

ASTORIA SPRING SPORTS PREVIEW 2018 • MORE ON PAGE 4

Challenges ahead for new-look Astoria team

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

"Filling big shoes" will be the theme this year for Astoria baseball, from the players to the coach.

While the players are busy trying to replace nine seniors off last year's team, Glen Fromwiller steps in as the new coach, and all he has to do is replace the winningest coach in Oregon high school baseball history.

Dave Gasser has retired for good, and Fromwiller is facing his first big challenge as he takes over.

With the major hit that Astoria took in the graduation department last season, the Fishermen find themselves in a rebuilding phase.

There will be a lot of unproven talent on the varsity field to start the 2018 season.

"We're a little inexperienced at the varsity level," said Fromwiller, who was the junior varsity coach. "It's a good group of guys. The juniors who are coming up to help us from JV are a competitive, hard-working group."

"We've had great JV teams the last couple years, and I'm confident they'll be able to step into that role. We just have to get some actual time at the varsity level. The speed



Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian
Ebin Hillard and a young Astoria baseball team have some high hopes in 2018.

of the game is what they need.

"As far as being skilled players and knowing the fundamentals, it's pretty solid," he said. "It's just a different game between JV and varsity."

THE COWAPA

"I expect Banks to be one of the teams to beat," Fromwiller said. "Something's happening in Banks — they're rolling in all their sports."

"Scappoose is always there, and Seaside's improving. Banks and Scappoose will be a challenge, but I won't look past anyone this year. Seaside will be a tough game, and even Tillamook and Valley."

THE FISHERMEN

In addition to the nine seniors

ASTORIA BASEBALL

Coach: Glen Fromwiller, 1st year
2017: 20-6 (12-3 Cowapa)
Playoffs: Won state play-off games at Estacada (3-0) and Hidden Valley (8-7); lost at La Grande (2-7)

Key losses: Jackson Arnsdorf, Ole Englund, Fridtjof Fremstad, Jasin Gohl, Tyler Lyngstad, Cade O'Brien, Kyle Strange, Samboy Tuitamo

Key returners: Trey Hageman, Burke Mathews

lost, junior pitcher Tristan Wallace could miss the majority — if not all — of the '18 season, after a knee injury in football.

Still, the Fishermen won't be completely without experience on the mound.

Trey Hageman is one of just two seniors, and will be looked to as the No. 1 pitcher.

As for Wallace, Fromwiller said, "Everything I've heard, his rehab will take him into the summer. That does put a hamper on our pitching staff. It is what it is."

That means Hageman will "take on a big brunt of the load, now that we don't have Tristan," he said.

When he's not pitching, Hageman will move from his spot at third

base and will see action in the middle infield.

Taking over at third will be senior Zac Patterson, a backup at third the last two years.

Sophomore Dylan Rush will pitch and also hold down a spot in the middle infield.

Others with limited varsity experience include juniors Josiah Hirsch (first base), and pitchers Calvin Kaul, Burke Mathews and Will Reed.

"Our four pitchers will be Trey, Calvin, Burke and Dylan," Fromwiller said. "From there, we go young. (Sophomore) Ryan Stutznegger can pitch, along with a sophomore transfer, Adam Feldman."

Sophomore Brooks Fromwiller could also see action on the mound, while sophomore Ebin Hillard will split time at catcher with Feldman, in addition to being one of Astoria's heavy hitters.

"There's going to be competition to earn your spot this year," coach Fromwiller said. "Nobody's coming with an 'I own this spot' attitude. As young as we are, I welcome that. It's fun to have that competitive edge, even at practice."

Pitching coach Ralph Steinback returns, along with assistant Ryker Thornton, while former Fishermen Ian Erickson and Tyler Lyngstad will coach the JV program.

The future is now for young Astoria team

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

A 3-1 start to the 2017 season quickly went south for the Astoria softball team.

The same day the Lady Fishermen beat Cottage Grove 19-1 in the Seaside Tournament, Astoria lost its next game to Warrenton, 11-0, then proceeded to lose four of its next five games.

The Fishermen bounced back briefly in league play, opening with an 18-8 win over Tillamook. But Astoria would finish just over .500 in league at 8-7. The hopes were higher for a team that went 9-6 the year before.

THE COWAPA

"Banks is definitely going to be tough, and Scappoose is always good," said Astoria coach Kent Israel Jr. "We won't be sorry to see Scappoose go," as the Indians leave the Cowapa League after this school year, and will move to the 5A level.

Astoria lost its 2018 league opener at Scappoose, 13-6, in a game that was much closer, as the Fishermen held an early 4-1 lead over the Indians, who played in last year's state quarterfinals.

"We're definitely making progress and getting better," Israel said after the game. "The score was not indicative of how close it was. We had some errors that gave them some extra outs. The sixth inning alone we gave them seven outs."

THE LADY FISH

The expectations will be high again for Astoria, which returns with a two-year starter in the circle and three all-leaguers.

Julia Norris and McKailyn Rogers will take turns starting at pitcher, exchanging spots in center field when the other one is pitching. Both could also see time at shortstop.

"I'm still getting that pitcher/shortstop/center field rotation sorted out," Israel said. "Julia, McKailyn and Hailey O'Brien are all in the mix there."

And no matter who the starters are in the outfield, he said, "this could be the strongest outfield we've had since that group two years ago."

At the corner infield spots, Astoria has Brooklynn Hankwitz at first base and Lexxis Lyngstad at third.

Kayla Helligso takes over behind the plate, replacing Caitlyn Hougham.

Besides Rogers, the only other seniors on the Astoria roster are Moira Welsh and starting outfielder Hailey Ranta.

There's also only two juniors — Lyngstad and starting infielder Jenna Barendse.

The freshmen and sophomores take up most of Astoria's roster.

Taileigh Cole is the fifth sophomore, joining Hankwitz, Helligso, Norris and O'Brien.

And all five freshmen (Emma Biederman, Madi Both, Halle Helmersen, Allyson Pritchard, Shelby Rasmusen) have already seen action.

ASTORIA SOFTBALL

Coach: Kent Israel Jr., 3rd year
2017: 11-14 (8-7 Cowapa)
Playoffs: Lost regional play-in at North Bend (0-10)
All-league losses: Abi Danen, Rylee DeMander, Caitlyn Hougham
All-league returners: Julia Norris, So., Hailey Ranta, Sr., McKailyn Rogers, Sr.

Talent, big numbers and Hageman lead Astoria

By GARY HENLEY
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While the Astoria girls are focused on winning their fourth straight state championship, the Astoria boys are hoping to work their way up the 4A podium on their side of the meet, as the 2018 track season gets underway.

"It's pretty common that once you have a lot of success, it continues to build on itself," said Astoria coach Garrett Parks. "And our boys have been sitting in the wings and have been very supportive of the girls, and kind of biding their time. Now we're starting to see not just the talent, but the numbers go up like crazy."

Astoria's preseason roster includes a whopping 51 athletes on the boys' side.

"We have a handful of seniors who have come out with not a lot of experience, but definitely have a lot of potential," Parks said.

For the girls, meanwhile, when you have just one athlete on the team who can outscore 90 percent of all the other teams at the state

meet ... senior Darian Hageman is the reason the Lady Fishermen (surprise, surprise) are the favorites once again to capture another 4A state title, as the Astoria girls look to extend the dynasty one more year.

Graduation and a few other losses may make it a little tougher than in the past.

"There's a lot of new faces," Parks said. "We're looking at a lot of young kids having to step in and fill some big holes. We've lost some really good talent over the last couple years."

In the sprints, Astoria lost Natalie Cummings (second at state in the 100) to graduation, and sister Gracie Cummings (eighth at state in the 100 and 200) to golf.

But Astoria has reloaded with some young talent, namely freshmen Kelsey Fausett (sprinter, middle distances), Abby Groncki (distances) and Lillian Randall (sprints).

And of course there's the returning talent that includes sophomore Elizabeth Barnett in the

hurdles, seniors McKenzie Burnett and Libbie Nash in the distance races, and Astoria's returning state champion 400-meter relay squad still has Andrea Harris and Nara Van de Grift. In their first meet of the season, Astoria won with a completely new foursome of Barnett, Fausett, Randall and Sophie Long.

In the throws, Kes Sandstrom will be looking to improve on her ninth place finish at state in the discus, and should challenge the Cowapa's top thrower — Seaside's Gretchen Hoekstre — in the shot put. Senior Taylor Cosner is currently ranked fourth in the state in the discus and javelin, and Kajsja Jackson should be strong in the javelin.

Astoria's star athlete is obviously Hageman, already signed and sealed for Oregon State next year.

Hageman is the defending state champion in the high jump and triple jump, and also placed second in the long jump and sixth in the pole vault.

Joining Hageman in the jumps will be juniors Heaven Barrett and Emilli DeLong.

On the boys' side, the obvious point-scorer will be senior thrower Tim Barnett.

Barnett currently has the best marks at the 4A level in the shot put and discus, second-best in the javelin. He is also closing in on some very old school records.

By the time the district meet rolls around, Barnett could be the state favorite in all three events.

"(Barnett's) attitude and work ethic in the off-season have been a huge driving component for the other athletes getting on board and working out in the off-season," Parks said. "Our throwers are always strong and carry us in many ways, but we're going to be strong in the jumps (Karsten Johnson, Isaac Brockman, Michael Kee, Justin Villa) and the hurdles (Kee, Ian Hunt, Niko Caruana). We're building well and looking to continue that."

Prediction: Another state title for the Lady Fishermen; a league title for the boys?

Large turnout of players for Astoria girls golf team

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

The numbers keep improving for Astoria girls golf. From five golfers two years ago, to eight last year, and now the Lady Fishermen will field 11 golfers for the 2018 season.

Astoria has just three returners — senior Sarah Lertora and juniors Samantha Hemsley and Jenna Travers.

The rest are first-year golf-

ers. The list includes senior Sierra Adams, junior Gracie Cummings, sophomore Kaitlyn Boutin, and freshmen Xochitl Perez, Constance Rouda and Annalyse Steele.

Rounding out the roster will be foreign exchange students Emilie Bonacina from Italy and Yaein Kim from South Korea.

Eleven golfers will go a long ways in sending Astoria to the state tournament.

In the Cowapa League, "I expect Valley Catholic to be the top team,

with Scappoose, Seaside and us battling for second," said Astoria coach Chris Hunt. "Valley and Scappoose have the top two returning individuals in Caroline Hobson (Valley Catholic) and Morgan Hall (Scappoose)."

Behind Hobson and Hall, Hunt said that two of his golfers — Hemsley and Travers — "should be in the next tier of golfers battling to round out the top five individuals in the league."

Elsewhere, "Sarah (Ler-

tora) improved greatly last year, and will provide us with a solid player in the No. 3 slot," he said. "Much of the early part of the season will be getting the new players lots of reps, as I get an idea of who will fill out the No. 4 and No. 5 slots."

"Overall, it's a great bunch of players, with outstanding leadership from my returnees and first year players who are picking things up and improving quickly."

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