

KNAPPA LOGGERS

FOOTBALL • VOLLEYBALL

LOGGERS AIMING FOR LEAGUE THREE-PEAT

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

The Northwest League has grown in size and strength, as the 2018 high school football campaign kicks off.

A few programs that have struggled in recent years have high hopes, as do two more that were playing at the 3A level last year.

But there's only one team that's won two straight league titles, with 4-0 league records three of the last four years.

The pressure won't be on the Knappa Loggers — the pressure will be on every other team trying to knock Knappa off the top spot.

And while Knappa must replace some all-star players, they've got healthy numbers and plenty of talent ready to step up and keep the mighty Loggers rolling.

Knappa made the state semifinals last year, and will be looking for a third straight league title this season.

Logger coach Aaron Barendse had his biggest turnout ever this season, with 31.

"We've got a big, young class," he said. "They're hardworking kids and eager to learn. It's no secret — we lost eight or nine seniors, and however many all-league and all-state players. We took a healthy hit, especially in experience."

THE NWL

The former five-team league has grown to seven in 2018, with the addition of Portland Christian and Warrenton.

The Royals are a member



Krissy Barendse-Goodman/For The Daily Astorian

Kanai Phillip, in playoff action here against Monroe last season, will be a big target this year for Knappa quarterback Eli Takalo.

of the NWL in every sport, while the Warriors are still a 3A school, but will play 2A football for the next two years.

While Warrenton coach Ian O'Brien has made Knappa the league favorite, Barendse is speaking highly of Warrenton and Neah-Kah-Nie.

"Neah-Kah-Nie has a lot of guys back, and they will be a handful," he said. "They'll be the team to beat on paper."

"Warrenton is also in the mix to be in that No. 1 spot. They have a lot of guys back, Ian's a good football coach and is building a good program. I would say they're the team to beat."

Vernonia should be pretty good too, he said, with junior running back Joshua Rice.

Still, most of the above schools have not had a lot of success against the Loggers.

Knappa has topped Warrenton the last two years by scores of 41-0 and 54-0. Neah-Kah-Nie hasn't beaten Knappa since 2002, and the Loggers are 10-2 against Gaston since 2006. Knappa also has wins of 40-7, 50-6, 63-0 and 64-6 over Vernonia, just since 2013.

Not much changes in the ol' NWL. Whether it's football, boys basketball or baseball, Knappa just doesn't lose when it comes to league play. Last school year, the Loggers were a combined 33-1 in all three sports (the only loss coming to Columbia Christian in boys basketball).

"Just being healthy will be

big for all of us," Barendse said. "You have to be healthy. It's not always X's and O's. Things have to go your way. I think it will be a three- or four-team battle for the top two spots. It's been a while since we've had three or four teams that are very competitive. We're four deep, and if all falls right, No. 4 could end up first."

THE LOGGERS

The Loggers have done it with talent and coaching. Barendse has been the league's Coach of the Year three out of the last four years, and last season saw all-league honors for every single Knappa starter — offense and defense.

On offense, the line makes

KNAPPA FOOTBALL

Coach: Aaron Barendse, 7th year

2017: 10-1 (4-0 league)

State playoffs: Defeated Bandon and Oakland, lost to Monroe in semifinals.

All-league losses: Mason Hoover (Defensive MVP), Kaleb Miller (Offensive MVP), Reuben Cruz, Braeden Eltagonde, Jacob Ford, Reece Hunt, David Patterson, Cody Stuhr.

All-league returners: Jaxson Goodman, Jr., Isaac Goozee, So., Luke Goozee, Sr., Cameron Miethe, So., Kanai Phillip, Jr., Joe Ramvick, Jr., Eli Takalo, Jr., Spencer Teague, Jr.

year as a sophomore. He's a beast. Then we have Ryson Patterson (Jr.) and Isaac Goozee (So.).

"Kaleb Roe (Jr.) is back off a leg injury and will help. Dominique Rizzo, Will Shadley and Andrew Pederson played some center and guard — I like where we're at."

At the skill positions, "Eli Takalo (Jr.) is at quarterback, with Cameron Miethe (So.) backing him up. Watching Eli play other sports, I've seen his confidence and work ethic really come out."

With Kanai Phillip and Devin Hoover, "we've got receivers who are 6-1 and 6-2, and both can run pretty well. Cameron Miethe will play some slot receiver and running back. He has wheels and great hands. Kayden Stuhr has great hands and has been working hard to be on the field, and the same with Tyler Green."

Joe Ramvick and Spencer Teague are two more all-league returners, both juniors.

Never a team to duck a challenging schedule, the Loggers are slated to kick off the season Friday at home against Grant Union.

"We've got a tough schedule," Barendse said. "Grant Union will be a huge test. They have arguably the best lineman in the state. We'll be tested right out of the gate."

Barendse's coaching staff includes Chad Harrington, Rusty Hebert, Chris Jackson, Doug Montgomery and David Patterson.

Prediction: The league championship may come down to the winner of the "All-In Bowl," Warrenton at Knappa, Sept. 21.

Young Knappa players dive into action

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

The Knappa Lady Loggers had higher hopes for the 2017 volleyball season.

It started on a positive note, with a three-game sweep over Clatskanie in the second match of the season.

But there's not much time to get things straightened before league play begins in Northwest League volleyball.

After splitting a pair of nonleague matches, the Loggers were in league play by Sept. 5. And after getting swept by Gaston in the league opener, Knappa never did quite recover from an 0-3 start in league, finishing 3-8 in the NWL standings, 4-12 overall.

If Jeff Kaul wanted a challenge in his ninth year, he's got one, as Knappa must replace six seniors lost to graduation. The Loggers head into the season with just four returners with varsity experience.

"But they want to play, and they play hard," Kaul said of this year's group. "I think we'll have a fun season, once they gel. They're playing across from people they've never played with before, so it's all new."

THE NWL

Speaking of new, even the Northwest League has a slightly different look, having lost Delphian and gained Portland Christian, which has dropped back down from the 3A level.

"Portland Christian did well last year at the 3A level, so obviously they're going to be a dominant team in the 2A," Kaul said. "Faith Bible graduated pretty much their whole team, but their JV was nothing to sneeze at. So I'm sure they will be a contender."

"Vernonia is always tough. Those girls just always seem to be big and



The 2018 Knappa volleyball team.

strong. Their coach gets them going for everything. I wish I knew their secret."

While the Loggers struggled after the league-opening loss to Gaston, the Greyhounds never looked back, finishing 12-0 in league play before going two-and-out at the state tournament.

Gaston lost five players to graduation, including middle blocker Charity Hall.

"Gaston lost a lot, but they'll still be tough and I don't think they will suffer that much," Kaul said. "Nestucca was coming on strong at the end of last season, so they might surprise some people this year."

As for his own team, Kaul said, "after watching these girls playing and hitting all summer, I'm thinking — if

we can stay healthy — we should be able to compete."

THE LOGGERS

A small senior class includes team captains Kourtney Tischer and Jordan Walter. There's also just two juniors, Sophia Carlson and Aiko Miller.

"Sophia and Aiko are both very strong players," Kaul said. "Aiko will step into Jaden Miethe's spot and be our Libero. But those four are my only experienced varsity returners."

The rest of the varsity roster is made up of four sophomores (Raven Corcoran, Cassidy Engblom, Megan Inlberg, Vicki Ramvick) and two incoming freshmen, Hannah Dietrichs and Taylin Regier, a promising outside hitter.

"Hannah and Taylin made every

open gym this summer," Kaul said. "We worked with them a lot, and this is the first time in a long time we'll be starting two freshmen. They will be fun to watch."

He added, "We did conditioning during the hottest week of the summer, and of course our gym is like a blast furnace. But they all showed up and kept coming back."

Kaul's setters will likely be Tischer and the freshman, Regier.

"They're not seasoned setters, but Kourtney will step up and be a setter for us, and we're working with Taylin to help out with setting. Right now, we're doing our gym. They were getting the ball up and setting it nice the first week of practice. Basically we're training two brand new setters."

KNAPPA VOLLEYBALL

Coach: Jeff Kaul, 9th year

2017: 4-12 (3-8 league)

Playoffs: Lost league playoff at Delphian.

Key losses: Jaden Miethe, Mack Strain, Kaitlyn Truax, Paris Vandenberg.

Key returners: Sophia Carlson, Aiko Miller.

Miller "was pretty excited" about playing Libero. "She can hit pretty well out of the back row. She's a good passer, she's fast and she knows the court."

On the downside, "we have no height coming back," he said, as the Loggers must replace Kaitlyn Truax and Paris Vandenberg. "Vicki and Hannah are pretty tall, and Taylin can jump to the moon."

The early returns for 2018 have been positive for the Loggers.

Following Knappa's appearance in the annual Warrenton tournament Aug. 25, Kaul said, "Our two freshmen, Taylin Regier and Hannah Dietrichs are getting stronger and more confident each outing, and it is great to have some young players who are already getting very confident with their jump serving."

"Together they combined for almost half of the team's aces," he said.

In addition, "Kourtney Tischer, who has stepped up to take on the setting position this season, has been getting stronger and stronger and when she gets good passes from the back, she is getting the ball where it needs to go so our hitters can make the plays."

Go Loggers!

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