



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The Seagull defense puts pressure on the Banks quarterback.

Banks tops Seaside for state title

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

HILLSBORO — A pair of Blakes beats one Alexander. At least that’s how it played out Saturday night in Hillsboro. Seaside’s great Alexander Teubner rushed for 211 yards and three touchdowns, but Banks answered with Blake Gobel and Blake Markham, who combined for 334 all-purpose yards and three scores of their own, leading the Braves to a 31-20 win over the Gulls in the 4A state championship football game.

“Our kids rallied, never gave up, never quit, and still had an opportunity,” said Seaside coach Jeff Roberts, whose team lost for just the second time all year. “But it stings. It stings a lot.”

Sometimes history is kindest to the one who waits the longest, and the Banks Braves have certainly done their share of waiting for a foot-ball title.

While Seaside was trying to win its first championship since 1994, the Braves (after run-ner-up finishes in 1949 and 2008) were in search of their first football title ever, period.

“It’s huge,” said Gobel, a senior. “Nine-ty-eight years and they haven’t won a title. It’s insane. First title ever at Banks, so it’s a good feeling for the community.”

And the football gods indeed smiled upon the Braves on this cold and foggy night, as Banks leveraged five Seaside turnovers into the Braves’ second victory over the Gulls this season, this one for the Class 4A state championship.

The last championship game appearance for the Braves was 2008, when Astoria topped the Braves 19-11 at Reser Stadium in Corvallis.

Banks was quarterbacked by Gabe Linehan that day, while the Fishermen had three future Pac-12 athletes on their roster, including a star NFL defensive back, Jordan Poyer.

There were no future NFL players on the field Saturday, but there was still a Linehan involved.

Gabe’s big brother Cole — the Braves’ coach — finally got the championship trophy that little brother didn’t.

“He’s my youngest brother, and he was quar-terback for them, back in the day,” said Cole Linehan, who for two years (2010-11) was the head track coach at Astoria High School.

“Ninety-eight long years,” he said. “This community is so supportive of us. It’s been a looong time coming, but these guys deserve a championship.”

And the Braves owed a big part of the title to their two Blakes.

While Gobel caught six passes for 93 yards, Markham was on the receiving end of six passes for 86 yards, and also had 14 carries for 110 yards rushing for Player of the Game honors for Banks.

Markham did most of his damage in the sec-ond half, including an amazing 38-yard touch-down run that clinched the win.

Teubner was Seaside’s Player of the Game, as the senior ran his astounding single-season total to 2,420 yards rushing and 44 touchdowns. But Teubner was held in check for the most part in the second half, when the Braves asserted their strength.

“(Teubner) is a great athlete and runs the ball well, but we have a ton of athletes on defense that can make plays,” Linehan said. “He’s had such an unbelievable year, and Seaside is such a great team — we’ve had some battles with them the last three times we’ve played. I have a lot of respect for those guys.”



Seaside’s Brayden Johnson makes a leaping attempt on a ball thrown deep into the end zone.

‘I’LL HAVE FOND MEMORIES FOREVER. THE PROGRAM’S IN GOOD HANDS. AARON (TANABE) IS GOING TO DO A FANTASTIC JOB. WE’LL BE BACK.’

Jeff Roberts | outgoing Seaside coach

And the Gulls had to be feeling pretty good about how Saturday’s game was progressing in the second quarter. For about five minutes, anyway.

Teubner had given Seaside a 14-7 lead fol-lowing a 20-yard touchdown run with 4:54 left in the first half.

But moments later, Banks junior Jarred Evans was sprinting through Seaside’s kickoff coverage team for an 80-yard return that tied the game, 14-14.

The Gulls had three turnovers in the first half, and the special teams breakdown made it a much closer game than it should have been.

“You can’t turn the ball over three or four times, and you can’t give up a kickoff return,” Roberts said. “We didn’t wrap up at times, but at the same time we made plays when we needed to. You just can’t turn the ball over against a good team. That’s not casting blame on anyone, it’s just pretty basic football.”

Banks received the kickoff to start the second half, and the Braves came out and set the tone for the third period.

On their first series of the second half, the Braves drove 53 yards in nine plays, with Gobel catching a 29-yard TD toss from Hayden Vandehey for a 21-14 lead.

After forcing a Seaside punt, the Braves sent their offense back on the field, and they proceeded to hold the ball for six minutes and nine seconds, finishing an 11-play drive with a 26-yard field goal by Jacob Slifka, pushing their lead to 24-14.

Teubner scored on a 5-yard touchdown run with 8:36 left in the third quarter, bringing Seaside to within 24-20, but the Braves answered again with a six-play, 75-yard march, capped by

Markham’s 38-yard, tackle-breaking touchdown run to make it 31-20.

The Braves intercepted a Payton Westerholm pass with 5:35 left, but Vandehey returned the favor by throwing an interception to Seaside’s Gio Ramirez, giving the Gulls hope.

Seaside eventually gave it back, with a lost fumble on a fourth-down play with 1:33 left, representing the fifth turnover.

“We always talk about protecting the foot-ball, and going into this game it’s all about who protects the ball,” Linehan said. “We stuffed them a lot more offensively the first time around, but we made a couple adjustments as well, and they paid off.”

Gobel said a little halftime pep talk from the coach had the Braves fired up for the second half.

“Linehan took us in at halftime and he got us going,” he said. “He got our linebackers and defensive line going. We know how to beat them. We’ve done it in the past. We stopped Teubner, and we figured it out in the second half, for sure. We got the ‘dub,’ and that’s all that matters.”

Seaside had 298 yards rushing on 49 carries, while Vandehey was 15-of-22 passing for 194 yards for the Braves, who had 364 yards in total offense.

Seaside led in first downs (18 to 15) and time of possession, but the five turnovers were the difference.

They’re not used to losing championship games at Seaside, so there were naturally lots of tears on the Gulls’ end of the field following the game.

Roberts kept things positive in his postgame talk to the fans and players.

“We’ve turned this program around,” he said of Seaside football. “The expectation is for them

SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL

	Banks 31, Seaside 20			
Seaside	0	14	0	6—20
Banks	7	7	10	7—31

First quarter
Banks: Blake Markham 58 pass from Hayden Vandehey (Jacob Slifka kick) 3:47

Second quarter
Seaside: Alexander Teubner 23 run (Gio Ramirez kick) 11:55
Seaside: Al.Teubner 20 run (Ramirez kick) 4:54
Banks: Jarred Evans 80 kick return (Slifka kick) 4:42

Third quarter
Banks: Blake Gobel 29 pass from Vandehey (Slifka kick) 7:49
Banks: Slifka 26 FG :15

Fourth quarter
Seaside: Al.Teubner 5 run (kick failed) 8:36
Banks: Markham 38 run (Slifka kick) 6:40

	Team statistics	
	Seaside	Banks
First downs	18	15
Rushes-yards	49-298	30-170
Passing yards	31	194
Total offense	329	364
Comp-Att-Int	3-10-3	15-22-1
Punts-yards	2-78	2-41
Third downs	5-11	6-11
Fourth downs	2-3	1-1
Penalties	2-31	5-49
Turnovers	5	2
Possession time	24:41	22:18

Seaside statistics
Rushing: Al.Teubner 31-211, Westerholm 11-47, Johnson 2-35, Ramirez 1-3, Thompson 4-4.
Passing: Westerholm 3-10-31-3. **Receiving:** Ramirez 1-18, Card 1-11, Al.Teubner 1-2.

Banks statistics
Rushing: Markham 14-110, Vandehey 10-47, Slifka 1-9, Ochoa 4-5. **Passing:** Vandehey 15-22-194-1. **Receiving:** B.Gobel 6-93, Markham 6-86, Slifka 2-12, Ochoa 1-3.

	State championship scores	
	Class 5A	
Thurston 30, Wilsonville 27	Class 4A	
Banks 31, Seaside 20	Class 3A	
Rainier 44, Cascade Christian 14	Class 2A	
Kennedy 31, Santiam 20	Class 1A	
Dufur 38, St. Paul 32		

to be good people. To do the right thing, to be men of character, men of class, men of commit-ment, and that leads to the product on the field. And that’s what I told them. I’m super proud of them. It’s the best season we’ve had in 25 years.”

To borrow one of their oft-used phrases: “It’s still a great day to be a Gull.”

The Gulls have won five state championships in three different sports since the spring of 2014, and will be heavily favored to win their third straight boys basketball title in March.

“It’s huge for the community,” said Roberts, coaching in his last game. He will turn the keys over to assistant coach Aaron Tanabe next sea-son. “You should have seen the bus ride out of town. The streets were lined with people. It was an opportunity for this town to come together and rally behind something.

“Basketball’s on the horizon, and it’s not just about Seaside football. It’s about the Seaside community, and to see the fans out in droves tonight is worth everything to me.

“I’ll have fond memories forever,” he said. “The program’s in good hands. Aaron is going to do a fantastic job. We’ll be back.”