

SPORTS

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Astoria hammers Valley Catholic

The Daily Astorian

Almost a third of the way into the league season, Cowapa League baseball is shaping up to be a two-team race between the same two teams that battled to a co-championship last year.

Banks holds down first place at 3-0, but only by a half-game, as the Astoria Fishermen (3-1) are on a roll and rising fast.

After a rough first inning Thursday at CMH Field, the Fishermen scored a routine 14-4 win over Valley Catholic, Astoria's third straight league victory.

Valley Catholic's Porter Agnew belted the first pitch of the game for a solo home run and the Valiants led 2-0 after a half-inning.

But the Fishermen rarely, if ever, lose an inning.

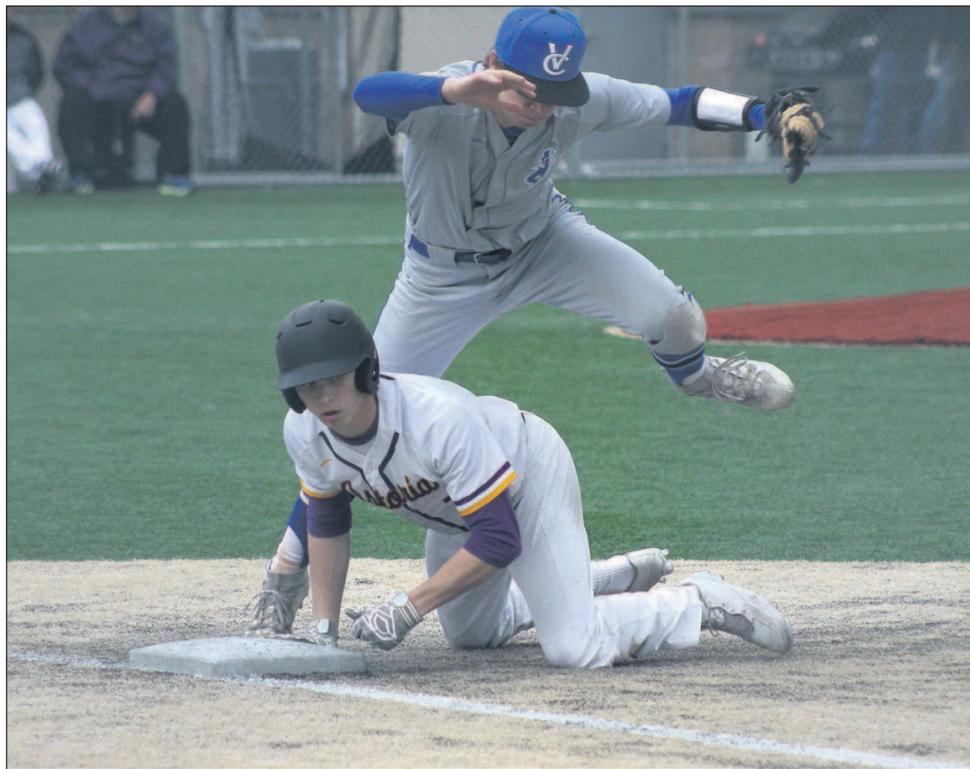
Astoria rallied with four runs in the bottom of the first, all runs scoring with two outs. The Fishermen gradually pulled away, taking advantage of a beaten and battered Valley Catholic pitching staff.

The Valiants were playing their third game in four days, and three Valley Catholic pitchers could do very little to help, giving up 10 hits with 11 walks and two hit batters. Defensively, the Valiants committed four errors.

Meanwhile, Astoria's first nine hits came from nine different players, before a walk-off, game-ending grand slam home run by Burke Matthews that gave the Fishermen a 10-run lead.

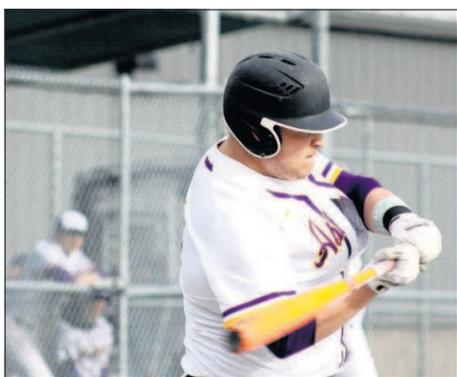
Trey Hageman pitched a complete game for Astoria, allowing eight hits with two strikeouts and three walks.

The Fishermen defense helped Hageman's cause, playing error-less ball in the field and making the plays that led to seven runners left on base for the Valiants.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The ball gets away from the Valley Catholic defense during a pickoff attempt against the Fishermen.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Josiah Hirsch takes a big swing for Astoria.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Kenneth Trey Hageman delivers a pitch.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

SOFTBALL

Astoria defeats Valiants, again

BEAVERTON — The Astoria softball team has scored a combined 31 runs in two wins over Valley Catholic this week, following an 18-9 victory Thursday over the Valiants in Cowapa League action.

McKailyn Rogers pitched the first five innings for Astoria, and Julia Norris finished in the circle.

In addition to drawing numerous walks and hit batters, Astoria hit the ball well when the Valiants were throwing strikes.

Brooklynn Hankwitz was 2-for-3 with a double and a triple, while Rogers added a pair of doubles.

Norris also went 2-for-3, while Valley Catholic's Natalie Alvis was 4-for-5.

Astoria has two games next week against a struggling Tillamook team which has lost seven straight.

GOLF

Astoria, Seaside compete in Scappoose Invite

BANKS — Astoria finished a close third in a rain-shortened Scappoose Invitational golf match Thursday at Quail Valley Golf Course.

In a Stableford-scored match, Valley Catholic earned the victory with 71 points, followed by Scappoose (60), Astoria (58), Seaside (21) and Tillamook (3).

Due to poor course conditions and rain, the 18-hole event was halted after nine holes.

Valley Catholic's Caroline Hobson was medalist with 27 points. Samantha Hemsley led Astoria with 20 points, while teammate Sarah Lertora (11 points) had the only birdie of the day, with a chip-in on the par 4 eighth hole.

Also competing for the Lady Fishermen were Jenna Travers (19 points), Sierra Adams (8) and Gracie Cummings (3).

Seaside sent three golfers to the match, and the Gulls were led by Tristyn McFadden with 13 points. Caitlin Hillman and Maddie Grimm scored four apiece.

Astoria competes Monday in the Seaside Invitational, which will take place at Gearhart Golf Links.

— *The Daily Astorian*

Finals Round 4? Warriors, Cavs vulnerable

By **BRIAN MAHONEY**
Associated Press

Maybe this is the year.

Maybe the Golden State Warriors, opening the postseason without Stephen Curry or any momentum, won't be the best of the West, where there's a Houston team that can run and gun as well as they do.

Maybe the Cleveland Cavaliers, starting from the middle of the pack in the East, just have too big a hill to climb, even with LeBron James carrying them.

Or perhaps none of that matters, and the NBA is headed toward Round 4 of its reigning rivalry.

The postseason opens Saturday and it's far from a guarantee it ends with a record fourth straight NBA Finals matchup between the Warriors and Cavaliers. Neither was the best team in its conference during the regular season — the Cavaliers were only No. 4 in the East — and it's not hard to envision a Houston to Toronto trip replacing what's become an annual Oakland, California, to Cleveland itinerary.

Then again, the Warriors could be as dangerous as ever once Curry returns from a knee injury that could have him back for the second round. James has played in the last seven NBA Finals, so nobody knows how to get to the finish line better, no matter from where he starts.

And the other top contenders

NBA PLAYOFFS: RND 1

No. 6 seed
NEW ORLEANS PELICANS
 (48-34)

No. 3 seed
PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS
 (49-33)

Game 1: Best of 7 series
 Saturday, 7:30 PM
 At Portland, Moda Center
TV: ESPN

have to overcome their history of disappointments. Houston's Mike D'Antoni and James Harden have never won, and Chris Paul hasn't even gotten out of the second round. The Raptors had their best regular season ever, but they were last seen in the postseason getting stomped in four straight by James and the Cavs last year in the second round.

Golden State faces No. 7 San Antonio on Saturday in the post-season opener, followed by the top-seeded Raptors and No. 8

Washington Wizards in the East. Sixth-seeded Miami and No. 3 Philadelphia are then followed by Portland-New Orleans in the other 3-6 matchup.

On Sunday, it's No. 7 Milwaukee at No. 2 Boston, and the Cavs hosting the No. 5 Indiana Pacers in the East, followed by No. 5 Utah at No. 4 Oklahoma City. The Rockets wrap up opening weekend against No. 8 Minnesota, ending the NBA's longest playoff drought with its first playoff appearance since 2004.

A look at some things to watch in the first round:

GOLDEN AGAIN?

Curry's injury is the only one that remains, but the Warriors at one point down the stretch were also without Kevin Durant, Draymond Green and Klay Thompson, too. Even the champions couldn't overcome that, dropping six of their final 10 games, but they start against a San Antonio team whose injury problems are every bit as bad, assuming Kawhi Leonard doesn't return after missing almost the entire season.

STREAKING SIXERS

Philadelphia is the hottest team in the postseason, winning its final 16 games to finish 52-30. But the 76ers are led by postseason newcomers in Joel Embiid and rookie Ben Simmons — and Embiid is still

recovering from a broken orbital bone and concussion as the postseason begins — and will have to overcome their inexperience and a rugged Miami team.

THUNDER STRIKE?

It was an up-and-down regular season for Oklahoma City, which acquired Paul George and Carmelo Anthony to play with Russell Westbrook but finished well back of Houston and Golden State. But the Thunder might be one of those teams better built for the postseason, and they got an easier road when they won three straight to grab home-court advantage against a Utah team that would have had it before a season-ending loss at Portland.

WHO WINS?

As good as Toronto is, it seems futile picking against James and the firepower around him to get to the NBA Finals. But the Cavaliers don't defend well enough and can be picked apart by top offenses, so go with the West champion to win the title, particularly if it's Golden State or Houston.

Take it from another champion.

"I like Houston and Golden State, pending their health, as being my top two favorites," five-time winner Kobe Bryant said during a conference call to promote his new basketball analysis show "Detail" that will run on ESPN during the postseason.

Dempsey suspended additional game

NEW YORK — Seattle Sounders forward Clint Dempsey was suspended an additional game for an incident on March 18 against FC Dallas. That brings the suspension to two games. Dempsey sat out the Sounders' game against Montreal on March 31, and he'll miss this weekend's match against Sporting Kansas City.

Dempsey was also fined an undisclosed amount by the MLS Disciplinary Committee, according to a league release on Thursday. The statement said the suspension was for "violent contact." Dempsey was shown a red card and ejected from the Dallas game after a video review for elbowing Jacori Hayes.

— *Associated Press*

A'ja Wilson top pick of WNBA draft

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A'ja Wilson is thrilled for the chance to head to Las Vegas.

The South Carolina star was the No. 1 pick in the WNBA draft by the Aces on Thursday night.

"It's such a great feeling, just an amazing way to cap off my collegiate career," Wilson said. "My heart was pounding before she announced she was picking."

The 6-foot-5 star admitted she has only been there once, but already knows the Nevada city slogan.

"What happens in Sin City stays in Sin City," Wilson said laughing.

The Aces, who moved to Las Vegas from San Antonio this past

winter, had the first pick for the second straight season.

Ohio State's Kelsey Mitchell went second to the Indiana Fever. Indiana also took Victoria Vivians with the eighth pick, giving coach Pokey Chatman a strong young core to build around.

The Chicago Sky took Diamond DeShields, who spent the season playing professionally in Turkey, and Gabby Williams of Connecticut with the next two picks.

"I'm excited to see what we can do," DeShields said.

UCLA guard Jordin Canada was selected fifth by the Seattle Storm. She'll get a chance to learn from Sue Bird.

"I love Sue Bird, she's one of my role models," Canada said.

Azura Stevens, who decided to forego her final year of eligibility at UConn, was taken sixth by Dallas. Washington drafted Ariel Atkins of Texas seventh. Lexie Brown was picked ninth by Connecticut.

New York took Kia Nurse 10th, marking the third UConn player to be taken in the opening round. It's the second time in three seasons that three Huskies were drafted in the first round. UConn players went 1-2-3 in 2016.

"It's really cool that we were all here for each other," Williams said.

Los Angeles drafted 19-year-old Russian star Maria Vadeeva with the 11th pick. She's the first foreign player who didn't play at an American college to be taken in the first round since 2012.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE

TODAY
Baseball — Tillamook at Seaside, 5 p.m.; Rainier at Warrenton (2), 3:30 p.m.; Knappa at Vernonia (2), 3 p.m.
Softball — Rainier at Warrenton (2), 3:30 p.m.; Knappa at Vernonia (2), 3 p.m.
SATURDAY
Track — Lower Columbia Invitational, St. Helens, 11:30 a.m.; Meet of Champions, Willamette U., 10 a.m.

BASEBALL

Astoria 14, Valley Catholic 4
Valley C. 201 001—4 8 4
Astoria 400 136—14 10 0
 Agnew, Eisenhardt (4), M.Weber (6) and Pruitt; Hageman and Hillard. W: Hageman. L: Agnew. RBI: VC, Agnew 2, W.Weber, M.Weber; Ast, Matthews 4, Kolee 2, Rush 2, Matteucci, Hageman. 2B: VC, Baglai, Agnew; Ast, Hirsch. HR: VC, Agnew; Ast, Matthews. HBP: Ast, Reed, Rush. LOB: Valley Catholic 7, Astoria 6. DP: Valley Catholic 2.

GIRLS GOLF

Scappoose Invitational
Team: Valley Catholic 71, Scappoose 60, Astoria 58, Seaside 21, Tillamook 3.
Medalist: Caroline Hobson, Valley Catholic, 27

Valley Catholic (71)
 Caroline Hobson, 27
 Annmarie Gallardo, 20
 Megan Birrell, 16
 Paige Nearman, 8
 Natalie Roth, 7
Scappoose (60)
 Morgan Hall, 25
 Kenzy Sue, 14
 Kaitlyn Bakkenen, 13
 Rylie Cook, 8
 Calli Enos, 3
Astoria (58)
 Samantha Hemsley, 20
 Jenna Travers, 19
 Sarah Lertora, 11
 Sierra Adams, 8
 Gracie Cummings, 3
Seaside (21)
 Tristyn McFadden, 13
 Caitlin Hillman, 4
 Maddie Grimm, 4
Tillamook (3)
 Steph Verdin, 3
 Natalie Gitchell, 0