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SPORTS

Astoria runs in big Nike meet

The Daily Astorian

PORTLAND — With the postseason right around the corner, the Astoria cross-country team stepped up in competition and took part in Saturday’s Nike Portland XC Invitational.

Drawing teams from around the Pacific Northwest and as far away as British Columbia, southern California, Nevada and Wyoming, the Nike meet is run on the infield of the Portland Meadows race track.

It “never fails to deliver with top-level competition and the opportunity for big PRs (personal records),” said Astoria coach Andrew Fick.

Thirty-one high schools took part, from all levels.

Running in the Division 3 race, Astoria rose to the occasion, with 16 of its 26 competing runners setting all-time personal records, and the remaining runners putting up season-best performances.

Sophie Long was Astoria’s top finisher, placing sixth out of 190 runners with a career-best time of 20 minutes, 22 seconds over 5,000 meters.

Long and the lead pack covered the first mile in just over six minutes.

Running eighth with 1,200 meters to go, Long surged and passed two runners, then held off competitors from St. Helens and Clackamas, as well as Valley Catholic’s Taylor Isaac.

Jazmine Liebl of 6A McKay won the Division 3 race in 19:46. McKay also won the team title, with Astoria 13th out of 27 teams.

Astoria’s Lindsay Riutta finished 32nd with a personal-record 21:11, followed by teammate Allyson Pritchard (PR, 22:09). Abigail Groncki (104th, 23:16) and McKenna Long (145th, 24:32) had season bests and rounded out the top five scoring.

Emma Roe (25:35) and Taylor Palmrose (25:49) also had season-best showings.

On the boys’ side, Knappa junior Robert Pina-Morton ran in the Division 2 race, and placed 45th out of 182 runners, in a personal best 17:06.

In the Division 3 race, Medical Lake was the winning team, with Astoria 20th.

Nikolai Boisvert had the top finish for Astoria with a personal-record 18:12 for 70th out of 238 runners. Anton Heinrich finished four seconds behind Boisvert in 76th, also with a personal record.

Logan Ploghoft (19:05), Elias Harding-Coe (19:16), Steven Blankenship (19:33) and Jacob Matlock (20:28) all had personal bests for the Fishermen. Calvin Kaul rounded out Astoria’s top seven with a season-best 20:36.

Astoria Middle School runners also had a strong showing in Portland. The top finishers for AMS were John Clement and Hannah Groncki. Clement placed 33rd out



Andrew Fick/For The Daily Astorian

Astoria’s Sophie Long charges toward the finish line.

of over 550 boys. Groncki was also 33rd in a field of nearly 400 girls.

“I was really happy with how we ran today, both as individuals and as teams,” Fick said. “Setting PRs and improving individually and as a team is what this sport is all about.”

“It can be a little overwhelming making sense of the day when you’re in the mix with a huge crowd and a huge field of teams, but when you start looking at the times and our team spread and the teams in our division, we’re showing some big improvements.”

The postseason hopes continue to climb for the Lady Fishermen.

“When you start looking at who’s in our classification that we were racing against, our girls are right on the heels of Stayton and they’re ranked top five in 4A right now,” Fick said. “We know that in addi-

tion to Tillamook, Valley Catholic girls are going to be tough in our league, so it’s encouraging to come out on top when we see them in these big meets.”

The Astoria boys “have really been stepping up, and as a younger team, it’s pretty inspiring to see them rise to the challenge against fast competition and bigger schools,” he said. “I think that we keep seeing what works for us in our races as well as areas where we can continue to grow and improve both for our boys and girls teams. Maintaining that growth mindset is key to keeping up the positive momentum as we move into the later part of the season. Having student-athletes who are driven to keep improving and are energized by the camaraderie of their teammates, that’s a pretty special place to be as a coach.”

Astoria races next Thursday at the Trojan Relays, near Rainier.

Mariners see playoff drought extended

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — In most years, 89 wins would have landed the Seattle Mariners in the postseason and ended the longest playoff drought of any team in the four major professional sports.

The Mariners picked the wrong year to collapse, going from being in control of a playoff berth at midseason to completely out of the race in early September. And with an expensive and aging core group, Seattle is back to asking whether it should push to be competitive with the rest of the American League powers in 2019 or take a step back and make changes this offseason in the hope of longer sustained success.

“Leaving spring training, if you had told any of us that 89 wins was our outcome this year, regardless of how we were going to get there, we would have been thrilled,” Seattle general manager Jerry Dipoto said. “We picked a unique season where 89 wins wasn’t enough.”

Seattle’s season was defined by its fade. In the middle of June, the Mariners held an 11-game lead over the A’s in the standings. By the beginning of August, Seattle was caught. By the end of September, the Mariners were eliminated.

In each of the previous four seasons, the Mariners’ 89 wins would have kept them in contention for a playoff berth. Before this season, the only team to earn one of the AL’s two wild card spots and win more than 90 games was the 2017 Yankees, who entered the postseason with 91 victories.

What happened this year with Oakland and the Yankees earning wild card spots with 97 and 100 victories, respectively, is rare. The Mariners more than did their part in contributing to a swoon that saw them finish eight games behind the A’s, but even if Seattle had played .500 baseball after building that 11-game lead, it still would not have been enough to keep pace with Oakland.

Seattle’s fade resulted from an offense that lost its punch and a pitching staff that carried the load for half the season and grew fatigued as the season progressed. Seattle’s already made one change, announcing that pitching coach Mel Stottlemyre Jr. will not return in 2019 after three seasons with the team.

“We have to figure out as we move forward what it takes to catch the front runners. We don’t want to make it to a wild-card game. We want to be a consistent playoff presence,” Dipoto said.

Seahawks try to move on after another rough trip

By CURTIS CRABTREE
Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — For whatever reason, playing in Arizona has become a drama-filled trip for the Seattle Seahawks.

The latest chapter came Sunday when Earl Thomas broke his leg in a 20-17 win.

Seattle’s star free safety fractured the tibia in his left leg in a collision with Arizona wide receiver Chad Williams with nine minutes to play. It was nearly an identical injury to the one Thomas sustained in 2016 when he collided with teammate Kam Chancellor in a game against the Carolina Panthers.

The stadium in Glendale, Arizona, has turned into a house of horrible memories for the Seahawks, and the Super Bowl loss to New England is just one of the miserable moments for Seattle.

Former running back Marshawn Lynch extended a middle finger to the Seahawks sideline in Arizona in 2013 to express his displeasure with offensive coordinator Darrell Bevell’s play-calling. There was the unsightly 6-6 tie during the 2016 season. And there was Malcolm Butler’s interception of Russell Wilson at the goal line to deny Seattle a second-straight Lombardi Trophy.

In addition to Thomas’ injury, Chancellor and Richard Sherman each saw his tenure with the Seahawks end because of injuries sustained in a game in Arizona last November. Chancellor sustained a neck injury that has kept him from continuing his career while Sherman tore his Achilles tendon and was released this offseason.

Seaside tops Astoria in Hood River Tournament

HOOD RIVER — The Astoria and Seaside volleyball teams tuned up for the Clatsop Clash meeting later this week with a best two-of-three nonleague match Saturday, at the Hood River Tournament.

In bracket play competition, the Gulls rallied to win, 20-25, 25-12, 15-11.

Seaside advanced but was defeated by Class 5A Hood River Valley, 25-18, 25-22.

The Gulls return to Cowapa League action Tuesday, as Seaside hosts Banks. Astoria has a bye Tuesday, then hosts the Gulls for a Thursday Clatsop Clash, 6:45 p.m.

North Bend soccer shuts out Seaside girls

NEWPORT — North Bend and Seaside met Saturday in Newport for a nonleague girls soccer game, and the Class 5A Bulldogs posted the win, 3-0.

Haley Edwards had two goals and Morgan Bream added two assists for North Bend, ranked ninth in 5A with a 7-1-1 overall record.

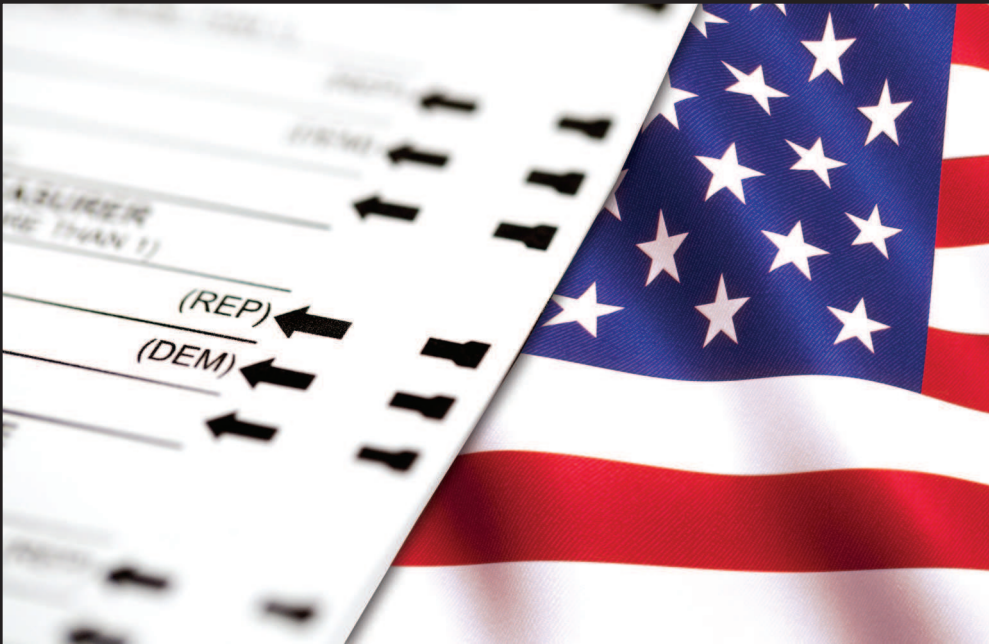
Charlise Stark had North Bend’s other goal, with an assist from Brooklyn Garrigus.

Seaside lost its fourth in a row, and drops to 2-5-1. The Gulls return to Cowapa League play Tuesday at Tillamook.

— The Daily Astorian

SCOREBOARD

PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE	
TODAY	
Volleyball	— Banks at Seaside, 6:45 p.m.; Warrenton at Clatskanie, 6 p.m.; Columbia Christian at Knappa, 6:30 p.m.; Jewell at St. Paul, 6 p.m.
Girls soccer	— Valley Catholic at Astoria, 7:15 p.m.; Seaside at Tillamook, 7:15 p.m.
Boys soccer	— Astoria at Valley Catholic, 7:15 p.m.; Tillamook at Seaside, 7:15 p.m.



ELECTION FORUM

WHEN:
7 p.m. Wednesday
October 3

WHERE:
Astoria High School
1001 W. Marine Dr.

Presented by Astoria AAUW and
The Daily Astorian

Come listen to
and ask questions of
candidates for City of
Astoria, City of
Warrenton and Clatsop
County representatives