchell and the Cummings sisters is also ranked No. 1.

Kee and freshmen Andrea Harris and Nara Van De Grift are set to score big points in the hurdles.

One of the few seniors is Halie Korff, returning state placer in the discus (2nd), shot put (7th) and javelin (3rd).

The throws are even stronger, with the addition of junior Skadi Freyr, the No. 1-ranked shot putter in the state.

Freyr and Korff are both ranked in the top three statewide in the discus and shot put.

If that wasn't enough, senior Daisy Gayral (currently sixth in state in the long and triple jump), sophomore Taylor Cosner (throws) and junior Shrida Sharma are capable of scoring points in the big meets.

In short — it's going to take a major upset for anyone to finish ahead of the Astoria girls at state.

AHS BOYS

For the Astoria boys, "we're still trying to figure out who's who," Parks said. "We have a large number of first-year track kids. We have some senior boys (Bronson Holthusen, Chris Williams) who kind of came out of nowhere, which is great."

Senior shot-putter Zander Arnold is ranked third in state, and sophomore Tim Barnett is seventh.

"Our boys are improving by leaps and bounds. Our throwers are holding on strong in most areas; the sprinters are improving; and Lucas (Caruana) is obviously a strong athlete," after placing fourth in the state 800 final last year.

"There's all kinds of talent there, we just need to learn how to develop it."

Prediction: A league title for the Astoria girls is pretty much a given. If everyone stays healthy for the Lady Fishermen, they're the favorites at state as well. Year 2 of the Astoria track dynasty is underway. **State Champions.**



Lucas Caruana competed in the 800 meter race in last year's OSAA Track and Field State Championships.

Junior takes over Astoria softball

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

It's Junior's team now, as Kent Israel Jr., takes over the coaching reigns of Astoria High School softball. Lou Marconeri stepped down as the head coach after seven years, but remains on the staff, along with Alan Barendse and Brittany Israel.

After assisting Marconeri in the past, coach Israel likes what he sees on the roster in his first year as coach.

The Lady Fish have several key returners, and are completely healthy for the first time in a few seasons.

THE COWAPA

It's the usuals, Israel said. And that usually includes Banks and Scappoose at the top. Both finished with 23-5 records last year. Banks lost to McLoughlin in the state championship game, after defeating Scappoose in the quarterfinals.

"Scappoose has three teams this year, and Banks has 28 kids, so they're both going to be good. They also both have new coaches (James Wise at Banks, CiJay Koler at Scappoose).

"Tillamook also has a new coach (co-coaches Erin



Astoria's Abi Danen watches a fly ball during the softball game against Corbett.

Photos by Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

ASTORIA SOFTBALL

Coach: Junior Israel, 1st year
2015: 6-19 (3-12 Cowapa)
Key Loss: Miranda Dietrichs
Key Returners: Mykka Abrahams, Rylee DeMander, Caitlyn Hougham, Taylor Mickle, Kelsey Wullger

Mathews and Kelsey Petty), so there were four new coaches at the meeting."

Israel wasn't on the coaching staff last season, and did not see much of Seaside, "but it sounds like they played fairly well," including a doubleheader sweep at Astoria. "Seaside's going to be good, and you never know what Tillamook has."

THE LADY FISH

The pitching staff is at full strength ... no leftover injuries from basketball, experience at every position ... on paper, Astoria softball is due for a breakthrough season.

Astoria has a nice 1-2-3 punch at pitcher, with senior Libby DiBartolomeo sharing time in the circle with junior Rylee DeMander and soph-

omore McKailyn Rogers (a transfer from Knappa).

The infield is also one of Astoria's strongest in years, with senior Kelsey Wullger at first (Wullger has already signed a letter-of-intent at Centralia College); DeMander at second, senior Taylor Mickle at short-stop and senior Mykka Abrahams at third.

Behind the plate is junior Caitlyn Hougham, one of the best catchers in the Cowapa.

The outfield features junior Abi Danen, Rogers in center and sophomore Sarah Lertora in right. Freshman Jenna Barendse has also seen action during the preseason.

"One of my goals is to see us play good defense," Israel said. "Libby will do most of the pitching, but I'm not going to run her into the ground. McKailyn throws good in practice, and we'll see what she can do. All I want her to do is throw strikes, and have DeMander come in for an inning or two and throw strikes."

"We have almost the whole team back, except for Miranda (Dietrichs)," Israel said. "And Rogers should fill in that spot in center."

"Libby will be in center when McKailyn is pitching. We'll try to keep the middle infield the way it is, with Mickle



Astoria's Libby DiBartolomeo scores during a softball game against Corbett. DiBartolomeo will share time in the circle with junior Rylee DeMander and sophomore McKailyn Rogers

and DeMander. Then we'll have Abrahams at third, Kelsey Wullger at first and Caitlyn catching. Abi Danen has a lock on left."

Prediction: How 'bout a breakthrough year for Lady

Fish softball? Through six games, Astoria was ranked No. 2 in the OSAA rankings. The Lady Fish are good enough this season for a top two finish in the Cowapa.

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