

# Knappa clinches another NWL title

By GARY HENLEY  
The Daily Astorian



Knappa's Jason Miller, No. 6, comes flying in to score another run in Tuesday's 13-0 NWL baseball victory.

Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian

KNAPPA— Tuesday's baseball game at Teevin Field ... looked pretty much like *all* the baseball games at Teevin Field.

The Knappa Loggers, needing only four at-bats to build a 13-run lead, pitching and playing flawless defense, stealing bases at will, crushing the ball to all areas of the field ...

In the end, the Vernonia Loggers didn't have a chance.

Knappa wrapped up yet another Northwest League title Tuesday, with a decisive 13-0 win. The hometown Loggers improve to 15-1 in league play, to Vernonia's 12-4. The two teams close out the league season Friday with a doubleheader at Vernonia.

Knappa has owned the league for the last four years, and they'll likely own it for the next four.

Over the last four years, Knappa is 74-2 in league play. And with most of Knappa's talent at the sophomore and junior levels, Vernonia's opportunity this week was likely the last chance for *any* team to unseat Knappa as league champs, for at least the next two years.

In Tuesday's win, sophomore pitcher Dale Takalo tossed a one-hit shutout, with four strikeouts and a walk. Junior shortstop Jason Miller fielded every ball hit his way, and a few that weren't; junior Michal Goodman did everything from crushing a ball to deep center field in the third inning, to laying down a perfect squeeze bunt in the fourth; and sophomore Reuben Cruz scored twice and is looking more and more like the league's Player of the Year with every game.

Last but not least, Knappa's lone senior — Noah Kinney — had two hits and drove in two more to earn the team's Player of the Game honors.

In short, it was Knappa baseball, like they always play it.

"It was a great day for Knappa baseball, and it was a great way to send Noah off that way," said Knappa coach Jeff Miller. "He's been so steady for us for four years. He's about the best kid on

anybody's team. He's not flashy, but he's automatic on every ball hit to him. He's only made three errors in four years. He's leaving quite a legacy here."

Vernonia had a slim chance of unseating Knappa as league champs, but they would have had to sweep this week's three-game series. After only five innings, the chase is over.

"The first game was important," Miller said. "We wanted to get it done here today, on our field."

"I know Vernonia wasn't at full strength, and that's unfortunate for them, but our kids played well," he said. "They get three starters back on Friday — their center fielder, shortstop and pitcher."

"I know they regret not having everybody here today, but to our kids' credit, they went out and played well," he said. "We didn't win it by default or anything. Whether they were at full strength or not, our kids went out and took it today. They smelled another league title."

Knappa's pitching and hitting is impressive enough, but it could ultimately be their defense that wins a second straight state title.

The only thing Knappa players dropped all day was the Gatorade bucket, over their coach's head after the game.

"We play to get better every day, and we're foolish enough to think we can win every time we go out. That's our goal," said Miller, who picked up career

coaching win No. 297 with the victory.

"It was a team effort, up and down the lineup. We produced, we ran some good bases, and forced (Vernonia) into mistakes."

### The game

It actually took Knappa three at-bats to jump on the scoreboard.

After a scoreless first and second, Goodman led off the third with a double to center.

He eventually scored on the first of three Vernonia errors in the inning, while Jason Miller reached base on a bunt.

A sacrifice fly from Takalo scored Colton Weirup, and Miller raced home on a grounder by Cruz. Vernonia committed two errors on the play, allowing Miller to score and Cruz to reach second.

Kinney capped the inning with an infield single that scored Cruz for a 4-0 lead.

Takalo retired the side in order in the top of the fourth, and Knappa went right back to work.

Goodman walked, Logan Bartlett reached on a bunt, Weirup's infield single scored Goodman, and Miller drove in a run on a base hit to left.

Moments later, Takalo's line drive up the middle struck Vernonia pitcher Brett Elliott, knocking him to the ground.

Weirup and Miller both circled the bases to score, and

Takalo reached second by the time Vernonia was able to field the ball.

Elliott remained in the game, but gave up a walk, a run-scoring single to Kinney, then hit Mason Hoover.

Elliott left the game, and Knappa scored four more runs — two on wild pitches, Hoover sprinted home on a squeeze bunt by Goodman, and Takalo was hit by a pitch with the bases full.

Three Vernonia pitchers walked six, while the Vernonia defense committed five errors.

On the Knappa side, "We played some really good defense today," Miller said. "Our defense has been solid all year. (Freshman) Shaun Lackey makes a tough catch in right field looking into the sun, and Jay (Miller) was a vacuum at short today. He saw a lot of tough grounders and made 'em look routine."

As for Takalo, "his location was good," coach Miller said. "He kept the ball down, mixed in a few curve balls — he didn't have to throw too many, but he located it. It wasn't his top velocity, but his location was so good, it didn't matter."

Vernonia's only hit was an infield single by Elliott in the first inning, when he was ruled safe on a close play at first.

"It's unfortunate for Dale, but it doesn't change what he did," Miller said. "Whatever you label it, he was outstanding today."

# Crook County Cowgirls ride off with golf title

The Daily Astorian

BANKS — The Crook County Cowgirls bested their first round score by 16 strokes, and made off with the Special District 1 Regional golf team title, Tuesday at Quail Valley Golf Course.

Crook County finished with a two-day total 758, ahead of second place Scappoose (787) and Valley Catholic (839).

Astoria had its sec-

ond-best score of the season in Tuesday's round (441) and finished fifth with a 904, followed by Seaside (923).

Oregon Episcopal's Jane Schlenorf took medalist honors with a final round 180.

Seaside's Caroline Kotton finished tied for 10th overall with a 203, with Astoria senior Chloe Hunt finishing her athletic career 14th with a 205.

Complete scores will be listed Thursday.

## BASEBALL ROUNDUP

### Fishermen belt three homers in win

Astoria only had six hits, but took advantage of six walks, five hit batters and three Tillamook errors to score a 13-4 win over the Cheesemakers, Tuesday at Aiken Field.

Kyle Strange, Carter Wallace and Tyler Lyngstad all had home runs for Astoria, which led 5-0 after two innings before giving up four runs in the top of the third.

The Fishermen answered with five runs in the bottom of the third to pull away, as pitchers Carter Wallace, Lyngstad and Jackson Arnsdorf combined to limit Tillamook to just four hits.

Jasyn Gohl was Astoria's only multiple hitter, going 2-for-4 with three RBIs and two runs scored.

### Braves blank the Gulls

SEASIDE — Jake Evans threw 99 pitches, and scattered four hits with five strikeouts to lead Banks to a 10-0 win at Seaside Tuesday.

The Braves had 10 hits off two Seaside pitchers, but only led 3-0 after six innings.

The floodgates finally opened for the Braves in the top of the seventh, when Banks scored seven runs to take a 10-run lead.

Dakota Bunn and Logan St. Marie had three hits apiece for the Braves, while Michael Lewis had two of Seaside's four hits. Alex Teubner and Lewis each had a double for the Gulls.

### Eagles top Warrenton, 8-3

WARRENTON — Untimely miscues by Warrenton led to a few early runs for Catlin Gabel, and the Eagles held on for an 8-3 win in a Lewis & Clark League baseball game Tuesday at Huddleston Field.

Catlin Gabel starter Wyatt Hoke scattered five hits with five strikeouts, while the Eagles built a 5-0 lead through three innings.

Matt Maynard had a home run for Catlin, which finished with nine hits.

Justice Watson and David Foster each went 3-for-4, while Hunter Wilson and Watson both had a double for Warrenton.

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