

SPORTS

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Submitted Photos

Astoria boys' eighth-grade team, from left to right: Hunter Ficken, Mikey Burger, Anthony Reed, T.J. Colvin, Dylan Junes, Bo Williams, coach Ty Williams, Tony Tumbarello. Front: Xander Marincovich.



Lady Fish eighth-grade tournament team. Back row, left to right: coach Nick Both, Shelby Rasmussen, Ally Pritchard, Emma Roe, Tajarae Tuimato, Sophie Long, Kelsey Fausett. Front row: Halle Helmersen, Maddie Sisley, Elle Espelien, Madi Both. Front: Coach Alex Eterno.

Fishermen youth teams head to state

The Daily Astorian

A pair of Astoria eighth-grade basketball teams will be competing in the 2017 Oregon Middle School Championships, which begin this weekend.

The tournaments take place in Bend, Redmond

and Sisters, with the girls' championships (grades five through eight) beginning today and running through Sunday.

Astoria's "Lady Fish" eighth-grade tournament team is headed to state for the fourth year in a row.

Coached by Nick Both and Alex Eterno, the Astoria team includes Madi Both, Elle Espelien,

Kelsey Fausett, Halle Helmersen, Sophie Long, Ally Pritchard, Shelby Rasmussen, Emma Roe, Maddie Sisley and Tajarae Tuimato.

The Lady Fish are in the same pool with the Hermiston Lady Ballerz, the Hidden Valley Hoops, and Molalla.

Astoria opens play against Molalla, 5 p.m.

today at Elton Gregory Middle School. The boys' tournament takes place March 10-12.

Players for Astoria include Mikey Burger, T.J. Colvin, Hunter Ficken, Dylan Junes, Xander Marincovich, Anthony Reed, Tony Tumbarello and Bo Williams. The Fishermen are coached by Ty Williams.

SPORTS IN BRIEF



AP Photo/Nick Wass

Washington Wizards head coach Scott Brooks, left, talks with referee Ken Maurer (41) during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Golden State Warriors in February in Washington. notforsale

Foul! NBA plans to keep stats on referees, too

By BRIAN MAHONEY
 Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NBA will start keeping stats on officials, too.

The league plans to hire more officials, plus change the way they are scheduled and evaluated.

The NBA will launch an Officiating Advisory Council, among a number of initiatives announced Thursday following a six-month review of the officiating program conducted by Byron Spruell, the president of league operations.

Salary cap for 2017 season is, up \$12 million

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NFL salary cap for the upcoming season will be \$167 million per team, up more than \$12 million over last year.

The league and the NFL Players Association compile the cap from specific revenues, and it has risen annually. It was \$143.28 million two years ago.

This is the fourth consecutive year the cap has risen at least \$10 million.

Player benefits also are included under the 10-year labor agreement reached to end the 2011 lockout. That comes to \$37 million per team, bringing the players' total compensation package to over \$200 million per club for the first time.

In comparison, baseball had 12 teams with luxury-tax payrolls beyond \$167 million in 2016.

Since 2011, the cap has increased by \$47 million.

Lillard scores 33 as Trail Blazers beat Thunder

By ANNE M. PETERSON
 Associated Press

PORTLAND — The Trail Blazers huddled in a timeout with just more than 17 seconds left against Oklahoma City, and the overwhelming sentiment was simple: relax.

The Thunder had trimmed Portland's lead to 110-109, but the Blazers refused to get rattled and came away with a 114-109 victory Thursday night.

"Even though it got scary there at the end, we were still able to calm ourselves down and get the win," said Damian Lillard, who finished with 33 points.

Russell Westbrook scored 45 on 12-of-36 shooting for the Thunder, who had their four-game winning streak snapped. Oklahoma City newcomer Taj Gibson added 15 points, including a high-arching buzzer-beater from 61 feet away to put the Thunder up 60-57 at halftime.

Alex Abrines' 3-pointer gave the Thunder their biggest lead at 97-89 with 7:48 left, but Al-Farouq Aminu made a layup that tied it at 101 with 3:43 to go. He missed the free throw, but Jusuf Nurkic got the tip-in to give Portland the lead.

Lillard's 3-pointer extended it to 106-101 before Westbrook's driving layup and



AP Photo/Craig Mitchell/Idyer

Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard, left, shoots over Oklahoma City Thunder forward Doug McDermott during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Portland Thursday. The Blazers won 114-109.

free throw pulled Oklahoma City to 110-106.

Abrines' 3-pointer with 17.7 seconds left narrowed it to 110-109. After the timeout, Lillard was fouled twice in the final seconds and made all four free throws before Westbrook and Doug McDermott missed 3-pointers at the end.

Nurkic, acquired by the Blazers just before the All-Star break in a trade with Denver, was a spark with 18 points, 12 rebounds, a career-high six assists and five blocks.

"He has a good sense of the

UP NEXT

Trail Blazers: Portland hosts the Brooklyn Nets on Saturday night.

game," Portland coach Terry Stotts said. "When you have that, I think the integration goes a little bit better."

Westbrook hit all 15 of his free throws. He had eight rebounds and four assists, ending a streak of four straight triple-doubles.

Enes Kanter added 18 points and 10 rebounds.

"Difference tonight was we

just couldn't make our shots," Westbrook said. "We missed the same shots that we've been making every game."

The Thunder were coming off a 109-106 victory over Utah. Westbrook had 43 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists in that game for his 30th triple-double of the season. The Thunder opened the game against the Jazz with 12 straight 3s.

The Blazers were coming off a 120-113 overtime loss at Detroit, which capped a 2-7 February.



AP Photo/Craig Mitchell/Idyer

Portland Trail Blazers forward Al-Farouq Aminu dunks during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Portland Thursday.

Basketball builds character at Naselle Youth Camp

Coach Smith leads stellar team of athletes

By AARON MEAD
 EO Media Group

NASELLE, Wash. — The Naselle Youth Camp basketball program, which completed its season last month, gives players direction and goals to pursue, and brings the whole camp together for home games.

The team played only three games this season, two against other facilities and one against Naselle High School alumni, finishing the year 2-1. Still, there was no shortage of camp residents



EO Media Group/File Photo
 A.J. "Mooch" Smith leads the basketball program at Naselle Youth Camp.

who were willing to commit to an intense effort to become a team and prepare for these chances to represent their camp.

"I tell the kids (basketball) is a chance, for two hours each day, to forget about things, about any difficulties

in their lives. It's a chance to be normal kids again," said coach A.J. Smith. Forty-five kids turned out, of which Smith picked 14 players for the team. Eligibility depends on good behavior.

Most players hadn't had opportunities for organized, team basketball in their past. "They've played on the street, in the courtyard," Smith said. "The challenge is teaching the team game. In terms of athleticism, they're the best high school team in the region. Ten of the 14 players on the team can dunk, or at least touch the rim."

Smith starts off the season teaching basic fundamentals of team basketball. He insists on players staying within the structure, rather than trying

to go one-on-one. On defense he ran a 1-3-1 zone, which Smith sees as well-suited to the team's length, athleticism, and inexperience.

Smith's goals go beyond winning basketball games, of course. "We teach them how to do things right," and represent the youth camp well on road trips, Smith says. But that doesn't necessarily mean having a team of nice guys.

"Throughout my coaching career, I've tried to teach players they need to have a little swagger," said Smith, who in the past has coached high school softball and eighth grade girls' basketball at Ilwaco. "With these guys, I don't have to teach that. It's the most competitive group you can imagine." What he

tries to teach them is how to apply that same spirit to the rest of their lives. "I teach them life is competition. If you go for a job interview, you want to be better than the next person."

The basketball team is part of the camp's larger goal of giving kids a source of camaraderie, a constructive group to belong to. "Every kid is part of one group or another," Smith said. At home games, the entire camp comes together to cheer on the team. As a medium/minimum security institution, "statistically, we're taking in kids who have a better shot" in life than other juvenile inmates, Smith said. "When they all participate, that helps down the road."

Ilwaco girls on track for state title

By AARON MEAD
 EO Media Group

SPOKANE, Wash. — Ilwaco High School girls won an exciting nail-biter vs. St. George School, 50-49, in overtime of the quarter-

finals Thursday to advance to the semifinals of the State Basketball Tournament.

Makenzie Kaech sank a 2-foot shot with 31 seconds left to win it.

Eliza Bannister hit a 3-pointer at

the end of regulation to send the game into overtime.

At halftime, hometown Spokane team St. George's led Ilwaco, 22-15.

Ilwaco is now one win away from the championship game.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE

TODAY

Girls Basketball — Washington 2B State Tournament: Davenport vs. Ilwaco (at Spokane), 7:15 p.m.

Boys Basketball — 4A State Playoff: Cascade at Seaside, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY

Girls Basketball — 4A State Playoff: Seaside at Molalla, 7 p.m. Washington 2B State Tournament: TBA vs. Ilwaco, 7 p.m.