

SPORTS

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Braves win two on Astoria's Senior Day

By GARY HENLEY
 The Daily Astorian

The No. 2-ranked Banks softball team put the finishing touches on another league championship season Thursday, as the Braves swept past Astoria in a Cowapa League double-header at CMH Field, 6-1 and 11-3.

Astoria's three seniors had their moments on Senior Day at the ballpark, but the Braves had the big innings.

Game 1 was scoreless through three innings before Banks scored four in the top of the fourth, and that was plenty for Braves' pitcher Michaela Shaw.

The sophomore allowed just two hits — both by Astoria senior Rylee DeMander — and struck out eight with no walks. Shaw faced the minimum number of batters (18) through six innings, before DeMander had a leadoff single in the seventh, took second on an error and eventually scored on a passed ball for Astoria's lone run.

Banks collected 11 hits off Astoria freshman Julia Norris, six for extra bases.

Katie Ragsdale had a pair of doubles, while Mary Schorn opened the scoring with a solo home run to lead off the fourth.

Teammate Alyssa Rogers had a two-run double later in the inning, but was thrown out at third by DeMander.

Senior Abi Danen had two of Astoria's five hits in Game 2, and DeMander had her third hit of the day.

The Lady Fish also held their only lead in the nightcap.

With two outs and no runners on in the first inning, Astoria senior Caitlyn Hougham drew a walk, Danen singled to left, and a base hit up the middle by McKailyn Rogers scored Hougham.

With two outs and no runners on again in the second inning, Astoria's Jenna Barendse singled to center.

DeMander followed with a base hit to left, and a wild pitch and a passed ball allowed Barendse to score for a 2-0 lead.

The Braves erased the deficit with three runs in the top of the third, and a two-run homer by Hannah McCourt in the fifth made it 6-2.

The big blast of the day belonged to Schorn, the senior who belted a grand slam home run in the top of the sixth.

Kayla Helligso scored on a wild pitch for Astoria's final run in the seventh inning.

Defensively, Danen and DeMander both had big days in the infield, fielding a number of line drives off the Braves' bats.

While Banks improved to 21-1 overall (14-1 in league), the Fishermen still finish third in the Cowapa with an 8-7 record, 11-13 overall.

Astoria will likely host a Regional Play-in game, day and time to be announced.

In a Cowapa League season finale at Broadway Field Thursday, Scappoose swept Seaside, 13-0 and 32-4. The No. 5-ranked Indians finish second in the league standings at 13-2, 20-3 overall.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE

TODAY

Baseball — Banks at Astoria, 5 p.m. (CMH Field); Scappoose at Seaside, 5 p.m.; Warrenton at Clatskanie (2), 3:30 p.m.; Vernonia at Knappa (2), 3 p.m.

Softball — Warrenton at Clatskanie (2), 3:30 p.m.; Vernonia at Knappa (2), 3 p.m.

Track — Cowapa League Championships, at St. Helens, TBA; Lewis & Clark League Championships, TBA; NWL Championships, at Portland Christian, TBA

SATURDAY

Track — Lewis & Clark League Championships, TBA; NWL Championships, at Portland Christian, TBA

SOFTBALL

Game 1

Banks 6, Astoria 1
 Banks 000 411 0—6 11 2
 Astoria 000 000 1—1 2 2

WP: Michaela Shaw (8 K's, 0 walks). LP: Julia Norris (2 K's, 1 walk). RBI: Banks, Rogers 2, Ragsdale 2, Schorn. 2B: Ragsdale 2, Rogers, Wise, H.McCourt. HR: Banks, Schorn. LOB: Banks 5, Astoria 1.

Game 2

Banks 11, Astoria 13
 Banks 003 035 0—11 12 1
 Astoria 110 000 1—3 5 3

WP: Kaylin Hernandez (5 K's, 1 walk). LP: Rylee DeMander (0 K's, 1 walk). RBI: Banks, Schorn 5, Ragsdale 2, H.McCourt 2, Wise, Ast, Rogers. 2B: Banks, Davis. HR: Banks, H.McCourt, Schorn. LOB: Banks 6, Astoria 3.

Spurs face quick turnaround before conference finals

By KRISTIE RIEKEN
 Associated Press



AP Photo/Eric Christian Smith

San Antonio Spurs forward LaMarcus Aldridge (12) shoots over Houston Rockets guard Patrick Beverley (2) during the second half in Game 6 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series Thursday, in Houston. San Antonio won 114-75.

UP NEXT: WESTERN CONFERENCE FINALS GAME 1

• San Antonio Spurs (61-21) at Golden State Warriors (67-15)
 • Sunday, 12:30 p.m. TV: ABC

HOUSTON — The San Antonio Spurs are thrilled to be in the Western Conference finals for the first time since winning the title in 2014.

But they won't have much time to celebrate with a series against the well-rested Golden State Warriors starting on Sunday.

In fact, they were barely going to give themselves two hours to bask in their 114-75 win over the Houston Rockets in Game 6 before looking ahead.

"We're just going to enjoy this one right now until midnight, at least," Danny Green said. "I think this one prepared us for the next one. They're a fast-paced team that likes to shoot on the perimeter. We have to communicate even better and be more perfect because it doesn't get any easier."

While San Antonio fought through six games with the Rockets, the Warriors have been off since wrapping up a sweep of the Utah Jazz on Monday.

Along with the fatigue factor, there are also questions about the their lineup heading in Game 1 after All-Star Kawhi Leonard sat out on Thursday night after rolling his left ankle in Game 5.

Coach Gregg Popovich didn't provide many details about Leonard's injury on Thursday. When asked if he protested when he chose to sit him, Popovich said: "He'd rather play." But it still seemed to be bothering him quite a bit after the game when he headed to the bus still walking with a noticeable limp.

The Spurs will certainly need his stellar defensive skills to contend with a Warriors team that not only swept the Jazz, but also eliminated the Trail Blazers in four games in the first round.

"We understand that the team we're now facing is the most dangerous team in the league with a lot of weapons," Pau Gasol said. "You have to prepare for this team a different way. The challenges they present, in some ways, are similar to Houston as far as the ability to shoot the ball from the 3-point line, but they have different personnel overall."

The Spurs know that limiting Golden State's 3-point shooting will be a key in the next round, just as slowing Houston from long range was in the conference semifinals. Houston averaged 20.5 3-pointers in its two wins and just 13 in the four losses.

Leonard's ankle problem wasn't the only injury San Antonio dealt with in this series, as it came after the Spurs lost veteran Tony Parker to a season-ending quadriceps injury in Game 2.

Neither injury seemed to have a major impact on the team, except for the fact that it gave LaMarcus Aldridge a chance to emerge as a dominant scorer for the Spurs. The 11-year veteran, in his second season with the Spurs, averaged just 9.5 points in the first two games before averaging 23.5 in the last four, highlighted by a season-high 34 in Game 6.

"Once he got it going, we tried to keep going back to him," Patty Mills said of Game 6. "He was an absolute beast (Thursday), and that's who he is."

Pearce, Smoak hit homers as Blue Jays beat Mariners

By IAN HARRISON
 Associated Press

TORONTO — Marco Estrada rebounded nicely from a rough first inning against the red-hot Seattle Mariners.

Steve Pearce hit a three-run home run, Justin Smoak had a solo homer and finished with four RBIs, and the Toronto Blue Jays beat the Mariners 7-2 on Thursday night, snapping Seattle's win streak at four games.

After giving up two runs in the first, Estrada (2-2) held Seattle scoreless for the next five innings, helping Toronto win for the fourth time in five games.

"He shut us down tonight," Mariners manager Scott Servais said.

Smoak went 3 for 3 with a walk against his former team. He had an RBI single in the first, walked in the fourth, singled home two runs in the fifth, and connected off rookie Sam Gaviglio in the seventh.

"He's a little more aggressive early in the count, and he's laying off that breaking ball," manager John Gibbons said.

Mariners slugger Nelson Cruz hit a two-run homer but Seattle's offense came up empty after the first.

After scoring 21 runs in their previous two games, the Mariners jumped on Estrada in the opening frame. Jean Segura led off with a double and Cruz

UP NEXT: MARINERS

• Seattle Mariners (17-18)
 at Toronto Blue Jays (14-21)
 • Today, 4:07 p.m. TV: RTNW

drilled a one-out homer into the center field party deck, his eighth.

"That first inning was kind of tough," Estrada said. "Even the outs were kind of hit pretty hard. I'm glad I was able to turn things around and make better pitches after that."

Smoak halved the deficit with an RBI single off Chase De Jong in the bottom half.

Toronto took the lead by scoring five times in a two-out rally in the fifth. Smoak lined a bases-loaded single over the head of shortstop Segura, who had shifted out behind second base, and Pearce followed with his fourth home run.

"It kind of got away from us pretty quickly there," De Jong said.

Aaron Loup, Jason Grilli and Leonel Campos each worked one inning of relief for the Blue Jays.

De Jong (0-3) allowed six runs in five innings.

"I really wasn't as crisp as I'd like to have been," De Jong said.

Seattle dropped one game below .500. The Mariners have not had a winning record at any point this season.

Grasshoppers, cookie dough among new MLB hits

By NOAH TRISTER
 Associated Press

The idea of serving edible grasshoppers at a baseball game isn't as crazy as it sounds.

The Seattle Mariners brought that curious offering to their ballpark this season, and although it might have seemed like a head scratcher to many fans and foodies, this crispy snack was more than just a quirky attention grabber.

"This is like an authentic local delicacy," said Diana Evans, a vice president of strategy and marketing for Centerplate, the Mariners' hospitality partner. "We're thrilled that people are excited about it."

The chapulines — toasted grasshoppers with chili-lime salt seasoning — arrived at Safeco Field this season courtesy of Poquitos, a Mexican restaurant in Seattle that serves them. For those fans who could wrap their minds (and mouths) around the idea of eating insects, the item proved quite popular, selling out during the opening home series.

In an era when ballparks are constantly trying to add new features and attractions, spicing up the menu can be an easy way to enhance the experience for spectators. There will always be room



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

Toasted chile-lime grasshoppers are displayed on a menu at a baseball game between the Seattle Mariners and the Los Angeles Angels in Seattle.

for hot dogs, popcorn and peanuts, but Seattle's experience with the chapulines shows how a creative new food offering can become the talk of baseball for a little while — and any team can pull it off.

"Much like teams will use the offseason to make a big splash with a free agent signing or renovation ... from a food and beverage standpoint, we'll use the off-season to evaluate our menus and develop new offerings as well," said David Freireich, a spokesperson for Aramark, which provides food and beverage services at eight ballparks.