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Ilwaco's football season ends

The Daily Astorian

CENTRALIA, Wash. — The season came to a close for the Ilwaco football team Saturday in Centralia, Washington.

Involved in a three-way Kansas Plan playoff tie-breaker with Onalaska and Raymond, the Fishermen and Gulls both lost out to Onalaska for District 4's seventh berth into the 2B state playoff round of 16.

In the tie-breaker, Onalaska defeated Raymond in the first match, then topped Ilwaco 8-0. Raymond eliminated Ilwaco, 11-8, and Onalaska beat Raymond a second time to clinch the tie-breaking win.

At the 1B level, Naselle will host Taholah in a quad-district playoff at 7 p.m. Friday. The winner advances to the state playoffs.

College hoops ready for early start date

By DOUG FEINBERG
 Associated Press

NEW YORK — College basketball season begins today — the earliest it's ever started. Muffet McGraw and Geno Auriemma aren't thrilled about that, either.

A sport that used to start official practice around Oct. 15 and have its first games at Thanksgiving is now beginning nearly three weeks sooner. Add that to the summer and preseason workouts that are allowed, and it's nearly a year-round sport.

Today will feature almost 100 women's games and 150 for the men.

"I think the season is way too long," said McGraw, the coach for defending women's national champion Notre Dame. "Basketball has more practice before its first game than any other sport."

With the Final Four taking place on April 5 and the title game on April 7, the season is nearly 200 days long.

"I don't like it. I don't like anything about it," said Auriemma, who has won 11 national titles as the women's coach at UConn. "I don't care what kind of players you have. I remember the days when you couldn't talk to your players about basketball until Oct. 15. We had some pretty good teams back then."

This year the NCAA moved up the start date a few days to today to try and create more buzz for the beginning of the season. It gets the opening night of games away from college and pro football, which dominates weekends in the fall.

"Saturday and Sunday is football in this country. It's college football on Saturday and the NFL on Sunday," NCAA vice president of men's basketball Dan Gavitt said. "You start the season Friday and basically they are dark for two days until you start up again on Monday. Starting today, we can hopefully get a few days before you get to the weekend where people talk about the season."

The only flaw in that this year is the new start date falls on Election Day, which will dominate news cycles. Gavitt said the NCAA might look at that in the future.

The midweek start does help alleviate a few scheduling conflicts for gyms, because volleyball is still going on and many schools use the same building for both sports.

With the new opening date, practice could officially start the last week of September — the NCAA allowed women's teams to begin 42 days before their first game.



Stan Sporseen/For The Daily Astorian

Knappa runner Robert Piña-Morton, second from right, finished seventh overall in the boys' 2A race at the OSAA state cross country meet.

Local runners finish strong at state

By GARY HENLEY
 The Daily Astorian

EUGENE — Knappa junior Robert Piña-Morton took seventh in the 2A boys' race, and Astoria's Sophie Long placed 19th overall in the 4A girls' race to highlight Clatsop County's appearance in the OSAA state cross-country meet Saturday in Eugene.

Following a day of racing at Lane Community College, team champions included Catlin Gabel (3A/2A/1A girls), Union/Cove (2A/1A boys) and Burns (3A boys).

Marist Catholic swept the Class 4A championships, winning the girls' and boys' team titles. The Tillamook girls placed third, while Tillamook and Valley Catholic took third and fourth, respectively, behind the Marist boys.

Individually, Piña-Morton covered the 5,000-meter course in 16 minutes, 47 seconds, setting a Knappa school record for the state meet. Jesse Brockey held the previous mark of 17:13.

Tim Stevens of Union/Cove was the 2A individual winner, running a 15:33 to place well ahead of Jedaiah Wasson of East Linn Christian (16:15).

Piña-Morton finished close behind Union/Cove's Jack Silveira (fifth, 16:44) and Seth Bergeron of St. Stephen's Academy (sixth, 16:45).

In the girls' 4A race, the Cowapa League had three of the top eight runners, including champion Solace Bergeron of Tillamook, who finished in 18:32, ahead of Junction City's



Andrew Fick/For The Daily Astorian

Astoria's Sophie Long, center, closing in on Siuslaw runner Brea Blankenship, finished 19th overall in the 4A girls' race.

Anika Thompson (18:40) and Tillamook teammate Sarah Pullen (18:59).

Long entered the race ranked 27th in girls 4A, but moved up eight places to finish 19th in a field of 95 runners.

Crossing the finish line in 20:27 — her third-fastest time for 5,000 meters — Long averaged 6:35 per mile.

"We went out pretty fast," Long said. "I was at about six minutes for the first mile. My

goal was to finish in the top 20. I feel pretty good about the race today."

Running with a large second pack, Long came through 2,000 meters in about 20th, trading places and holding off challengers throughout the middle of the race.

There was more shuffling over the final 1,500 meters, as the runners worked their way over hills and surged toward the finish. Long edged Isabella Zachem of Marist and La Grande's Maia Vandervlugt over the final 300 meters to secure her top 20 finish.

"We knew that the start is usually quick, and Sophie did what she needed to do to get out and up toward the front," said Astoria coach Andrew Fick. "She showed a lot of mental toughness. The long straight stretch in the middle mile and the hills in mile three can really hit you, but she battled through it and held off some strong competition. I'm really proud of her and how she raced today. It was a great way to finish the season."

Just a sophomore, Long said "I want to have a top four finish for our whole team" next year, as the Lady Fishermen will return nearly their entire team, with more young talent entering at the freshmen level.

"With some hard work between now and then, I think our program has a lot of potential to continue to be more and more competitive," Fick said. "We have a lot of positive attitude on our team, a lot of hard workers, and everyone making contributions where they can. That's what it takes to keep getting better. It was a great season, and we're already excited for next year."

Seahawks sit at .500 after step back from winning formula

By TIM BOOTH
 Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — The Seattle Seahawks figured out just how easy it is to get off track.

After successfully resetting its roster and figuring out a style and method for winning in the first half of the season, Seattle took a major step backward in a loss to the Los Angeles Chargers. The Seahawks had built a winning formula on running the ball, avoiding mistakes on offense and stopping the run on defense. Now, Seattle has to prove it can beat a quality opponent when the script doesn't play out perfectly.

"We've found ourselves in most of the games we didn't win right here at the end, so close to getting it done," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said. "I'm hoping the second half of the season will allow us to finish those games and get the wins that we want and turn this season into a really positive year for us."

The 25-17 loss to the Chargers revealed how quickly the Seahawks can lose the style of play that led them to win four of the previous five games. They sit at 4-4, facing a challenging three-game stretch that starts this week with the Los Angeles Rams.

"I've never looked at this like it's a rebuilding year. (GM) John (Schneider) and I didn't look at this like that. We saw the opportunities to fill the spots and we thought we could keep moving and going," Car-



AP Photo/Ted S. Warren

Seattle Seahawks players, including wide receivers David Moore, right, and Doug Baldwin, upper left, sit on the bench late in Sunday's game against the Los Angeles Chargers in Seattle.

roll said. "There's always going to be some growing time and we saw that the first two weeks of the season. As far as expectations, our expectations are higher and that's why we're disappointed that we're not in better shape than we are right now."

Seattle still had a chance to force overtime against the Chargers until Russell Wilson's pass for David Moore at the back of the end zone was tipped slightly and fell incomplete on the final play.

The Seahawks issues started long before that pass hit the turf.

Seattle did not stop the run, giving up 7.3 yards per carry to the Chargers

and letting Melvin Gordon run for 113 yards and a touchdown.

It did not avoid offensive mistakes. Wilson was sacked four times, with several of those his fault for not getting the ball out or trusting the protection. He also made a critical turnover, throwing an interception that was returned 42 yards for a touchdown by Desmond King in the fourth quarter.

And Seattle's own run game was spotty. The Seahawks finished with 154 yards rushing, but starter Chris Carson didn't play the final 2 1/2 quarters due to a lingering hip injury. After scoring a touchdown on their

UP NEXT: SEAHAWKS

- Seattle Seahawks (4-4) at Los Angeles Rams (8-1)
- Sunday, 1:25 p.m. TV: CBS

opening possession, the Seahawks got just three points out of the next nine drives.

The end result was too much reliance on Wilson for a fourth-quarter rally. While Wilson nearly pulled it off, the Seahawks fell to 5-6 at home over the past two seasons and have lost the last five games when Wilson has attempted 30 or more passes dating to last season.

Carroll was uncertain the status of Carson or strong safety Bradley McDougald for Sunday's game against the NFC West-leading Rams. Carroll said Carson's hip was a lingering problem coming out of last week's victory over Detroit, and a light week of practice wasn't enough for Carson to handle the load early against the Chargers. Carson had just eight carries, leaving Mike Davis as the primary back. Davis had 15 carries for 62 yards.

McDougald didn't play in the second half with a knee injury that Carroll said was "pretty sore" on Monday. McDougald will likely be a very limited participant in practice this week, but Carroll said he was pleased with the performance of backup Delano Hill stepping in for McDougald, who has been one of Seattle's top defensive players this season.