

SEASIDE SPRING SPORTS PREVIEW 2018 • MORE ON PAGE 8

Seaside golf team in state title contention

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

It's been a great year for boys sports at Seaside High School, with state play-off appearances in football and boys soccer, and of course another state title in basketball.

One team that's always competitive: coach Jim Poetsch's boys golf squad. After winning state titles in 2014 and 2015, the Gulls are once again part of the state championship discussion.

Especially after their performance in the first two meets of 2018.

The Gulls came up 20 strokes short of state contender Valley Catholic in a



Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian

Samson Sibony is one of several good, experienced golfers for the Seaside boys golf team.

dual meet March 21, and two days later, Seaside finished ahead of a field that included

all 5A schools in The Dalles Invitational.

If they don't win a state

title this year, the Gulls will be right back in the running in 2019, with most of their golf-

ers returning and more on the way.

The leader and lone senior for the varsity this season is Jackson Kunde, who placed ninth individually in last year's district meet.

Rounding out Seaside's usual top five are juniors Connor Merrell, Mason Shamion and Samson Sibony, along with freshman Curtis Kunde, who tied his brother Jackson for Seaside's top score in The Dalles Invite.

After the loss to the Valiants, Poetsch said, "We had 14 double bogeys, two triples and two quadruples today. If we can turn those into bogeys, we win this match. Even with those holes, we are light years ahead of where we were at this time last season."

"All of our returners scored much better than their opening scores from a year ago and our freshman, Curtis Kunde, was able to get those first match jitters out of the way."

"Valley Catholic is a team I expect to compete for the state title in May, and they only got us by 20 on a day we gave 42 strokes away on blowup holes. As the season progresses, we will learn to limit damage and I expect we will have a very successful year."

Junior Mason Crawford has also seen time with the varsity, while Seaside's current junior varsity includes Chris Bodner, Leif DeWinter, Nick Mace and John Whittle.



Seaside High School

Left to right: Madi Grimm, Tristyn McFadden, Sydney Rapp and Caitlin Hillman.

Young athletes on the course for Seaside

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

The Seaside girls golf team enters the 2018 season in much better shape than they finished 2017.

Last year, the final tournament of the year for the Gulls was the district tourney at Forest Hills, in which Seaside had only three scoring golfers (to qualify for state as a team, you need at least four).

For now, the Gulls are back to four. And maybe five.

Either way, it's still going to be a young group for second-year coach Mike Verhulst.

Seaside played its first two tournaments of 2018 with sophomores Caitlin Hillman and Sydney Rapp, and freshmen Madi Grimm and Tristyn McFadden, who is currently listed as the Gulls' No. 1 golfer.

Hillman is the only returner from last season, one of the three Seaside players in the Cowapa League meet and region-

als. Top golfer Caroline Kotson has graduated.

Only three of the Cowapa schools had four or more golfers in last year's league meet, won by Valley Catholic, ahead of Astoria and Scappoose.

Oregon Episcopal won the district meet, which serves as the qualifying tournament for state.

"I'm excited to see how the girls progress throughout the season, and look forward to continuing to grow the program," Verhulst said. "The girls are eager to move into league play and get experience with the new scoring format for the matches (modified Stableford). A huge focus for our program will be developing our short game."

And the Gulls may add one more golfer to the roster at some point. "It looks like we may be adding a fifth golfer to the mix with a recent out-of-state transfer student," Verhulst said. "We look forward to adding her into the mix for league matches."

Seaside most improved in Cowapa League

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

It's the price you pay when you have a great basketball team.

While other baseball teams are out practicing, many of your players are still shooting 3-pointers and winning championships.

So it is with Seaside. After most teams began practices Feb. 26, the Gulls had exactly four days between their last basketball game and the first baseball contest.

In his 21st year as the Seaside coach, Joel Dierickx was pleased with a 2-2 start after four games.

"It's a good measuring stick of where we're at and what we need to work on," Dierickx said. "There's a lot of areas that need work. (The basketball players) had only three practices, for the most part. We'll figure it out."

THE COWAPA

"I think Banks is head and shoulders above everybody else," Dierickx said. "They're a real solid team, in all facets. From athleticism to speed, good pitching and contact hitting. They're just super solid."

"And Astoria's always going to be there," he said. "They will always be tough. Tillamook is a much-improved team. Scappoose has quality. It's like any



The Daily Astorian

Seaside baseball is armed with talent this year, including pitcher Duncan Thompson.

other sport — the Cowapa League is going to be very, very strong."

Seaside finished 4-11 in league play last year, which included three wins over Tillamook and a season-ending victory over Scappoose.

THE GULLS

Most area coaches see the Gulls as possibly the most-improved team.

"We're hoping," Dierickx said. "We have a lot of experience coming back, and some athleticism. Combined with some baseball knowledge and doing things the right way, maybe we can win some of the closer games we've had."

Call it "young experience," because

SEASIDE BASEBALL

Coach: Joel Dierickx, 21st year
2017: 7-15 (4-11 Cowapa)
Key losses: Otto Hoekstre, Scott Plampin, Brent Walsh
Key returners: Dawson Blanchard, Isaias Jantes, Gage McFadden, Duncan Thompson, Payton Westerholm

the Gulls only have four seniors. Several juniors have been starting since their freshman season.

The Gulls had six pitchers listed on their preseason roster, but "we'll see how that pans out," Dierickx said. "Three of the six have just started throwing. They still need time to grow, learn the mechanics and gain the arm strength. That's a big question mark. Once April rolls around, we'll see how it pans out. I think all of them have the capability to be pretty solid pitchers."

Among the throwers are juniors Travis Fenton, Gage McFadden, Duncan Thompson and Payton Westerholm. The last three also start in the infield when the others pitch.

The seniors are Dawson Blanchard, Ashton Boyd, Astor Landwehr and Parker Moore, with additional juniors Isaias Jantes, Dylan Meyer and catcher Alex Teubner, who missed action early in the season with a high ankle sprain.

Rounding out the roster are sophomores Brayden Johnson and Gavin Rich.

Hoekstre to lead Seaside girls track team

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

They've got the depth, the athletes and the talent to compete.

Now it's just time for the Seaside track team to turn it all loose on the Cowapa League.

Head coach Jeff Kilday's team is loaded with athletes and will be looking to improve on their finish in last year's district meet — a tall task in the Class 4A's "Conference of Champions."

The Seaside boys are coming off a 10th-place finish in the 2017 state meet, even after taking third in their own league.

Meanwhile, the Lady Gulls (and everybody else) will be chasing the

Astoria girls' track dynasty, as the Fishermen look to win their fourth straight state championship.

The big point-scorer for the Seaside girls — this year and next — will be junior thrower Gretchen Hoekstre.

Hoekstre dominated the shot put and discus events in the Cowapa League, winning both district titles on her way to second- and third place finishes, respectively, in the same events at the state meet as only a sophomore.

Hoekstre is the top returner, statewide, in both events.

Also on the girls' side, junior Katie Zagata is back as one of the top distance runners in the Cowapa.

The Seaside boys took a big hit in the graduation department. Gone are district champions Will Garvin (300-

meter hurdles), Jackson Januik (two-time state champion in the 800 meters) and Phoenix Johnson (high jump and triple jump, second in the long jump). Talented distance runner Bradley Rzewnicki also graduated.

Seniors Colton Carter (hurdles, jumps) and Rafi Sibony (distance events) are the returning mainstays, while the Gulls will pin their hopes on some young talent.

Freshman Henry Garvin and Dodger Holmstedt took first and second, respectively, in the 400 meters in Seaside's first meet this season.

Sophomore thrower Derrick Bennett could be a big point-scorer in the shot put and discus.

Kilday is assisted by Jo Ellingson, Jarom Bowles and Margie Leary.

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