

SPORTS

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La Grande catches the wind, advances

Seaside falls 3-1 in state soccer

The Daily Astorian

LA GRANDE — The La Grande boys soccer team had the wind at their backs in the second half of Wednesday's Class 4A state playoff game with Seaside.

And the Gulls know a thing or two about playing with and against the wind.

In this case, it certainly helped the Tigers, who snapped a 1-1 tie at halftime with two second half goals, in a 3-1 win over Seaside.

La Grande advances to play Madras Saturday in the state quarterfinals.

Despite the loss, Seaside still managed to break new ground this season, winning its first Regional Play-in game since 2011. The Gulls were 3-0-1 the second half of league season, and finish 8-2-4 overall.

Meanwhile, the Tigers came in to Wednesday's game sporting a four-game win streak, having outscored their last four opponents, 19-2.

And they grabbed a quick goal for the early momentum.

After a Seaside foul in the penalty area, the Tigers managed to score the first goal on a penalty kick by senior Lewis Wright in the 10th minute.

Seaside picked up the pace in the final 15 minutes of the first half, with a few corner kick opportunities and shots on goal from Hunter Thompson and Jackson and Chase Januik.

Those three attempts were stopped, but a shot on goal in the 38th minute by Colton Carter got through.

Carter carried from the left side to the center, and managed to push a shot past La Grande keeper Jon Gonzales for a 1-1 halftime tie.

The momentum, however, shifted back to La Grande in the second half.

Consecutive shots on goal by the Tigers midway through the half were either saved by Seaside goalkeeper Jesus Perez, or were off frame.

It was another penalty kick that put La Grande back in front, as Christian Miramontes converted for a 2-1 lead with 17 minutes remaining.

La Grande scored again just three minutes later, off the foot of Michael Ebel.

Carter had a free kick that was stopped in the closing minutes, and the Gulls were unable to conquer the wind in the second half.

The loss marked the end of the line for eight Seaside seniors — Perez and Thompson, along with Dylan Wallis, Jackson Januik, Juneau Meyer, Will Garvin, Brent Walsh and James Kennedy.

The fall sports season continues for Januik, Meyer and Thompson, who will be in action this weekend, seeking a second state championship as members of the Seaside boys cross country team.

CLASS 4A STATE PLAYOFFS

Sisters 2, North Valley 1
 Brookings-Harbor 3, Stayton 0
 La Grande 3, Seaside 1
 Madras 3, McLoughlin 2
 Newport 7, Henley 0
 North Marion 3, Tillamook 2
 Molalla 2, North Bend 0
 Phoenix 2, Philomath 1

QUARTERFINALS (SATURDAY)

1. Sisters vs. 8. Brookings-Harbor
 2. Phoenix vs. 10. Molalla
 3. Newport vs. 11. North Marion
 4. Madras 5. La Grande

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

Football — OSAA 4A State Playoff: Gladstone at Astoria, 7 p.m.; WIAA 2B Playoff: Tootle Lake at Ilwaco, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY

Football — OSAA 2A State Playoff: St. Paul vs. Knappa (at CMH Field), 2 p.m.



Football playoffs set for Loggers and Fishermen

The Daily Astorian

The Astoria and Knappa football teams will both be hosting state playoff games at CMH Field, Friday and Saturday.

Astoria kicks off the action at 7 p.m. Friday, when the Fishermen host Gladstone in a first-round game of the 4A state playoffs.

The Fishermen defeated the Gladiators in Week 2, 49-42.

The gates open for admission at 5:30 p.m.

Reserved seats are now on sale at the Astoria High School main office, starting at 8 a.m. Reserved seats are \$10 or \$8, based on avail-

ability and location. General admission tickets are also on sale for all fans and students. General admission tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for high school-aged students and younger.

Knappa will be the home team at 2 p.m. Saturday vs. St. Paul, in a first-round game of the Class 2A state playoffs.

Gates open and tickets go on sale at 12:30 p.m. All tickets will be general admission. Knappa fans will be encouraged to sit in the designated 'Home' areas of seating.

Only OSAA-approved passes may be used for free admission for any round of the OSAA playoffs.

WORLD SERIES — COLUMN



AP Photos/David J. Phillip

Chicago Cubs' Anthony Rizzo reacts after scoring on a hit by Miguel Montero during the 10th inning of Game 7 of the Major League Baseball World Series against the Cleveland Indians Wednesday in Cleveland.

Cubs fans keep faith, rewarded

By TIM DAHLBERG
 AP Sports Columnist

They'll relive the game for generations, these Cubs fans, talking about the magical night in Cleveland when the skies opened up and the curse of the Billy Goat was buried once and for all.

Somewhere along the way the stories will be embellished, as if that is even possible. Joe Maddon will be hailed as the greatest manager ever, and Aroldis Chapman will be remembered more for the W attached to his name in the box score than how he actually ended up being the winning pitcher of a Game 7 that was as thrilling as it was flawed.

They might even make a movie out of it, though they'll have to write a new script. The way it all went down was too corny, too implausible for even Hollywood to believe.

The manager who led the Cubs to the promised land seemed to be trying his best to extend the curse rather than finally putting it to rest. Not once, but twice, Maddon took his best pitchers out of the game just when they seemed to be cruising and almost paid for it dearly.

The closer he seemingly couldn't wait to put in every game of this World Series was ripe for the picking, and that was Maddon's fault, too. He didn't trust his bullpen and was determined to ride Chapman even when he was clearly a thoroughbred who had been ridden too hard.

That it all turned out fine will be all that will be remembered, not that a pitcher who had never saved a game in his career was on the mound with the weight of the city of Chicago on his shoulders as he tried to get the final out.

That the Cubs are the World Series champions for the first time in 108 years will be all anyone wants to talk about, not the fact the Cubs were up by three runs and needed only four more outs before Chapman imploded and they seemed cursed yet again.



Actor Bill Murray, a Cubs fan, attended Game 7 of the World Series in Cleveland.

"Another team might have folded," Cleveland manager Terry Francona said. "And they didn't."

Give some of the credit to an intervention from above, when the baseball gods finally decided the Cubs had suffered enough and interrupted the game just as it was going into the 10th inning. It wasn't a long rain delay, far from it, but just long enough for the players to gather in the strength room and listen to outfielder Jason Heyward tell them they had come too far to get too down at this point.

"The best rain delay of all time," Anthony Rizzo said.

Give some credit, too, to Kyle Schwarber capping the most improbable postseason ever by leading off the 10th with a base hit. Don't forget Ben Zobrist, either, and the double that would give the Cubs a lead and make him an equally improbable World Series MVP.

But it was the manager who encouraged them to dress up in Halloween costumes on the flight to Cleveland who brought them to that point. It was the manager who scoffed at the idea of a curse and got his players to be aggressive early in the deciding games because he didn't want to face the Cleveland bullpen from behind.

Yes, the same manager who pulled both Kyle Hendricks and Jon Lester too early because, well, just because.

Had the Indians managed to scratch across the winning run in the bottom of the ninth inning, Maddon would have taken his place in the Cubs' Hall of Shame, probably alongside Steve Bartman, the unfortunate Cubs fan

who until Thursday morning had been unable to shake the blame for the Cubs losing in the 2003 playoffs.

Instead, he's the first Cubs manager in more than a century to hoist the World Series trophy aloft. That's enough to secure his legacy alone, though he'd prefer not to go down in baseball lore as a curse buster.

Like superfan Bill Murray, he ain't afraid of no goat.

"It has nothing to do with curses, superstition," Maddon said. "If you want to believe in that kind of stuff, it's going to hold you back for a long time. I love tradition. I think tradition is worth time mentally and tradition is worth being upheld. But curses and superstitions are not."

Tell that to long-suffering Cubs fans, thousands of whom made their way to cheer loudly in Cleveland, and millions more who jumped on the bandwagon late. The Cubs were such a great story that baseball got television ratings not seen since before the steroid era for the World Series, and anyone who watched Game 7 in its entirety has to be a baseball fan for life.

It was 108 years in the making, and it was epic. The Cubs and Indians made a divided country feel better about itself, and the sight of thousands in the streets outside both ballparks made a lot of people feel better about the game of baseball.

The Cubs are no longer lovable losers, and that will take some getting used to. So will the expectations for future seasons with a team built for success and a manager comfortable with making whatever decisions he thinks are right to get them there.

"I'm really proud of the attitude, the culture that we've created," Maddon said. "I think it's something that carries for many, many years to come. Just like in the past, not having won a World Series trophy in 108 years, this is a breakthrough year. So now that standard of excellence can be carried through for many years to come."

The goat is gone and they're singing in the streets of Chicago.

As if that somehow isn't good enough, the "W" flags could be flying at Wrigley Field for quite some time.