

Seaside is the star of volleyball tournament



Jeff TerHar/Submitted Photo

Hundreds of amateur volleyball players hit the beach in Seaside over the weekend.

Hundreds of players hit the beach

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Seaside's biggest party was in full swing over the weekend, with spectacular weather and a beach full of volleyball players and fans.

With the Summer Olympics in Brazil airing the world's best athletes every night, the competitors in this year's amateur tournament received added inspiration.

"Gosh, to me it actually boosts up the morale and that excitement of playing," said co-organizer PT Thilavanh. "The players are watching the Olympics after they're done and then they're anxious to play even more."

On the Turnaround, New York City's Josh Sweigert and Katie Nicholls shared the energy of competition and a pitch-perfect 70-degree day on the beach with coed doubles partners Joey Burda and Katie Dyk.

Nicholls — who was making her first trip to Seaside — and Sweigert flew in for the tournament from New York City late Thursday. A three-hour delay deposited them in Portland at 4 a.m., only hours before their first matches.

The trip is an annual one for Sweigert, a Portland native, who has appeared in 16 Seaside volleyball tournaments.

"My parents actually met playing beach volleyball here, so it was kind of like part of their marriage," he said. "I grew up with it being part of my family."

Rounding out the family affair, Burda, who now lives in metro Portland, is a former volleyball teammate of Sweigert's cousin.

"This is an awesome atmo-

sphere," Dyk, from Medford, said. "Everyone is very laid back. You just make friends with whoever's around, listen to music, hang out, play pick-up games — it's just a very fun atmosphere."

They were just a few of the 1,500 teams and 3,500 competitors. Seaside Chamber of Commerce President Brian Owen estimated more than 10,000 visitors attended the event.

Behind the scenes, organizers Thilavanh, Deng Thepharath, and Mike Griffin — "the bad boys of volleyball" — described a smooth-running event and hailed the launch of a new scheduling program. The cellphone application enables players to check online for court assignments and times, eliminating needless waits and confusion.

"The difficulties have been the newness of how we're running the format, everybody's not really familiar about going on the electronic brackets, but given a tutorial on it they're fine," Griffin said.

"The system works as planned," Thilavanh said. "People are loving that the schedule is online. There's no center bulletin boards to worry about checking their matches. They can watch matches. It's been great."

"It's paid off in spades," Owen added. "What I'm hearing from local merchants, is that when people arrive coming off the beach, they aren't complaining not knowing when they play next, having to be stuck on the beach waiting for the bracket boards to be updated, they're actually able to shower and have lunch and come back and play their matches."

Even better, "This is probably the best weather out of my many years playing in this tournament," Thilavanh added.

"This is what we call 'Chamber of Commerce weather,'" Owen said.



PT Thilavanh



Jeff TerHar/Submitted Photo

Betsi Flint, left, Kelley Larsen, right, took the women's open title.



Jeff TerHar/Submitted Photo

Miles Evans, left, and Marty Lorenz, right, won the men's open division.

Soccer gets a jump on 2016 season

Gulls look strong in tournament

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — It's a long ways to November, but fans of the Seaside boys soccer team have to be encouraged with the early results.

The Gulls looked to be in midseason form over the weekend in an annual "pre" preseason tournament.

Today is the first official day of fall sports practice, but nowadays — with summer tournaments, open gyms and conditioning camps — most teams in most sports like to get a jump on things. And some local soccer teams took it a bit further over the weekend.

The players were playing and the coaches were coaching in Astoria's annual preseason tournament Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the Lower Columbia Youth Soccer complex.

Other than a shorter time limit on games, every scrimmage looked pretty much like any regular season game.

Or, in this case, playoff game ... since many of the teams that took part will end up in the state playoffs a few months from now.

Participants included the Astoria, Catlin Gabel, Henley, Hidden Valley and Seaside boys; with the Astoria, Banks, Catlin Gabel, Henley, Hidden Valley and Klamath Union girls.

"It's just a brilliant tournament that (former Astoria coach) Bill Patterson and LCYSA with Astoria puts on," said Seaside boys coach John Chapman. "There's some good schools here. Being local, we're honored to take part in some of these games."

"Going into daily doubles, it's a great opportunity to see where our boys are, what we need to work on, and where we



Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian

Irving Contreras of Seaside outraces a Henley defender down the field in a Saturday morning soccer match.

need to focus," he said.

Chapman's team got off to a great start, as Seaside defeated Hidden Valley 4-0 Friday.

The Gulls also jumped out to a 3-0 lead over Henley, in a 9 a.m. contest Saturday morning. The Hornets — a Class 4A semifinal team last year — scored two goals in the second half, as the Gulls won 3-2.

Seaside's first goal came from Colton Carter, off a give-and-go from teammate Jackson Januik; Januik assisted on a second goal; and Irving Contreras converted a penalty kick in the closing seconds of the first half.

"That's a great league they have down there (the Skyline Conference), with Hidden Valley, Mazama, Phoenix and Henley," Chapman said. "We don't get to see those teams until a playoff situation. A little early-season flavor helps us see how those leagues do."

Seaside's main challenger in the Cowapa League could be Astoria.

The Fishermen scored five first half goals in a win over Class 5A St. Helens Friday, despite not having their coach.

Tim Fastabend — who coached the Astoria boys last year and was recently named

the girls' varsity coach — was on the sidelines for both in the weekend scrimmages.

"I think the boys and the girls looked real good this weekend," Fastabend said. "It was mainly just a chance to give all the young kids a chance to play."

"These facilities are so nice, and Camp Kiwanilong was open to everybody — it's just a real nice opportunity for the North Coast to show everyone what we have," Fastabend said. "The University of Oregon women's team was here earlier in the summer, OES was here for a few days ... and we had 150 kids here this weekend."

Lee Cain will coach the Astoria boys this season, but Cain was in Mexico on a field trip with students, which included several players for the Astoria girls.

The Lady Fishermen had a nice start, as Hailey Ranta scored in the opening minutes against St. Helens Friday, before the Lions answered with five unanswered goals.

Astoria goalkeeper Lexis Law suffered a wrist injury later in the weekend, but the extent of the injury was not known.

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