

SEASIDE SEAGULLS

FOOTBALL • VOLLEYBALL

The Daily Astorian
Tori Tomlin returns as one of the Seaside hitters.

Lund takes over Seaside program

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

The positives and negatives of playing volleyball in the state's toughest 4A league. Seaside saw both sides of the coin in 2017.

On one side, the Gulls finished 1-9 in league play. On the other side, 1-9 was good enough to land a spot in the regional play-in round — just one step away from the Sweet 16.

In the end, the Gulls lost the play-in match at Sweet Home and finished 11-14 overall, still a respectable record in Eric Huntsman's only season as head coach. Huntsman has stepped down, one season after replacing wife Angie Huntsman, and Demi Lund has taken the coaching reins.

With the coaching changes, the Gulls "maybe haven't felt such security in recent years, so I just told them that I plan on sticking around," Lund said. "And they know that success may not happen instantaneously, so we're not building goals around wins. Right now, it's more important that we build their confidence up."

THE COWAPA

Last year's final eight at the 4A state tournament included three Cowapa League teams (Scappoose, Tillamook, Valley Catholic), with the Valiants advancing to the state championship match.

Valley Catholic has lost league Player of the Year Lizzy Osborn and one other all-league player. But in a league where two-thirds of the starters made all-league, the Valiants still have four all-leaguers returning.

All six Tillamook starters also made all-league, but only two return.

Scappoose is no longer in the league, while Astoria was the most improved in 2017, advancing all the way to the Sweet 16 one year after an 0-10 league record.

The bottom line: The new-look Cowapa League has just five teams, and if the RPI rankings are good enough at the end of the regular season, all five could end up in the state playoffs.

THE GULLS

Lund played collegiately at Mt. Hood after a high school career at Roseburg, and the young coach — she turned 27 Aug. 28 — has brought some excitement into the Seaside program.

SEASIDE VOLLEYBALL

Coach: Demi Lund, 1st year

2017: 11-14 (1-9 league)

Playoffs: Lost regional play-in at Sweet Home, 0-3

All-league loss: Alyssia Gonzales

All-league returner: Anna Huddleston, Sr.

The Gulls opened with two bracket wins in the Warrenton tournament Aug. 25, and lost a close match in the championship to Culver — which played in the 2A state championship match last year, and is normally an automatic lock to win the Warrenton tournament.

"We were able to see some of the more apparent things that we need to work on," Lund said.

One factor: Seaside is long on experience in 2018.

The preseason roster — which is subject to change, Lund said — includes four seniors and five juniors. Two freshmen are also on the list.

All-leaguer Anna Huddleston tops the list of senior returners. Huddleston was an honorable mention setter last season, and is back with fellow seniors Maddie Jensen and Tori Tomlin.

The fourth senior is Morgan Blodgett, a middle blocker who transferred from Warrenton along with her sister, junior outside hitter Elly Blodgett.

Additional varsity experience includes junior Andrea Castro, with junior newcomers Emma Brown, Emma Meyer and Bella Samuelson.

Brown and Elly Blodgett are listed as outside hitters, as the Gulls look to replace Jetta Ideue.

Seaside's two freshmen are defensive specialist Sandee Adriano and right side hitter Lilli Taylor.

"We've looked really good," Lund said. "We're strong at the net, with Tori Tomlin. We'll be running a 6-2, with a 'setter up' defense, which is something they've never played before."

"Anna Huddleston and Emma Meyer are my two setters, then we've got the two sisters from Warrenton, who will both contribute," she said. "Morgan will be a strong middle blocker, and Elly is our strongest hitter. So they will definitely make a difference."

Seagulls: New owners of the Cowapa League?

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

With state championships in boys basketball, cross country and golf over the last five years, the Seaside Gulls are looking to add another banner from another sport to the school gym. And football would be a logical place to start.

Seaside football spent almost all of the 2017 season ranked in the top 10, and entered the state playoffs ranked fifth before a 43-39 loss to Henley in the first round.

The Gulls are out to settle a few scores this season, including their loss to the Hornets. Seaside and Henley kick off the 2018 season this Friday, the Game of the Week on opening night at the 4A level.

The Seaside players? "They're hungry," said head coach Jeff Roberts. "We made it a point of scheduling Henley. That (playoff loss) left a bad taste in our mouth. Henley beat us, and our hat's off to them. But right now, we're looking at August 31st. We've had that one circled on our calendar since we scheduled it. We're excited to play them again. I appreciate their willingness to give us another chance."

It doesn't stop there for the Gulls, who travel to Eugene in Week 2 to face Marist. They host Gladstone Sept. 14.

"We wanted to make the schedule as difficult as we could," Roberts said. Mission accomplished.

THE COWAPA

With first-place Scappoose out of the picture (the Indians have moved to the 5A level), every team in the Cowapa League is free to move up one spot in the standings. For the Gulls, that means second to first.

Seaside's only league loss of 2017 came to the Indians in week 1. That was followed by convincing wins over Astoria (40-0), Valley Catholic (62-0) and Tillamook (54-23), and ended with a 19-14 win over Banks at Broadway Field.

This year's game vs. Banks (Oct. 12) will be the biggest league meeting of the season, and in a big scheduling break for the Gulls, the Braves will come to Seaside for the second year in a row.

"Banks will be hungry to get us," Roberts said. "I'm just thankful that we get them at our place again. I don't know that our schedule could have worked out any better for our home games. The Clatsop Clash and Banks are both here, so that worked out in our favor."

The absence of Scappoose "certainly changes the dynamics of the league," he said. "For a lot of years, teams were playing for second place. That's not the case any more. The Cowapa can still be one of the most difficult leagues, from top to bottom, but I'd be lying if I didn't think we were a contender for one of those guaranteed playoff spots."

THE GULLS

The reason Seaside will be in contention: Eight all-league returners should have the Gulls winning right away in 2018.

Included are two all-league



Photos by Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian

Seaside's Payton Westerholm is the class of Cowapa League quarterbacks.



One of three Offensive Players of the Year in the Cowapa League last season, Alexander Teubner is Seaside's breakaway running back looking for an even bigger season in 2018.

offensive lineman, and the return of possibly the league's best quarterback/running back tandem. For an offense that runs the Wing-T, that could take Seaside a long way.

Alexander Teubner — one of three Offensive Players of the Year in the Cowapa last season — will take handoffs from all-league quarterback Payton Westerholm, and follow the blocks of Travis Fenton and Isaias Jantes.

"We're excited to have a bunch of guys back," Roberts said. "We finished the regular season ranked No. 5 in the state, and a lot of those kids are back. We have some skill players and we return three offensive linemen, so that's good. Defensively we're in good shape, so I'm excited about that. The kids worked their tails off in the weight room all summer."

And there are players on the roster who know what it's like to win state championships.

"I attribute a lot of our success last year to the basketball program, what Bill (Westerholm) has done, and that culture of winning," Roberts said. "When these kids were sophomores, they got beat up pretty good on the football field."

"They've grown and matured a lot. They're back in a system they're comfortable with and excited about. This is a group that's been running

SEASIDE FOOTBALL

Coach: Jeff Roberts, 2nd year (6th overall)

2017: 6-3 (4-1 Cowapa)

Playoffs: Lost to Henley in first round, 39-43

All-league losses: Michael Bailey, Dawson Blanchard, Cameron King, Garrett Kiser, Parker Moore, Skyler Yoshino.

All-league returners: Travis Fenton, Sr., Isaias Jantes, Sr., Brayden Johnson, Jr., Gio Ramirez, Sr., Alex Teubner, Sr., Duncan Thompson, Sr., Paxson VanNortwick, Sr., Payton Westerholm, Sr.

as a leader is (center) Travis Fenton. He has really dedicated himself to being a leader in the program. All the guys on the offensive line ... those are the guys who are going to win it for us. Left tackle Derrick Bennett, left guard Dylan Meyer, Jantes at right guard, and Paxson VanNortwick at right tackle."

THE COACH

"I've made it public now that this is it for me," said Roberts, the high school's principal who will step down as football coach after this season. "Aaron (Tanabe) will take over next year. This will give me an opportunity to go out with these kids. I've known them for a long time, and when the opportunity presented itself, I felt like I owed it to them to finish with them."

Prediction: Gulls will send Roberts out with a league championship, and hopefully a whole lot more.

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