

CONTACT US
Gary Henley | Sports Reporter
 ghenley@dailyastorian.com

SPORTS

FOLLOW US
 facebook.com/
 DailyAstorianSports

Naselle's season ends with semifinal loss

By **PATRICK WEBB**
 For the Daily Astorian

WENATCHEE, Wash. — It became evident very early Saturday that Naselle's stellar 2018 football season would have no fairytale ending.

Last year's WIAA 1B Player of the Year Maguire Isaak was returning as quarterback for Almira-Coulee-Hartline.

And the 6-foot-tall senior leader proved poised and elegant.

When his speedy receivers were well-covered, he made short passes, Almira gained ground and kept the ball. When there was no one open, he ran himself, scoring three touchdowns on his way to a 82-28 victory.

The Warriors will defend their 2017 state championship against Eastern Washington neighbors Odessa on Saturday. Odessa made easy work of Quilcene 65-6 in the other semifinal.

Naselle had lost to Odessa on the opening day of the season, then racked up points in each subsequent encounter en route to an 8-1 regular season record. As the playoffs began, the Comets blanked Taholah, then beat Lyle-Wishram by a 30-point margin to advance to the semis.

Afterward, Naselle head coach Jeff Eaton gathered his players in a huddle, and in his quiet manner reminded them they had made Naselle High School history by reaching the semifinals.

"Up to this point you have set a perfect example, winning the last 10 in a row," he said. "Now we lose here. It's a disappointment. We didn't give them our best game, but the journey was fantastic."

Assistant coaches Matt Scrabbeck and Pete Riley commended their squad, saying their season memories should last their entire lives. "You gave it everything you've got," Scrabbeck said.

For four seniors who had been with the program all four years of their high school career — Cole Dorman, Jacob Eaton, Vince Fauver and Aaron Todd — there were tears and hugs.

The fifth senior, Antonio Nolan, joined the program later and proved a key participant all season. He also earned the WIAA good sportsmanship medal.

The game began with Almira recovering an awkwardly bouncing onside kick and Isaak then running 46 yards in open space down the wing to score.

Naselle battled back under the steady hand of quarterback Dorman, who moved the Comets upfield with runs by Fa'aoso Tutu'u, Ethan Lindstrom and Nolan. Despite being tackled by multiple burly defenders, the 170-pound Tutu'u then bundled his way across the line and Nolan caught the 2-point conversion to level the score.

Early Comet celebrations did not last long, however, as Almira added two touchdowns in the first quarter and four in the second, one from a looping 78-yard pass that would make



Photos by Patrick Webb/For The Daily Astorian
 Naselle's Antonio Nolan (5) runs with the ball as Almira-Coulee-Hartline's Hayden Loomis (10) moves in to tackle.



Behind the blocking of teammate Antonio Nolan, Naselle quarterback Cole Dorman, right, looks for big yardage.

any highlight reel.

The half ended with some joy, however, as Nolan caught an equally spectacular pass from Dorman to score. The applause from the dedicated Comet fans when he ran back to the bench was the loudest of the afternoon.

The score was 52-14 at halftime, and the second half began with another Warriors' touchdown on the first play from scrimmage.

Then Lindstrom stepped up. The Naselle junior returned a kickoff 39 yards, setting up good position for the Comets. Dorman eventu-

ally channeled the ball to Nolan, who crossed the line from short range.

Almira put the already-won game out of sight with two more scores, including Isaak's third solo run. The running clock in the fourth meant little time for additions. Almira added one more TD from close in, but fittingly Naselle seniors had the last word.

Dorman set up sophomore Jimmy Strange to weave his way 23 yards for the final touchdown. Then, with less than a minute remaining, Dorman tossed the conversion to the edge

of the end zone, where fellow senior Fauver caught his last football wearing Naselle colors.

There were some other bright moments. Naselle freshman Jason Harman made a touchdown-saving tackle as Almira appeared almost unstoppable and Nolan performed the same heroic duty later in the game (both Comets weigh in at 155 pounds).

Almira had defeated Naselle in the quarterfinals last year on their way to the state title. Coach Eaton reflected on the season as his players went off to change for the long ride home.

"They have a good team," he said, gesturing to the Almira bench. "Our guys couldn't cover them — that was the biggest difference."

Two recovered onside kicks, two Comet fumbles and one intercepted pass were also costly, he conceded.

"The journey to get here has been fantastic," said the coach. "We lost to Odessa when we were changing out our linemen, and then had a tougher league and all those games helped us to get here."

"Last week, beating Lyle-Wishram was the highlight. And these five seniors, four who have been with us all four years, were great for the program."

SCOREBOARD

PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY

Wrestling — Knappa Invitational, 5 p.m.

FOOTBALL

Almira-CH 82, Naselle 28

Naselle 8 6 6 8—28
 A-M-C 22 30 24 6—82

First Quarter

Alm: Maguire Isaak 46 run (pass good)
 Nas: Fa'aoso Tutu'u 8 run (Antonio Nolan from Cole Dorman)

Alm: Hayden Loomis 54 pass (pass fail)
 Alm: Gage Burchill 67 pass (pass good)

Second Quarter

Alm: Loomis 43 pass (pass good)
 Alm: Isaak 20 run (pass good)
 Alm: Brayton Schafer 35 pass (pass fail)
 Alm: Loomis 78 pass (pass good)
 Nas: Nolan 55 pass from Dorman (pass fail)

Third Quarter

Alm: Schafer 54 run (pass good)
 Nas: Nolan 6 run (pass fail)

Alm: Dane Isaak 12 run (pass good)
 Alm: Maguire Isaak 39 run (pass good)

Fourth Quarter

Alm: Parker Roberts 6 run (pass fail)
 Nas: Jimmy Strange 23 run (Vince Fauver from Dorman)

Naselle Statistics

Rushing: Nolan 9-29, Tutu'u 8-28, Strange 1-23, Fauver 1-5, Dorman 1-2, Lindstrom 1-(-3). **Passing:** Dorman 13-23-245. **Receiving:** Nolan 4-94, Eaton 3-68, Lindstrom 3-31, Townsen 2-28.

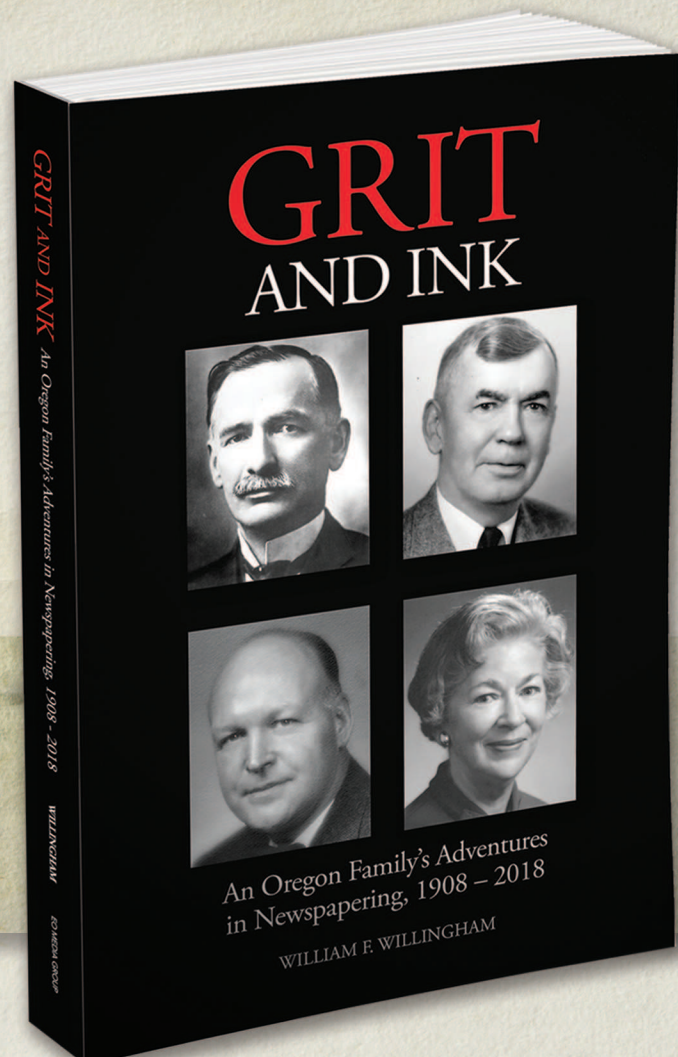
Knappa Loggers host season-opening meet

The Daily Astorian

The 2018-19 winter sports season kicks off Wednesday at Knappa, where the Loggers will host an eight-team "mix and match" wrestling meet.

Other than Knappa, competing teams will include Astoria, Clatskanie, Corbett, Ilwaco, Nestucca, Seaside and Warrenton.

Over 100 wrestlers are expected to take part, with action starting at 5 p.m.



"Stirring and moving"

— Buzz Bissinger, author of 'Friday Night Lights'

- The history of the company and family that owns The Daily Astorian
- Grit and Ink helps you understand what makes Oregon Oregon
- 220 pages with 60 B/W and Full Color photos

Grit and Ink

An Oregon Family's Adventures in Newspapering, 1908–2018

By William F. Willingham

Foreword by R. Gregory Nokes. Preface by Stephen A. Forrester

Published by the EO Media Group 2018. Paperback, \$19.95

Available from local booksellers or call 800-621-2736

Go to indiebound.org to find an independent bookstore near you
books.eomediagroup.com/grit-ink

