

Fishermen reloading

Football team aiming for another league title

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

It's a new group, with new names and new numbers.

The seniors and all-stars — Fritz, Olaf, Lyngstad, etc. — are all gone. One of the most successful senior classes in Astoria school history has moved on.

But you can be sure the Astoria Fishermen still have that "favorite" label.

The defending Cowapa League champions always have high expectations. That's natural, especially when they're coming off a perfect league season and a second straight appearance in the state playoffs.

And though it's a new-look team, there's no reason the Fishermen can't accomplish what they did a year ago.

Like they say in the hallowed halls of the high school, "Tradition Never Graduates."

The Cowapa

Last year's all-league team was senior-dominated, with Astoria, Banks and Scappoose all losing a lot to graduation.

Still, "We hope to be right back in the mix, in the top three with Scappoose and Banks," said Astoria coach Howard Rub, entering his 18th season at the helm. "Coach (Jeff) Roberts running the Wing-T automatically makes Seaside a better program. (Kye) Johnson is doing a good job in Tillamook, and Valley Catholic is always a question, with them being a private school.

"It's a very competitive league. I wouldn't be shocked to see four teams qualify for state."

Those four would likely be Astoria, Banks, Scappoose and Seaside, in no particular order.

Astoria was the clear-cut winner last season, cruising to a 5-0 league season with wins over Valley Catholic (33-20), Seaside (50-12), Tillamook (27-7), Banks (22-6) and a season-ending victory at Scappoose, 25-22.



Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian

Trey Hageman is a triple threat for the Astoria football team — the senior can run, catch and throw the ball for the Fishermen offense.

ASTORIA FOOTBALL

Coach: Howard Rub, 18th year

2016: 8-2 (5-0 Cowapa)

State playoffs: Defeated Gladstone (48-14), lost to Cottage Grove (21-25).

All-League losses: Fridtjof Fremstad, QB/DB (League Offensive MVP); Samboy Tuimato, LB (League co-Defensive MVP); Olaf Englund, WR; Keldon Littell, T/DL; Jared Lucore, C; Tyler Lyngstad, LB; Matthew Mather, G; Ryan Palek, WR/DB; Kyle Strange, WR; Isaac Villa, T.

All-League returners: Andrew Schauer-mann, Sr., K

It may be a little closer this season, but Astoria is still the league favorite.

The Fishermen

Specifically, Astoria lost six all-league starters on offense, including the league's Offensive Player of the Year (quarterback Fridtjof Fremstad), and the league's co-Defensive Player of the Year (linebacker Samboy Tuimato).

Astoria's five all-leaguers on defense have also graduated.

"We've got two returning starters on offense and two on defense," Rub said. "We are definitely in reload mode. Fortunately, the lower-level coaches have done a good job the last couple years."

Yes, strong teams at the freshman/sophomore and junior varsity levels always seem to save the Fishermen.

Astoria has dominated the Cowapa at the junior varsity level, with just one loss the last two years.

"To be honest, it's a credit to those coaches and players," Rub said. "And our incoming juniors look relatively varsity ready."

Some of those being counted on will include junior Tristan Wallace, the front-runner at quarterback to replace Fremstad.

"Tristan, K.J. Johnson, Trey (Hageman) — they all took reps (in last week's jamboree)," Rub said. "Going into North Bend, Tristan will be the starter. We like his athleticism. We also like how K.J. throws the ball, and we like Trey all-around. It's a good problem to have, three guys who you can count on if you need 'em."

At running back, "Tyler Ranta (Sr.) is one of those two returning starters on offense, so he should get the bulk of the load. We like our juniors, Connor Long and Niko Caruana, and we like the idea of converting lineman Daegan Chattick to fullback. We have some decent depth there, and some good options."

The Fishermen lost three all-league receivers — Olaf Englund, Ryan Palek and Kyle Strange.

"We're replacing a ton there, but Dylan Matteucci (Sr.) has looked really good. He should have a solid year. If K.J. isn't at quarterback, he will be the split end on the left. Ian Hunt (Jr.) has looked good, and Josh Olsen (Jr.) is a good athlete, once he's healed."

Other names to follow at the skill positions: seniors Hageman and Kainoa Kaonohi, and juniors Tryton Matlock and Justin Villa.

All-league placekicker Andrew Schauer-mann returns for his senior year.

As always, the Fishermen will have a top-flight defense.

Quotable: Following last week's jamboree, Rub said, "we made it look like football at times. And more importantly, good football."

Prediction: League champions.

Cain returns with 'a solid team' in '17

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria boys soccer team was 3-1 through four games last year. By midseason, they were 3-4, and the Fishermen never did regain their winning edge, as they finished 5-8 overall in Lee Cain's first year as head coach.

And following the graduation of their all-star goalkeeper, Cain and the Fishermen are facing a tough challenge as they enter the 2017 season.

The Cowapa

The league will take care of itself, Cain said. He's just focused on his team.

"I really don't know much about the league," he said. "I haven't cared, because I want to focus this summer on my boys and how we're playing."

Tillamook is the defending league champion, with Seaside looking to regain the title this year. Banks is also back with a varsity team, as the Cowapa returns to a full six-team league.

The Fishermen

Astoria lost some big-time scorers (Rafael Alcantar, and brothers Jorge and Luis Herrejon), and their big-time goalie (Kyle Birge, the Cowapa's Goalkeeper of the Year). So a rebuilding job is definitely in order for Cain and the Fish.

They're off to a good start.

"We've got a pretty solid team," Cain said, one week into practice. "Nine, possibly 10 seniors and six juniors, so it's a fairly mature team, and they're all playing well together."

Astoria had a turnout of 40-plus players, and Cain will keep 17 to 20 on the varsity.

"We will have a real solid JV squad that I want to keep together," he said. "A couple

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ASTORIA BOYS SOCCER

Coach: Lee Cain, 2nd year
2016: 5-8 (2-6 Cowapa)

Playoffs: None

All-League losses: Kyle Birge (GK of the Year); Rafael Alcantar, Jorge Herrejon, Luis Herrejon

All-League returners: Cody Early, Sr.; Jose Gonzalez, Sr.

years down the road we're going to have a real solid team."

For now, the Fishermen will replace Birge with senior Jake Hurd in goal.

"That's a tough spot to fill," said the coach. "Jake Hurd is going to be our starting keeper. He's been working hard and looks good. He played JV and part-time varsity last year; it's a big spot to fill, but I'm happy with what I'm seeing in Jake."

Elsewhere, Cain said, "Cole Beeson (Sr.) is back, Antonio Bermudez (Sr.), David Bermudez (So.), Trev Byrd (Sr.), Aldo Cruz (Jr.) ... Jose Gonzalez (Sr.) is really solid, strong and can play anywhere; Jonathan Jimenez, Christian Medina-Perez and Rodrigo Palacio-Rojas (all juniors) will be the varsity back line."

Also playing big roles will be returners Gustavo Velazquez (Sr.) in the mid-field and Porter Whitsett (Jr.). Serving as backup keepers to Hurd, the Fishermen have several incoming freshmen, as well as junior Taylor Palmberg.

Also on the preseason roster: senior Tyler Gagnon, junior Ivan DeLaCruz, sophomore Michael Postlewait and freshman Josh Condit.

Astoria girls soccer: Searching for goals

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

On the field, there were improvements shown for the Astoria girls soccer team in 2016. On paper, the highlights were few and far between.

Their 1-0 nonleague win over Rainier early in the season was Astoria's first victory over someone other than Tillamook in three years; and a 1-1 tie against Banks Oct. 20 highlighted the league season.

Unfortunately, still no playoffs, and the goals were still hard to come by for the Lady Fishermen.

Outside of the 11 goals

Astoria scored in two wins against Tillamook, the one goal vs. Rainier and the 1-1 tie against Banks represented the only other scores for the Fishermen, who were outscored 35-0 in their nine losses.

No one said life in the Conference of Champions was going to be easy.

The Cowapa

Last year's tie vs. Banks was big, but the jinx is still there — no league wins for Astoria over any team but Tillamook since 2013.

The Cowapa is a tough league, as first-year coach Tim Fastabend found

last season.

"The tough part is playing Valley Catholic and Scappoose," he said. "I think they only lost two or three seniors each."

Scappoose has won two state titles over the last four years, and Valley Catholic has played in four state championship games over the last five years. North Valley defeated Valley Catholic 2-1 in last year's 4A title game.

And the Valiants and Indians "are probably stronger than they were last year," Fastabend said. "A number of those girls play year-round, which is something we

don't have."

Still, the Lady Fish are hoping to be competitive in all games.

"We had a couple games against Seaside that could have gone either way," Fastabend said. "And with Lexi (Law) in goal, she saves a couple goals every game. If we can figure out how to go forward, we may have a little more offensive power this year, score some goals and be in a couple games."

The Lady Fish

"We have to replace a lot of seniors," Fastabend said. "We have some juniors

who have been with the varsity for three years. We have Lexi Law back, and that gives us a strong back end. Claire Albright, Sarah Lertora, Haley Ranta, Hannah McCauley — the senior group is pretty good.

"This will be the third varsity year for Andrea Harris; we have a couple sophomores and we're bringing in three freshmen. We have a good class mix."

That mix includes seniors Jasmin Mabry and Megan Schacher, and junior Samantha Messing. Stepping up to varsity are sophomores Taileigh Cole and Libby Whitsett,

ASTORIA GIRLS SOCCER

Coach: Tim Fastabend, 2nd year

2016: 3-9-2 (2-6-2 Cowapa)

Playoffs: None

All-League losses: Jenna Rudolph; Rachel Simmons

All-League returners: None

while freshmen Elle Esplien and Hayley Kelley will see action at the varsity level.

"It's a fairly athletic team," Fastabend said. "We're not strong technically, but they have a good attitude and can get up and down the field. We had kind of a weak summer turnout, so it might take us three weeks to get up to speed, but the girls seem enthusiastic and willing to work hard."

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