

Lady Fishermen go down swinging in playoff loss

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

It had all the markings of another classic comeback victory for the Astoria softball team. The only thing missing for the Lady Fishermen was the ‘W.’

For the most part, the Lady Fish did all the right things Wednesday afternoon. They made all the right plays and even outthit their playoff opponents at CMH Field.

But in the end, the late-game dramatics belonged to Hidden Valley, as the Mustangs posted a thrilling 4-3 playoff win on the artificial turf.

There was nothing artificial about the intensity of the game, however. The Class 4A Regional Play-in was a winner-to-state, loser-out contest.

And it came down to the bottom of the seventh, with two outs and the bases loaded in a one-run ball game.

Despite the loss, the Lady Fish took another big step forward this season as the program entered a new era.

“We beat the teams we were supposed to beat, and we played well against the tough teams,” said Astoria first-year coach Junior Israel.

“That senior group (starters Mykka Abrahams, Libby Di Bartolomeo and Taylor Mickie) is going to be tough replace,” he said. “They played together for so long. And you throw Rylee (DeMander) and Caitlyn (Hougham) in there with them, they’ve played a lot games together.”

And the last game came down to just a few key hits, key plays and key pitches.

More heartache for Astoria, because with few exceptions, the Lady Fish had the key hits, made the key plays and had a solid effort in the circle from Di Bartolomeo.

The Mustangs simply made the last play.



Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian
Astoria players welcome teammate Taylor Mickie, left, to home plate, following Mickie’s two-run homer in the third inning of Thursday’s softball loss to Hidden Valley.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE

TODAY

Baseball — 4A Regional Play-in: Sweet Home at Astoria, 4:30 p.m., Aiken Field

Track — OSAA State Meet, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBA

SATURDAY

Track — OSAA State Meet, Hayward Field, Eugene, TBA

SOFTBALL

Hidden Valley 4, Astoria 3

H.Valley	200	200	0—4	6 2
Astoria	002	010	0—3	7 0

W: Shayla Lawson (3 K's, 1

walk). L: Libby Di Bartolomeo (2 K's, 1 walk). **RBI:** HV, Coates 2, Sheely 2; Ast, Mickie 2, Lyngstad. **2B:** HV, Norberg. **3B:** HV, Coates. **HR:** Ast, Mickie. **LOB:** Hidden Valley 2, Astoria 4.

Clatskanie 5, Warrenton 4

Warrenton	110	020	0—4	6 1
Clatskanie	000	000	4—5	9 3

W: MacKenzie Mitchell (4 K's, 0 walks). L: Niqui Blodgett (5 K's, 4 walks). **RBI:** War, Blodgett, Armstrong; Cla, Warren 3, Jackson 2. **3B:** War, Blodgett; Cla, Strong. **HR:** Cla, Warren. **HBP:** War, Little, Kadera. **LOB:** Warrenton 2, Clatskanie 4.

With the bases loaded and two outs, pitcher Shayla Lawson fielded a grounder back to the circle, threw to the catcher, who stepped on the plate for the final force out to end the game.

“Coming into the game, if someone had told me (the Mustangs) would only score four runs, I would have taken that,” Israel said. “We just had way too many flyouts today.”

“We played a flawless game defensively, and we didn’t have a whole lot of missed opportunities,” he said.

Astoria finished with seven hits to Hidden Valley’s six, and played errorless ball in the

field (the Mustangs had two errors).

Making her final appearance at CMH, Di Bartolomeo settled down after a rough first inning and out-pitched Lawson.

Hidden Valley’s Jeydawn Coates had the first big hit of the game, a two-out triple that scored Annabelle Perdue and Brayanna Norberg for a quick 2-0 lead in the top of the first.

After Coates’s triple, Di Bartolomeo retired nine straight.

Meanwhile, the Fishermen tied the game (with an exclamation point), as Taylor Mickie blasted a two-run

homer to left field in the bottom of the third.

The Mustangs regained the lead in the top of the fourth, as Abby Contreras drew a two-out walk, Hailey Miller singled to center, and both runners scored on a single up the middle by Megan Sheely.

Astoria answered right back in the fifth, as Kelsey Wullger had a leadoff hit, and scored from second on a single to left by Lexi Lyngstad.

But that would be the final run for the Lady Fish.

Hougham had a leadoff single in the sixth, but was stranded when Lawson retired the next three in order; and Astoria loaded the bases in the bottom of the seventh on a two-out single by Lyngstad, a walk to Mickie and an infield hit by DeMander, before the final force out play.

“All I wanted to do was get Taylor to the plate again,” Israel said.

But after a quick timeout, Lawson proceeded to walk Mickie on five pitches.

“They had a conference, and I’m sure that’s what they said,” Israel said, referring to the walk. “Taylor is going to be irreplaceable. But how ’bout that Lyngstad? She’s tough, always coming up with hits in clutch spots.”

Astoria finishes 16-11 overall, while Hidden Valley (fourth place out of the Sky-line Conference), improves to 12-13 and advances to play next Wednesday in a first round state playoff game.

As for the Lady Fish, “We’re going to ‘young up’ next year,” Israel said. “But we’ve got three really good juniors (Abi Danen, DeMander, Hougham) returning, and I know we have a good freshmen group coming in.”

For Astoria softball and the building of a winning program, to be continued ...

Tiger rally drops Warrenton, 5-4

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

CLATSKANIE — The Warrenton softball team was three outs away from advancing to the Class 3A state playoffs.

But fate was not with the Lady Warriors Wednesday afternoon at Clatskanie, as the Tigers rallied with four runs in the bottom of the seventh for a 5-4 victory in the Lewis & Clark League playoff.

A single by Maris Jackson scored MacKenzie Mitchell and Olivia Warren with the winning runs, helping Clatskanie earn the L&C’s No. 2 seed to state.

Warrenton scored a run in each of the first two innings, and led 2-1 through four.

The Warriors tacked on two more runs in the top of the fifth, as Niqui Blodgett’s double scored Landree Miethe, and Lilly Thomas (running for Blodgett) scored on an error.

Warren had three RBIs on three hits for the Tigers, including a home run in the first inning.

Mitchell got the win in the circle, as she allowed six hits with four strikeouts and no walks.

Blodgett struck out five with four walks, while teammate Landree Miethe was 3-for-4 at the plate, to go with three stolen bases and two runs scored.

Miethe finished the season with a .613 batting average, a new school record

(breaking the .603 mark of her cousin, Mady Hanna).

With another year to go, Miethe also holds the record for career hits (114), over Gracie Smith (94); and has the season and career runs scored records (42 and 89, respectively) previously held by Shaena Stabler.

The Warriors finish 9-18 overall, while Clatskanie improves to 21-6.

“I don’t think many of us expected the improvement we saw over this season,” said Warrenton coach Staci Miethe. “This team was by far the most improved of my career. With limited experience and softball knowledge, they were able to make it to three outs away from going to the state tournament,” something only four other Warrenton softball teams have done in school history, “and all of those didn’t field eight underclassmen,” she said.

“This team is returning every starter,” said coach Miethe, whose team had four sophomores and four freshmen in the starting lineup.

“The two of the three others who saw significant playing time are also freshmen, so this team has a bright future.”

“It has been a pleasurable challenge to coach such a young group of girls in a tough league like ours,” she said, “but the challenge has made us all stronger, both mentally and physically and I am certain next season is going to bring great things for the program.”

‘ This team is returning every starter. ... So, this team has a bright future.’

Staci Miethe
Warrenton coach

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