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Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian

Astoria sophomore Jordan Poyer, right, on his way to scoring his first high school touchdown, Sept. 1, 2006 vs. Molalla. The Indians will join the league for football this year.

Cowapa League welcomes Molalla

By **GARY HENLEY**
The Daily Astorian

The Cowapa League is trading one “Indians” team for another this coming football season.

While the Scappoose Indians have made the jump to Class 5A, the Cowapa will welcome the Molalla Indians — for football only — to keep it as a six-team league. In all other sports, the Cowapa League will be a five-team league.

It’s better than nothing, said Astoria athletic director Howard Rub, after the offseason realignment by the Oregon School Activities Association.

“It’s kind of a weird, funky way for us to even things out for football, but I’m glad it happened,” Rub said. “Because, unlike a lot of other sports, it’s impossible to find a good nonleague matchup in the middle of a league season.”

If the Cowapa had remained a five-school league for football, it would have created a bye week for one team every week of the league season.

Astoria begins the 2018 season Aug. 31 — ironically, for a nonleague game at Scappoose. Seaside will host Henley on Aug. 31, while the Fishermen and Gulls open the league season Sept. 21 against each other, at Broadway Field.

Meanwhile, Molalla competed in the Tri-Valley Conference last year, along with

UP NEXT: FISHERMEN

- Astoria Fishermen at Scappoose Indians
- Friday, Aug. 31, 7 p.m.

Crook County, Estacada, Gladstone and Madras.

The Tri-Valley (for football) is now known as Special District 2, with Crook County, Estacada, Gladstone, North Marion, The Dalles and Woodburn. The Cowapa will be known as Special District 1 in football.

The Oregon West Conference (Special District 3) is now comprised of Cascade, Newport, Philomath, Sisters, Stayton and Sweet Home. Special districts 4 and 5 have five schools for football, while Special District 6 has four teams.

In other sports, the Cowapa contains five teams (the usuals, minus Scappoose), while the Oregon West will have seven.

For Cowapa football teams, “We still have a five-game league schedule, and it just creates so much better balance for us as a league” with Molalla moving in, Rub said. “It was really great of Molalla, their athletic department, their entire school district to recognize the imbalance and the problems that the Cowapa only having five teams in football was going to create.”

So the Cowapa will lose one traditionally strong football program in Scappoose, and

gain a program that struggled last season.

Molalla finished 3-6 overall in 2017, ranked 21st out of 39 schools. That’s compared to Scappoose, which was 8-2 and ranked second. Molalla was 6-3 in 2016, 7-2 in 2015 and 7-3 in 2014.

The Fishermen are not totally unfamiliar with Molalla. Astoria played a nonleague game with the Indians in 2013 (defeating Molalla, 37-14). Molalla won by forfeit in 2012, and the Indians knocked off Astoria 41-13 in a 2011 play-in game. Seaside has not played Molalla since 2003.

Halfway between Portland and Salem and east of Interstate 5, Molalla will be the farthest road trip for the Cowapa’s coastal schools of Astoria, Seaside and Tillamook.

“One of the things Molalla wanted to make certain was that they did not want to make three trips to the coast in any one season,” Rub said. “So they won’t play at Astoria, Seaside and Tillamook in the same year.”

Still, the Indians are scheduled for back-to-back road trips this season to Tillamook and Seaside (Sept. 28, Oct. 5), then the Indians will host Astoria on Oct. 12.

“It’s actually the same amount of travel Molalla would have had in the Tri-Valley,” Rub said. “No difference in travel. The mileage won’t be bad.”

And, Rub said, “that’s how it will stay, at least for two years. But you never know. Never say never.”

Williams reaches Wimbledon semifinals

Associated Press

LONDON — There are moments in which nothing at all seems different about Serena Williams, moments such as when she unleashed a 109 mph service winner to even her Wimbledon quarterfinal at a set apiece, leaned forward and yelled, loudly as can be, “Cooome ooon!”

Or when, about 10 minutes later, she stretched for a lunging backhand winner to break at love and take control of the third set, then raised a fist, figuring a berth in her 11th semifinal at the All England Club was close at hand.

And after Williams came up with a comeback to beat 52nd-ranked Camila Giorgi of Italy 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 on Tuesday, she headed off Centre Court with her right index finger aloft. Yes, no matter what the rankings or seedings say, no matter how long she was away, Williams still looks capable of playing like someone who’s No. 1, just about 10 months after having a baby.

“Everything right now is a little bit of a surprise. To be here. To be in the semifinals. I mean, I always say I plan on it, I would like to be there, have these goals,” Williams said. “But when it actually happens, it still is, like, ‘Wow, this is really happening.’”

Les Bleus advance to World Cup final

By **STEVE DOUGLAS**
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — They’re young, they’re brash and they’re collectively worth a billion dollars. The one thing missing for this French squad is an international title.

Kylian Mbappe, Paul Pogba and France are about to get that chance.

Les Bleus are headed to the World Cup final.

Samuel Umtiti clinched a 1-0 win over Belgium — and earned the approval of watching French President Emmanuel Macron in the VIP seats at St. Petersburg Stadium — by scoring on a header off a corner kick in the 51st minute on Tuesday.

“Vive la France! Vive la République!” France forward Antoine Griezmann shouted during postgame celebrations.

Umtiti played his part in a strong defensive effort by the French, too, helping to shut out the highest-scoring team at the tournament and leaving Belgium’s golden generation of Eden Hazard, Kevin De Bruyne and Romelu Lukaku to regret another missed opportunity at a major tournament.

“It’s me that scored,” Umtiti said, “but we all delivered a big game.”

France’s players danced on the field after the final whistle and their fans sang in the stands past the end of the match, surrounded by yellow-clad security.

They certainly hope to keep the party going on Sunday in the final in Moscow. France — with an average age of 26 — will face either Croatia or England, who play Wednesday at



AP Photo/Natacha Pisarenko

France’s Samuel Umtiti celebrates after scoring his side’s only goal against Belgium at the World Cup in St. Petersburg Stadium.

the Luzhniki Stadium in the Russian capital, and has a shot at redemption after losing its last two major finals — at the 2006 World Cup when Zinedine Zidane was sent off for a nasty headbutt and the 2016 European Championship on home soil.

“We’re immensely privileged to be in the World Cup final,” France coach Didier Deschamps said. “It was so painful two years ago we have to savor it.”

Deschamps now has the chance to become the third person to win the World Cup as a player and a coach, after German great Franz Beckenbauer and Brazil’s Mario Zagallo. As France captain, Deschamps raised soccer’s most prized trophy in 1998.

Deschamps has faced some criticism for being too pragmatic and functional despite having a squad of superstars, but his team was set up

superbly against an opponent that was largely restricted to only minor chances and denied on two occasions in particular by France goalkeeper Hugo Lloris.

He dived to his right midway through the first half to claw away Toby Alderweireld’s shot, then got in front of Lukaku to punch away one of the many crosses sent in by Belgium in the final stages.

In a tournament dominated by goals from set pieces, France’s goal came off a corner when Griezmann curled in the ball from the right and Umtiti got in front of tall Belgium midfielder Marouane Fellaini to knock in his header at the near post.

Up in the corporate seats, president Macron reacted to the goal by shaking the hand of King Philippe of Belgium as FIFA president Gianni Infantino watched on between them.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Angels overcome injury to Richards, beat Mariners 9-3

ANAHEIM, Calif. — After a big game with the bats, the Los Angeles Angels went home worried about one of their most important arms.

Kole Calhoun and Andrelton Simmons each had three of Los Angeles’ 15 hits Tuesday night, but starting pitcher Garrett Richards left in the third inning of a 9-3 victory over the Seattle Mariners because of irritation in his right forearm.

Richards has been plagued by injuries during his career and this was just his second start since coming off the disabled list after being sidelined by a left hamstring strain. He is scheduled to have an MRI on Wednesday.

“It’s tough. Just hoping for good news,” Calhoun said. “He’s been battling for the better half of a couple years. Hopefully, everything comes back all right.”

Calhoun and Albert Pujols both homered for the Angels, who have won three of four. Calhoun and Simmons each had two RBIs.

Ex-Seahawks player Browner charged with trying to kill ex

POMONA, Calif. — Prosecutors say former NFL cornerback Brandon Browner has been charged with trying to kill his ex-girlfriend after breaking into her Southern California home.

Browner, who won Super Bowls with the Seattle Seahawks and New England Patriots, was arrested Sunday east of Los Angeles.

The LA County District Attorney’s Office says the 33-year-old was charged Tuesday with attempted murder, first-degree residential robbery and other counts. It wasn’t immediately clear if he has a lawyer. Arraignment is scheduled for July 30.

Prosecutors say Browner broke into the apartment, chased and dragged the woman and then tried to smother her in a carpet. Prosecutors say he also stole a Rolex watch valued at about \$20,000.

Browner is from nearby Pomona and played for Oregon State University before signing with the Seahawks in 2011.

Beard lifts Sparks to 77-75 OT win over Seattle

SEATTLE — Alana Beard scored five of her 11 points in overtime including a 3-pointer that put Los Angeles ahead for good in a 77-75 victory to end Seattle’s five-game win streak Tuesday.

Candace Parker led the Sparks (13-8) with 21 points. She added 10 assists and was a rebound shy of a triple-double with nine boards.

Beard’s shot from behind the arc came with 3:23 left in overtime and put Los Angeles ahead 71-70. After Breanna Stewart missed a pair of shots, Beard came back with a jumper to extend the Sparks’ lead.

The Storm (15-6), who lead the WNBA’s Western Conference, could not respond.

Parker’s turnaround hook gave the Sparks a 77-72 lead with 1:05 to play. Natasha Howard cut into the margin with a three-point play, but Seattle came no closer.

Sue Bird, Howard and Stewart all missed chances to tie the game in the final seven seconds.

— *Associated Press*

SCOREBOARD

LOCAL SPORTS SCHEDULE

THURSDAY

Baseball

Seaside Wood Bat Tournament
 (at Broadway Field)
 Valley Catholic vs. Warrenton, 10 a.m.
 Churchill vs. Madison, 12:30 p.m.
 Baker vs. Hood River, 3 p.m.
 The Dalles vs. Seaside, 5:30 p.m.