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**SEASIDE WINTER SPORTS PREVIEWS**

## Seaside boys set to defend the crown

By GARY HENLEY  
*The Daily Astorian*

Defending state champions. That's a pretty nice title to enter a season with, as the Seaside boys basketball team will.

The Gulls certainly earned it last year, winning 23 of 24 games, including their final six, which included a 71-63 victory over Valley Catholic in the state championship game.

Now comes the tough part — keeping the title while every team you play is trying to take it away.

“We had a target on our back all last year, from what we had done the previous year,” said Seaside coach Bill Westerholm, entering his 20th year. “We know (the target) is going to be there. Teams are going to come after us, because we’re one of the teams that has shown to be successful the last five or six years and can compete, year in and year out. It’s a good position to be in.”

And keep in mind: Seaside is still the best in the Cowapa League, and for the last three years, the best in the Cowapa League has ended up in the state championship game. So don’t be surprised to see the Gulls right back in Forest Grove playing for another state title in March.

### THE COWAPA

The toughest part for Seaside may be winning a league title. It’s all downhill once they get to the state tournament.

“Once again, it will be a tough league,” Westerholm said. “Valley Catholic has a lot back — they’re going to be tall and physical; Banks has some of their big guns back, Dalton Renne and Blake Gobel, and they’ll be in the running for one of the top spots in state.

“Tillamook finished strong last year and they get most of their team back. Scappoose has some good athletes and lost only two seniors. Astoria has good height. We should be right in the mix in league, and right in the mix of the state playoff run.”



**Seaside coach Bill Westerholm hopes to hold another state championship trophy come March.**

### SEASIDE BOYS BASKETBALL

**Coach:** Bill Westerholm, 20th year  
**2016-17:** 23-1 (9-1 league)  
**Playoffs:** State champions. Defeated Gladstone, North Bend, Valley Catholic in state tournament.  
**All-league losses:** Jackson Januik (MVP), Attikin Babb, Hunter Thompson  
**All-league returners:** Chase Januik, Jr.; Payton Westerholm, Jr.

### THE GULLS

Seaside spent most of the boys soccer season ranked No. 1 in the state, and most of the football season ranked in the top five. Most members of the basketball team played one of the two spots.

The Gulls came up short of state championships in both, which could serve as an inspiration for basketball.

“They had a bit of disappointment from not going as far as they had hoped,” Westerholm said of the fall sports athletes. “They all wanted to go a little farther, but that may benefit us this winter.”

First off, the Gulls will miss last year’s seniors — Jackson Januik, Attikin Babb, Hunter Thompson and Otto Hoekstre.

But, the Gulls still have a Januik (Chase), and a Thompson (Duncan), with returners

who experienced last year’s state title.

“Colton Carter is a natural leader,” Westerholm said. “He’s a senior who hasn’t played much varsity, but he leads us in practice. Then we have Payton (Westerholm) and Chase — they know the routine and played significant roles on last year’s team.

“Payton is going to be the point guard, and Chase is still in the off-wing role. Then we have Duncan Thompson, who will move into a starting spot at low-post. He can step out and play the wing, too.

“Colton will be a low-post who provides some toughness and rebounding inside.”

The Gulls are not very big, but they were the smallest team in the state tournament last year, so no worries.

Coach Westerholm said,

“Payton is 6-1, Chase 5-10, Duncan 6-1, Ryan Hague is almost 6-2 — he will be starting at wing; Brayden Johnson is 6-foot, a sophomore with good basketball skills; Beau Johnson (So.) can shoot it from the outside; Dylan Meyer (Jr.) has more of a big frame, with a good mid-range game; and Rafi Sibony is a solid 5-11, can come in and hit perimeter shots, with good athleticism.”

Rounding out the roster are seniors Ashton Boyd, Astor Landwehr and Camdon Ritterby (6-3), in his first year of organized basketball.

Januik, Thompson and Westerholm are all juniors, so the Gulls might as well include their annual trip to Forest Grove on the schedule.

“One thing I know is that we’ll be able to score the basketball,” coach Westerholm said. “Once we get everything together, we’ll make a good run at the league championship, and make a run at another state championship.”

**Prediction:** League champions, and another three-day stay at the state tournament for the Gulls.

## Small numbers, still high hopes for Seaside girls

By GARY HENLEY  
*The Daily Astorian*

### SEASIDE GIRLS BASKETBALL

**Coach:** Mike Hawes, 2nd year  
**2016-17:** 20-5 (9-1 league)  
**Playoffs:** Third place at state. Defeated Cascade and Marshfield, lost to Sutherlin.  
**All-league losses:** Maddi Utti (MVP), Sydney Villegas  
**All-league returners:** Bryre Babbitt, Sr.; Jetta Ideue, Sr.

Seaside girls basketball coach Mike Hawes doesn’t pull any punches when talking about the upcoming season: “We’re going to be thin, no doubt about it.”

Seaside’s best player over the last four years, their all-everything, is well on her way to a promising hoops career at Fresno State University. Maddi Utti has graduated, but life goes on for the Lady Gulls.

“Obviously this is the transition year without Maddi, and there’s no way that we can replicate all the things that she did,” Hawes said. “But at the same time, these girls want to establish their own identity.”

And establishing any kind of identity in Cowapa League girls basketball is never easy.

### THE COWAPA

“Banks will be good, Astoria should be better, and you never know what Valley Catholic might have,” said Hawes, while it’s hard to imagine the Gulls not being a part of the state tournament, which they’ve played in every year for the past four years.

Over that same time span, Seaside has a league record of 35-5.

“I’m sure there’s some teams out there that would happily like to get back at us,” Hawes said.

### THE LADY GULLS

Utti graduated from Seaside as the all-time team leader in career points (1,794), assists (504) and steals (503), and season record-holder in all three.

She will be impossible to replace, and the Gulls can’t

even begin to try.

“We still have some kids who can shoot the ball, and we’ve got some quickness,” Hawes said. “We’ll just try to play to our strengths. The idea is to have some different people who can handle the ball. Whoever gets the dang rebound — which will be a challenge, because we’re really short — we can spread and go, and hopefully fire away. I’m as curious as anyone to see how we’ll do.”

There’s still plenty of varsity experience on the roster, with seniors Bryre Babbitt, Jetta Ideue and Anesha Smart; and juniors Annaka Garhofer and Emy Kiser.

Junior Gretchen Hoekstre is dealing with a shoulder injury and hopes to be back by January, while junior Trinity Turner suffered a recent knee injury, and may be lost for the season, Hawes said.

Making the jump to varsity will be juniors Jessica Angulo-Joli, Alyssa Goin and Katie Zagata. Sophomore Ruby Davis rounds out the roster.

“We’ve had some injuries and sickness, so we were running about 20 players,” Hawes said after two weeks. “The numbers have been challenging. It’s leaving us pretty thin.”

## Seaside swim team rebuilds, refills the pool

By GARY HENLEY  
*The Daily Astorian*

While Seaside will see the return of a couple of state-qualifying girls swimmers, the Gulls will have to replace some high-powered boys, including their entire 200-yard freestyle relay team.

Will Garvin, James Kennedy, Luke Liljenwall and Brad Rzewnicki played a big role in helping Seaside to a second-place team finish at districts last year. But the Fab Four has graduated, forcing a quick rebuilding job for head coach Shane Spell.



**Daily Astorian**  
**Kendy Lin is in the senior year of a very successful high school swimming career at Seaside.**

And rebuild they did. From a total of 18 swimmers

last year, to 34 this year.

While the Gulls have restocked the pool, they will have to wait before they can use it, as a remodeling project has closed Sunset Pool temporarily. As a result, the entire team has to hop on a bus four times per week and travel to either Nehalem or the Astoria Aquatic Center for practices.

In the meantime, Seaside has “lots of young, new swimmers who have been working hard and having a great attitude about hopping on that bus each day,” Spell said. “I’m pretty confident we’ll have some big surprises

before the season is over.”

The first month of the season will be all road meets for the Gulls, “and then every Thursday in January we’ll be at home,” Spell said. “We’re looking forward to practicing in our home pool, once the Sunset Empire remodeling project is complete.”

Currently, the team has “more bus time than water time, but we’re appreciative of everyone who has made it possible for us to get that practice time,” said Spell, referring to the Astoria Aquatic Center, and Nehalem’s North County Recreation District.

### THE SWIMMERS

#### Girls

Yaneli Aguilera, Jr.  
Sierra Bailey, So.  
Xcaret Bello, So.  
Cailin Bennett, Jr.  
Brooke Blankenhorn, Fr.  
Maddy Brown, Jr.  
Ashley Conrad, So.  
Jacie Gregory, So.  
Anna Huddleston, Jr.  
Vanessa Hughes, Jr.  
Kaisa Liljenwall, So.  
Kendy Lin, Jr.  
Kimberly Mella, Jr.  
Tyler Miller, So.  
Riley Mitchell, So.  
Lola Paser-Johnson, Fr.

Emily Philbrook, Fr.  
Aviana Pierce, Fr.  
Bella Samuelson, So.  
Lisette Santiago, So.  
Peyton Sims, Fr.  
Kara Spell, So.  
Anastasia Tarvin, So.

#### Boys

Dawson Blanchard, Sr.  
Isaiah Collins, Sr.  
Shawn Collins, Fr.  
Leif DeWinter, Fr.  
Henry Garvin, Fr.  
Nick Konya, Jr.  
Axel Martinez, Jr.  
Lucas Nagle, Sr.  
Joao Pedro Polles, Sr.  
Chris Quashnick, Jr.  
Josh Shipley, Jr.

Key returners for the Gulls this season include state qualifier Kendy Lin in the girls’ 200-yard freestyle, while Isa-

iah Collins returns for the boys, after swimming the lead leg for the state qualifying 200-yard medley relay team.

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