

Lady Gulls: Look to advance

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Led by their dynamic duo of seniors Maddi Utti (15 points, nine rebounds, six assists) and Sydney Villegas (10 points, 10 rebounds, two steals), the Gulls simply out-hustled and outplayed the Cougars to pull out the impressive victory.

"We're really excited because we came out and played our best to get the win," said Utti. "We rotated really well in our zone defense and we all did a good job to pull out the win. We're really, really happy and it's the biggest win of our career. She (Cascade's Halle Wright is a big part of their team. We're excited and ready to play in the Final Four."

Utti, who injured her chin and right wrist in Seaside's 38-31 playoff win over Molalla on Saturday, proved capable of overcoming adversity, while helping lead the Gulls to victory. Utti, the Moda Health Player-of-the-Game for Seaside, fired in a jumper from the free-throw line at the outset of the contest, giving Seaside an initial 2-0 first quarter lead.

What followed was a highly physical and very aggressive battle with players elbowing, shoving and pushing each other throughout the contest, as many fell hard to floor often after contact.

Cascade, the Oregon West Conference champions from Turner (near Salem), came back with a 6-2 run to go ahead 8-4. Cascade, led by 6-foot junior Halle Wright (17 points, nine rebounds) remained ahead 12-10 at the end of the first quarter, which included three lead changes. Wright earned the Moda Health Player-of-the-Game for Cascade.

The two evenly matched squads traded baskets early in the second. After Cascade took a 17-16 advantage, Villegas hit a jumper in the post area giving Seaside an 18-17 lead. Utilizing a solid an effective zone defense, the Lady Gulls remained in control, while leading for the remainder of the contest.

"This is so exciting to get a win against the No. 1-ranked team in the state," Villegas said. "Honestly, I'm kind of surprised we won, because in the last couple of years, we've kind of had a tough time in our opening game. I just feel speechless, though right now, but I'm just so very proud of my team."

Seaside capitalized on a total of 20 Cascade fouls and the Gulls shot 13-for-18 (72.2 percent) from the line to help them extend their lead. Lucy Bodner (four points) hit a jumper underneath giving Seaside a 20-17 edge with 4:03 left in the second. The Gulls sank six free throws in the final 2:43 of the quarter, including three each by Villegas and Utti, who shot 7-for-9 at the line. A Villegas free throw with 8.2 seconds



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Seaside Seagulls' Maddi Utti and Gretchen Hoekstre defend as Cascade Cougars' Mariah Hollenbeck attempts to drive to the basket as Seaside faces off against Cascade in the 4A State Quarterfinals on Thursday, March 9 at Forest Grove High School in Forest Grove. Seaside defeated Cascade 47-42.

left lifted Seaside in front 26-20 at halftime.

Injuries impact

"After the injuries that Utti had on Saturday, she really recovered well and came back strong, and we really needed to have her at full strength," said Hawes. "We're extremely proud of the team and everyone made key contributions to helping us get the win. We're not satisfied with one win, though, because we still have lots of work to do."

Seaside extended the margin to its largest of the game early in the third when Bodner a 10-foot baseline jumper from the side, making it 28-20 with 7:50 on the clock. Cascade, which reached the 2016 finals before losing 45-40 to Sutherland, responded with a strong comeback effort, trimming it to 38-36 after three.

Cascade got to within 38-37 early in the fourth, forcing a Seaside timeout with 6:06 left. With 4:50 left, Wright fell to the floor hard and was crying and pounding the floor with her fist while obviously in severe pain with a left leg injury. She limped off the court assisted by two assistant coaches.

With Cascade's best player sidelined, Seaside took advantage of the unfortunate situation though and extended its lead. Seaside sophomore guard Emy Kiser fired in a three-pointer from the corner, putting the Gulls up 41-37 with 3:58 left in the game.

"We had the lead when she (Wright) got hurt, but whenever your top player gets hurt, it obviously affects your team," said Hawes. "We were in control for most of the game, at that point, so I'm not really sure how much her absence affected the outcome. I'm was incredibly happy to see that she did come back into the game. Wright and

Utti are the two best players in Class 4A, so it was a good matchup to see those two players square off head-to-head."

Cascade trimmed it to 41-39 with 2:37 remaining on two free throws by Karen Miller (12 pts.) but they didn't get any closer though. Utti's jumper in the lane made it 43-39 with 2:05 left, but Cascade came back and narrowed it to 43-40. Utti then had a key assist with a long pass from near the top of the 3-point arc to Villegas, whose key basket inside made it 45-40 with 1:30 left.

"I'm really excited to have an opportunity to play Sutherland, which is a really good team, too," said Villegas. "I think we're capable of beating them if we play the same way we did today against Cascade. We just took down the No. 1-ranked team, which really gives us lots of confidence now, and I think we can beat anybody."

Wright somehow managed to shrug off her injury and then played the final 90 seconds. Cascade trimmed it to 45-42, forcing a Seaside timeout with 44.4 seconds left. Seaside failed to score on its ensuing possession, giving Cascade one final chance. Wright fired up a possible game-tying 3 and missed, but the Cougars retained possession as the ball went out of bounds after being touched by Seaside.

Following a Cascade timeout with 15.1 seconds left, Seaside's Bryre Babbitt (5 points) grabbed an errant ball after forcing a Cougar turnover and she passed the ball to Utti, who was fouled with 6.7 seconds left. Utti sank both from the line, giving Seaside a 47-42 lead. The Gulls then reacted as expected after a big win with excited players jumping up and down, screaming and hugging one another in a very joyful and emotional victory celebration.



Photos by Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian
Seaside Seagulls' Jackson Januik collides with Gladstone Gladiators' Lyric Warren in the 4A state quarterfinals on Thursday at Pacific University in Forest Grove.

Gulls: Grind onto semifinals

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finals and the Bulldogs, who will play Seaside at 3:15 p.m. today at Forest Grove High School, right after the Seaside girls take on Sutherland in a girls' semifinal.

It's a pretty big rematch — and one that definitely favors the Seaside boys. The Gulls knocked off North Bend at their place in the preseason, 82-62.

Low scoring

Seaside won Thursday's game with its lowest point total of the season.

The Gulls had 3-pointers from Jackson Januik and Attikin Babb near the end of the first half, and even those two shots had Seaside in front by a low-scoring 23-15 at halftime.

"We did just enough to get by," said Seaside coach Bill Westerholm. "We didn't do a very good job of moving the ball in the first half. We tried to play a lot of one-on-one stuff, and that doesn't always work at the state tournament."

Both teams also got into foul trouble. Januik and



Seaside Seagulls' Chase Januik takes a shot while Gladstone Gladiators' Deshawn Dix, left, and Gladstone Gladiators' Briggs Tatom try to defend.

Hunter Thompson each finished with four.

"(The Gladiators) got into a little more trouble than we did," Westerholm said. "But we didn't shoot the ball very well the whole night (13-for-39). Attikin Babb had a good game, and we hit just enough free throws down the stretch (5-of-11 in the final 1:15). But they're a good team, too. Every game here is going to be a dogfight."

Seaside was 16-of-27 at the free-throw line, to Gladstone's 1-of-6.

A 3-pointer by Thompson early in the fourth quarter gave Seaside a 35-26 lead, but Gladstone fought back, eventually closing to within 45-43 on a 3-pointer by Briggs Tatom with 21 seconds left.

Payton Westerholm was fouled twice in the final 15 seconds, and was 1-of-4 at the line.

On his second miss, however, he grabbed the offensive rebound and was fouled again.

"That was big," said coach and dad Westerholm. "To miss two free throws and get away with an offensive rebound. The kid has a knack for getting his hand on the ball. He was more upset at himself for missing the free throws."

Payton said, "I wish I would have made a couple more. I was definitely nervous coming in, but hopefully that passes."

"We were up the whole game, and just kind of kept it there," he said.

"We feel good. We feel like if we can play our game, we can win the next one, too."

Hotel: 'Proposal still has a few problems'

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between the east and west sides of the building, an additional variance was needed to allow the increase to 60 feet for the roof height at the west building wing, an addition of 15 feet over the 45 feet allowed by zoning. The building will have sloped roofs and dormer windows, with an 80-foot tower, an architectural feature already allowed as an exception to the building height under city ordinance.

"When you look at it from the east, it is 15 feet above the variance at 60 feet, but when you look at it from the ocean side, the Prom, it will just be 7 feet above grade," Simmons said.

He said the building was comparable height to other buildings in the area, which is zoned for hotels and resorts.

Back and forth

Appeals were brought by the Calefs and Avrel Nudelman, who owns a home at 341 Beach Drive. Based on the setback variances, the City Council returned the project to the Planning Commission for redesign.

Simmons and architect David Vonada went back before the Planning Commission in January with revised plans eliminating the need for

setback variances by reducing parking and eliminating four second-floor rooms.

"The way we had to structure it, we had to give up the second-floor oceanfront rooms and turn that area into parking," Simmons said. "That did reduce us by six oceanfront rooms. That's our bread-and-butter for this type of property. That's the sacrifice we had to make to get enough parking places."

After revised plans won Planning Commission approval for a height variance in January, the Calefs submitted their second appeal to the City Council. Nudelman did not appeal the Planning Commission's second decision.

'A few problems'

"From what I have seen, the new proposal still has a few problems," Dan Calef said. "From the perspective of 25 Avenue A — our house — one drawing shows the building set back from Avenue A in such a way that our whole house is visible — and hence we could see the Prom — while other drawings have the building closer to the street and partially in front of us."

"I would also think that there would have to be some sort of fence in front of our house to stop we AARP members from

tumbling into the driveway down into the parking garage," Calef added. "This would also change our property from 'ocean view' to 'fence view.'"

Simmons said he understood the motivation for the Calefs' appeal. "It's been their family's home, I understand that. It would be a challenge for me if it was my ancestral family home," he said.

Simmons said the family had rejected purchase overtures. "We offered twice as much as it was worth, based on the comps," Simmons said. "They can't even come to the point of selling. They don't want to. All of their childhood memories are part of that house. I understand that."

Even if the Pearl plan wins approval and the hotel is built, the Calefs will continue to receive most of their light and views, Simmons said. "The Pearl will be built based on the 15-foot side yard setback requirement," Simmons said in a letter to members of the City Council. "The angle of the vacant lot, which gets narrower as it nears the ocean, will push the building footprint back to almost 25 within the lot. With the building setbacks, the sunlight and ocean view in front of the neighbor's home will be protected."

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