

Submitted Photo

The Astoria baseball team following Friday's win at Cottage Grove. It's on to another Final Four for the Fishermen.

# Fishermen outlast the Lions in nine, 4-2

By GARY HENLEY  
The Daily Astorian

COTTAGE GROVE — The team that's become a mainstay in the Final Four of 4A baseball is back again for the seventh time in 11 years.

Astoria's eighth trip to the quarterfinals since 2006 was a winner Friday, as the Fishermen worked overtime for a 4-2 win at Cottage Grove.

Tyler Lyngstad belted a one-out, two-run homer in the top of the ninth inning to break a 2-2 tie, and teammate Fridtjof Fremstad retired the side in order in the bottom of the ninth to close it out.

And now the No. 12 seed Fishermen advance to another Final Four, where they will play at No. 1 seed Henley Tuesday. Astoria is the only team in the semifinals that's won both playoff games on the road.

"And we're not done traveling," said coach Dave Gasser, who has seen his share of playoff travels with Astoria.

"Jordan Poyer's senior year (2009), we went from Ontario to Hidden Valley," he said. "In Matthias Brause's senior year we went from Hidden Valley to La Grande. But I have never gone from Coos Bay to Cottage Grove to Klamath Falls.

And it's going to be about 150 degrees (Tuesday)." Speaking of which, Astoria's bats are heating up.

"We hit the ball well to every part of the field" against the Lions, Gasser said. "What we haven't been able to do most of the season, we're doing now. And it's a great time to arrive."

Astoria had nine hits in the win, although the Fishermen stranded 10 baserunners.

Meanwhile, pitchers Jackson Arnsdorf, Lyngstad and Fremstad combined for just four strikeouts on the mound, "so we had to make a lot of plays in the field, and we did," Gasser said of his defense, which handled 23-of-23 chances in the field, with no errors.

"We played extremely well defensively, and so did (the Lions)," he said.

The game was tied 2-2 after six innings, and remained that way through eight.

In the top of the ninth, Trey Hagemen led off with a double, Jordan Poyer sacrificed to Ryan Palek, and Lyngstad homered to the opposite field on a two-strike pitch.

Fremstad came in to pitch, and "just mowed 'em down," Gasser said, retiring the side on just six pitches.

Astoria's "pitch by committee" formula is working, so far.

"It's the best we can do," he said. "We have four kids who are quite confident, and we don't have a Matt Brause, a Jordan Poyer or a Conor Harbor. We are who we are."

"When you have to play 16 innings in 24 hours, you need to have four people," he said. "Jackson Arnsdorf threw beautifully. It was a super-nice performance by all three of our pitchers. The kids did a great job."

Astoria has played in half the state title games over the last 10 years, and with a win at Henley, the Fishermen would make their sixth championship game appearance in 11 years.

Tuesday's winner will play either Banks or Estacada in the state championship game Saturday at Volcanoes Stadium.

Astoria's current run is similar to their last state title in 2011, when the Fishermen won back-to-back games in Hillsboro over Henley and Sisters, won a semifinal game at Baker, then defeated North Valley in the state championship.

On the plus side, Gasser said of all the miles, "It's great memories, and the kids travel super-well."

# Knappa's 'Big D' shuts 'em down, 6-3

By GARY HENLEY  
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It's not the ideal way to win ball games, but hey, whatever works.

For the second time in three days, the Knappa Loggers fell behind, chipped away at the lead, brought in Dale Takalo, then shifted into "Cruz control" to score another state playoff victory.

This time, it was a 6-3 decision over North Douglas in a 2A state quarterfinal. And now it's on to yet another Final Four appearance for the Loggers, who host Monroe Tuesday.

Friday's playoff was moved from Knappa to a more water-resistant CMH Field, after a slight threat of rain earlier in the day.

And a "slight threat" was about all North Douglas could muster off Takalo.

After the Warriors scored twice in the first inning and once in the second for a 3-0 lead, Takalo took the mound in the top of the fourth, trailing 3-2.

Knappa coach Jeff Miller always has just one message for his big sophomore right-hander: Shut 'em down, Big D.

Maybe not in the those exact words, but close.

"I just come in and pitch, and give it everything I've got," Takalo said. "Whenever coach says to come in, I just get ready, throw strikes, and pound the zone."

And Takalo did just that in Friday's win.

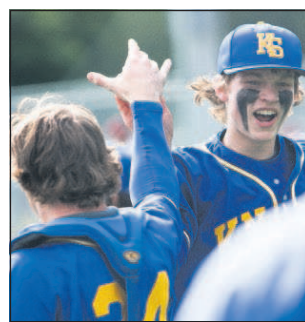
It took six pitches to retire the first three batters he faced, and of the 12 outs Takalo recorded, six were strikeouts.

North Douglas had the tying run at the plate in the top of the seventh, but Takalo struck out Austin Gordon for the final out.

Offensively, the Loggers only had four hits.

"We didn't do much at the plate, but we were solid on the base paths and forced some mistakes," Miller said.

Knappa scored twice in



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian  
Knappa's Dale Takalo celebrates after assisting in a double play in the first inning as the Knappa Loggers faced off against the North Douglas Warriors in the 2A quarterfinals Friday at CMH Field in Astoria. Knappa defeated North Douglas 6-3.

good pitches and really found his groove in the third inning," Miller said. "He maybe started a little tight, but we haven't helped him (defensively). We need to do a better job behind him. He's thrown fine both games."

"He settled down and threw fine against the heart of their order in the third inning. I compliment Mike, because the game really could have gotten out of hand."

Especially in the first inning, when the Warriors had the bases loaded and no outs. They scored two runs before the Loggers turned a 3-2-4 double play to end the inning.

And once Knappa got the lead in the fourth, it was Takalo Time.

"We just wanted to change the pace of the game a little, and I think Dale did a good job of that," Miller said. "The (Goodman-Takalo) combination worked again. It's not a plan, necessarily, going in. But if you look at the games this week, that's been the pattern."

When asked what pitches have been working, Takalo said, "all of 'em. I've just been locating well. Not velocity or anything, just hit my target in whatever pitch I throw, and it's worked out well for me. Really just locate, locate, locate."

Meanwhile, no deficit is too big to overcome for the Loggers.

"We haven't been behind too many times this year," Miller said. "The first game of the year (against Reedsport), we're down two in the sixth right here on this field, and earlier this week we're down four, and down three today."

"It wasn't perfect and it wasn't always pretty, but our kids answered the bell, answered the challenge, and showed that they can come back and overcome obstacles."

Tuesday's winner advances to Volcanoes Stadium to play either Irigoin or Burns in Friday's 2A state championship game.

the bottom of the third on five walks, a wild pitch, a passed ball and an error. And not a single hit.

Again, whatever works. Said the coach, "When we had the opportunities, we took advantage, and that's what you have to do in playoff baseball."

The Loggers did have three hits in a four-run fourth inning, including singles by Logan Bartlett and Colton Weirup to start the rally, and a one-hop double off the fence in left field by Reuben Cruz that scored Weirup.

Noah Kinney's sacrifice bunt scored Takalo, and Cruz sprinted home on the Warriors' fifth error.

"When we had to, we had some timely hitting," Miller said. "At this time of year, you can't expect double-digit hits all the time — you have to have timely hitting."

"Reuben had the big hit, Kinney had a big bunt — those types of things."

And Knappa's current routine — starting Michal Goodman on the mound, then bringing in Takalo, is winning games and saving on the workload for Takalo, who should be available for both games this week.

"I don't know if that's our routine, but Mike threw a lot of

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