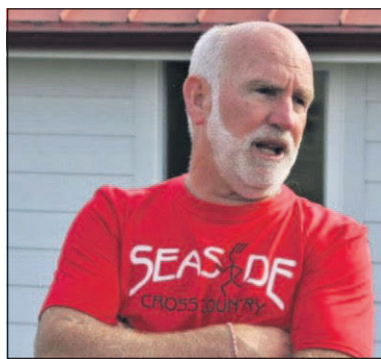


SPORTS

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Jeff Ter Har/For the Daily Astorian
Seaside coach Neil Branson talks with a reporter during the 2013 3-Course Challenge.

Coach Branson calls it a career

Will step down at end of season

By **GARY HENLEY**
The Daily Astorian

A simple statement earlier this week from a legendary coach, it was typical Neil Branson: "As I conclude my 39th year of coaching cross coun-

try, I have decided this will be my last."

Branson — who always passes the credit on to his runners — will hang up his stopwatch after the current season, as head coach of the Seaside cross country program.

"I had 37 years as an assistant and head coach here at Seaside High, and one year each at the helm at Illinois Valley High in Cave Junction and another at Sisters High."

Branson also happens to be the head coach of the defending 4A state champion boys cross country team, which will be running in the Cowapa League championship meet next Wednesday.

From there, the Seaside boys are hoping to defend their state title in the OSAA state meet, Nov. 5 at Lane Community College in Eugene.

Branson will likely continue to have a hand in Seaside track and cross

country. He will still serve as the meet director for the annual 3-Course Challenge meet, held every September at Camp Rilea.

"Each of you, in one way or another, has played a role in my years of coaching cross country and I thank you for your contributions," he said. "The rewards have been immeasurable. And yet as (daughter) Ann Branson would echo to her dad, time to expand the horizons."

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE

TODAY

Girls Soccer — Banks at Astoria, 7:30 p.m.; Tillamook at Seaside, 7:30 p.m.

Boys Soccer — Seaside at Tillamook, 7:30 p.m.

Volleyball — L&C Playoff: Warrenton at Catlin Gabel, 6 p.m.

FRIDAY

Football — Astoria at Scappoose, 7 p.m.; Seaside at Banks, 7 p.m.; Warrenton at Clatskanie, 7 p.m.; Knappa at Vernonia, 7 p.m.; Ocoosa at Ilwaco, 7 p.m.

Volleyball — NWL Playoff: Faith Bible vs. Knappa, at Vernonia HS, 3 p.m.

STANDINGS

FOOTBALL

Cowapa League		
Team	League	Overall
Astoria	4-0	6-1
Scappoose	3-1	4-3
Banks	2-2	4-3
Valley Catholic	2-2	5-2
Tillamook	1-3	1-6
Seaside	0-4	2-5

Northwest League

Knappa	3-0	4-3
Gaston	1-1	3-4
Neah-Kah-Nie	1-1	2-4
Nestucca	1-2	2-5
Vernonia	0-2	2-5

VOLLEYBALL

Cowapa League (Final)

Team	League	Overall
Valley Catholic	9-1	19-3
Banks	8-2	18-5
Tillamook	7-3	14-5
Scappoose	4-6	13-8
Seaside	2-8	7-12
Astoria	0-10	4-13

Lewis & Clark League (Final)

Rainier	11-0	16-4
Portland Chr	10-2	15-4
OR Episcopal	9-3	15-6
Portland Adv	7-5	11-6
Catlin Gabel	6-6	8-11
Warrenton	5-6	9-9
Clatskanie	3-8	5-13
Riverdale	1-11	4-14
De La Salle	0-11	2-16

Northwest League

Gaston	11-0	13-4
Delphian	9-3	15-8
Vernonia	8-3	12-6
Faith Bible	7-5	9-10
Columbia Chr	5-6	7-11
Knappa	5-6	9-8
Nestucca	4-8	5-12
City Christian	1-10	4-11
Neah-Kah-Nie	1-10	1-14

GIRLS SOCCER

Cowapa League

Team	League	Overall
Valley Cath	8-0-0	9-3-0
Scappoose	7-1-0	7-3-2
Banks	4-4-0	5-5-2
Astoria	2-5-1	3-8-1
Seaside	2-5-1	2-8-2
Tillamook	0-8-0	0-12-0

BOYS SOCCER

Cowapa League

Tillamook	6-0-0	10-2-0
Seaside	4-1-2	7-2-3
Scappoose	2-3-1	4-3-4
Astoria	2-5-0	4-7-0
Valley Cath	0-5-1	1-7-3

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Cleveland reliever chosen MVP of ALCS

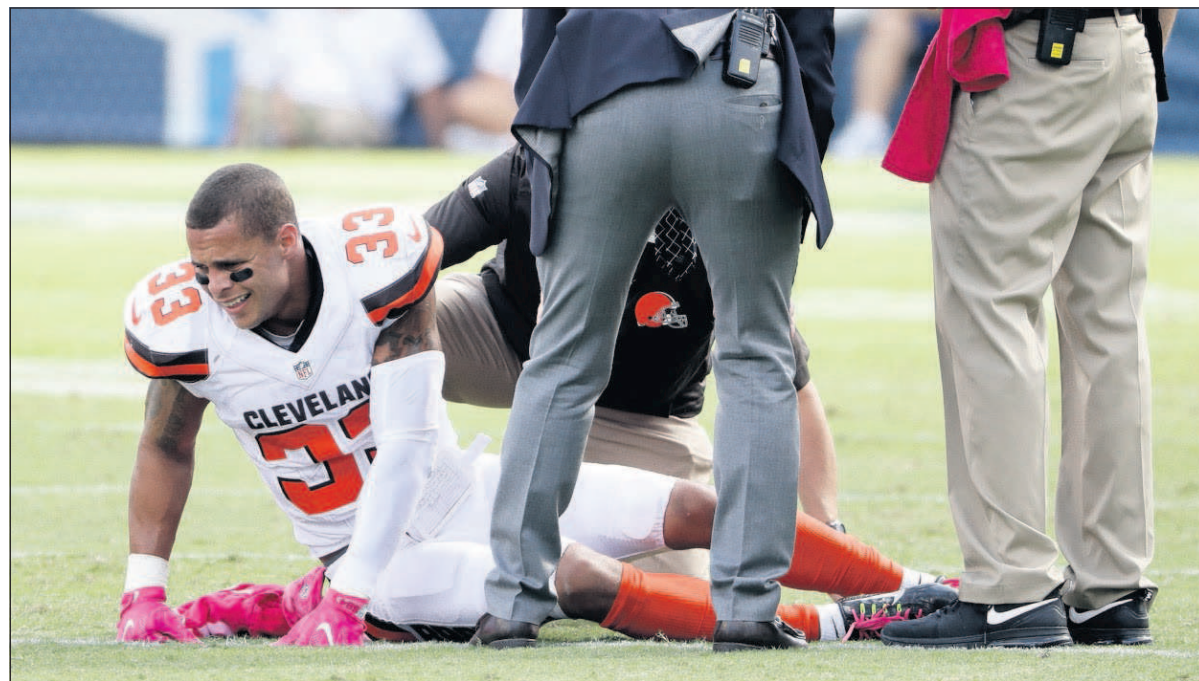
TORONTO — MVP: Most Versatile Pitcher.

The humble workhorse in a wipeout bullpen, Andrew Miller was selected AL Championship Series MVP after his latest spotless outing sent the Cleveland Indians to their first pennant since 1997.

Miller tossed 2 2/3 innings in a 3-0 victory Wednesday over Toronto, capping a five-game series in which the lanky left-hander overpowered the dangerous Blue Jays.

He had one strikeout in Game 5 and finished the series with 14 — an ALCS record for a reliever. Miller gave up three hits in 7 2/3 shutout innings against Toronto and earned a four-out save in Game 3.

After capturing their sixth pennant, thanks in large part to Miller, the Indians are four wins from their first championship since 1948.



AP Photo/James Kenney
Browns free safety Jordan Poyer is attended to after being injured in the first half against the Titans Sunday.

Poyer teammate blasts Titans player for bragging

Former Astoria star will miss remainder of NFL season

By **TOM WITHERS**
AP Sports Writer

BEREA, Ohio — One violent hit on Jordan Poyer was bad enough.

Browns wide receiver Terrelle Pryor wasn't going to let his teammate take another vicious shot without striking back.

Pryor blasted Tennessee running back Antonio Andrews for posting a video of the devastating hit he made on Poyer that sent Cleveland's starting safety to the hospital with a lacerated kidney.

Andrews delivered an illegal blind-side hit during a punt return Sunday, and while Poyer was still recovering at Nashville's Saint Thomas Midtown Hospital, he posted the video of his hit on Instagram with the caption: "Relentless."

Pryor said that was over the line. "I love Poyer like a brother, and that really angered me," Pryor said Wednesday, adding something more colorful to convey his feelings.

Pryor didn't have an issue with the hard, high hit by Andrews, who was penalized 15 yards for the infraction.

He took exception to Andrews boasting about hitting a player who had no chance to defend himself.

"If you're going head up with a man face to face and he sees you, you see him, all right, cool," Pryor said before the Browns (0-6) practiced in advance of Sunday's game at Cincinnati.

"But if you're a special teams guy and you're popping that stuff on there like you're some type of superhero or something just because you're hitting a guy blindsided and you think that's cool, that's where the problem comes in."

"So I think he should stay to his special teams and what he does and don't post stuff when a man's not looking and taking a hit like that."

Pryor agreed the hit was within what's accepted behavior in the NFL, but feels Andrews' bragging is intolerable.

"Obviously it's a game," Pryor said. "I was fine with it (the hit) because it's a game, it's what happens. We put ourselves in that situation by signing the contract to play here. But the only thing that I didn't like was when the guy posted about it, bragging — relentless. What is relentless about that? Hitting a guy, another man when he's not looking."

Andrews, who will be fined the NFL for his personal foul, has made his Instagram account private.

Poyer, who will miss the remainder of the season, also took exception to Andrews on Twitter.

"Buddy posted the hit to his Social Media page?" Poyer wrote. "Wow. Not complaining about the hit... its football.. stuff happens... but dam.. idk (I don't know) why but thats wild to me.. good for him tho."

Andrews didn't back down and responded to Poyer, posting, "Ha this contact sport get well soon tho kid."

After his timeline filled with comments, Andrews defended his decision to post the video.

"Man these cats all in they feelings," Andrews tweeted. "Its not gloating its just a simple post. Idc (I don't care) either way. i'm gonna get paid and get my 8 hrs of sleep."

Browns Pro Bowl tackle Joe Thomas also felt Andrews went too far in making so much of his hit on Poyer.

"I think there should be some sensitivity involved with that type of a thing," he said. "And you've got to be careful with what you're promoting because obviously when you're promoting a play that was a penalty and that got somebody hurt, maybe that's not the right thing that you want to promote for your own brand."

While acknowledging the inherent violence in any game, Thomas thinks the league comes off as hypocritical when promoting player safety and showcasing fierce collisions.

Caruana third in Valiant Invite

The Daily Astorian

BEAVERTON — Astoria's Lucas Caruana ran another solid race Tuesday, as he helped the Fishermen boys to an eighth-place team finish in the Valiant Invitational cross country meet, hosted by Valley Catholic.

Caruana took third in the boys' 3,000-meter varsity race, finishing in 9 minutes, 43 seconds, in the field of 153 runners.

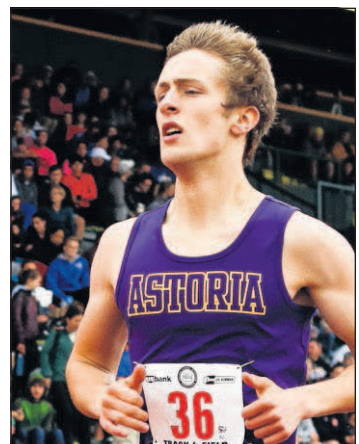
Valley Catholic won the boys' team championship with 51 points, followed by Scappoose (69) and Tillamook (71).

Scappoose junior John Kavulich was the individual champion, crossing the line in 9:22, followed by Tillamook junior Gabe Lachenmeier (9:37) and Caruana.

Parker Ivanoff was Astoria's next-highest finisher, 38th in 10:57.

Tillamook was the girls' team champion, with 48 points to edge Catlin Gabel (50). Astoria was ninth.

Junior McKenzie Burnett was the top runner for the Lady Fishermen, taking 12th in 12:07. Scappoose junior Linnaea Kavulich was the girls' individual champion, as she finished in 10:53, just ahead of Tillamook freshman Solace Bergeron (10:54).



File photo/The Daily Astorian
Astoria's Lucas Caruana competed in the 800 meter race in last year's state track meet.

Cubs homer twice in win over Dodgers to tie series

By **BETH HARRIS**
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES — After striking out in his first two at-bats, Anthony Rizzo needed something to bust his slump. He found it in teammate Matt Szczur's bat.

Using the borrowed lumber, Rizzo homered and ended a postseason skid with three RBIs. The rest of the Chicago Cubs' hitters broke out equally as big in routing the Los Angeles Dodgers 10-2 on Wednesday to even the NL Championship Series at 2-all.

"I know Szczur's bat has a lot of hits in it," Rizzo said. "I've done it a few times this year, just switching up the bat, switching up the mindset."

Addison Russell's two-run homer highlighted a four-run fourth that stopped Chicago's 21-inning scoreless streak and ensured the NLCS will return to Wrigley Field for Game 6 on Saturday.

"It's definitely a sigh of relief to have a big night," Russell said.

Kenta Maeda is set to pitch for the Dodgers in Game 5 on Thursday against Jon Lester. Manager Dave Roberts said he will not start Clayton Kershaw on short rest after the Los Angeles ace threw a bullpen session



AP Photo/Mark J. Terrill
Cubs' Albert Almora Jr. loses his bat during the ninth inning of Game 4 of the NLCS against the Dodgers Wednesday in Los Angeles.

Wednesday.

"It's not an elimination game," Roberts said.

Following consecutive shutout losses, the Cubs rapped out 13 hits on an 80-degree night with the warm Santa Ana winds fluttering the flags in center field.

Rizzo used Szczur's bat on Tuesday night and got a broken-bat single. Szczur, left off the NLCS roster, didn't mind. He wrapped another one for Game 4, figuring Rizzo might want to use the bat that is the same

weight and size but a different model than his.

"I just saw him walking up with my bat, and I started laughing," Szczur said. "And then he hits a homer with it."

Rizzo and Russell had three hits each. Chicago's 3-4-5 hitters — a combined 2 for 32 in the first three games — busted out. Every Cubs starter got at least one hit except Kris Bryant, who walked twice and was hit by a pitch.

"It's contagious, just like the lack

of it is contagious," Cubs manager Joe Maddon said. "When you start hitting, it's contagious, defense, this whole game really follows itself."

Los Angeles was limited to six hits and made four errors in a game that dragged on for 3 hours, 58 minutes.

"It happens, but we haven't had a game like that in a long time," Roberts said. "You've got to brush off and get ready for tomorrow."

Mike Montgomery won in relief of John Lackey, removed after consecutive walks opening the fifth. Four days shy of his 38th birthday, Lackey allowed two runs, three hits and three walks.

"I thought we put ourselves in a position to get to Lackey, but he escaped," Roberts said.

At 20 years, 68 days the youngest postseason starting pitcher in major league history, loser Julio Urias gave up four runs and four hits in 3 2/3 innings. He was the third consecutive left-hander to start for Los Angeles.

"I wish I had taken advantage of this outing," he said through a translator.

Chicago rattled off three straight hits to open the fourth, sparked by Ben Zobrist's leadoff bunt single to third.