

ASTORIA FISHERMEN

BASKETBALL

Astoria girls will battle Banks for league title

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

The “Conference of Champions” did not get a state title in girls basketball last season, but the Cowapa League did have the fourth- and fifth-place teams at the state tournament.

Both Banks and Valley Catholic will be back and contending for a state championship, while Astoria should be the third team in the mix for a league title this season.

The Lady Fishermen will be the only team in the Cowapa with three returning all-league players, and Astoria will be looking to improve on their 15th-place finish in last year’s final OSAA rankings.

To prepare themselves for league play, “we’ll have a tough preseason,” said Astoria coach Mike Jacobson, whose team will play in nothing but tournaments the entire month of December.

The Lady Fishermen open with the Madras tournament (Nov. 30-Dec. 1), followed by tournaments at Marshfield (Dec. 13-15), Seaside (Dec. 20-22) and Astoria’s own Dulcich tournament (Dec. 27-29).

“I like how our schedule is working out,” Jacobson said. “Everything is pretty much Thursday, Friday, Saturday.”

THE COWAPA LEAGUE

Astoria was 6-0 against the bottom three teams in the league standings last year, 0-4 against Banks and Valley Catholic.

One win against either the Braves or Valiants this year could vault the Lady Fishermen into a top three finish in



A pressing Astoria defense will be led by Brooklynn Hankwitz, center, and Kelsey Fausett, right.

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

the Cowapa.

The favorite?

“I’m thinking Banks, with Aspen (Slifka),” Jacobson said. “She’s one of the best players, not just at the 4A level, but overall.”

“But we’ll be battling right there with them, or right below them, I would hope,” he said.

The OSAA’s preseason coaches poll had Banks ranked second in the state at

the 4A level, behind Marshfield. Valley Catholic is ranked ninth, with Astoria picking up 20 votes for 11th place.

THE LADY FISH

Astoria’s strength is “size and athleticism,” Jacobson said, “and hopefully we’ll be able to push the ball and run our press quite a bit more.”

With just one senior, the Lady Fishermen could also be

the future power of Cowapa League girls basketball.

The lone senior is Lexxis Lyngstad, while the talented junior class includes returning all-league players Brooklynn Hankwitz and Hailey O’Brien, along with Taileigh Cole, Kajsa Jackson and Julia Norris.

Astoria will carry four sophomores on the varsity roster, three with varsity experience: Kelsey Fausett, Halle

Helmersen and Sophie Long.

“We’re young, but they all have experience,” Jacobson said. “Brooklynn and Hailey will be three-year starters.”

Hankwitz and Jackson will be Astoria’s twin towers, while O’Brien will be running the point, along with Helmersen at times.

In addition, “Kelsey’s shooting and ball handling have really improved. They all have over the summer.”

ASTORIA GIRLS

Coach: Mike Jacobson, 5th year
2017-18: 15-10 (6-4 league)
Playoffs: Lost at Molalla in Play-in (29-53).
All-league loss: Sam Hemsley
All-league returners: Kelsey Fausett, So., Brooklynn Hankwitz, Jr., Hailey O’Brien, Jr.

Life gets tough in Cowapa League for Astoria boys

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

While most eyes will be on Seaside, Clatsop County’s other 4A boys basketball team should have no problem in coming in “under the radar” this season.

A 1-19 league record over the last two years will do that.

Injuries and graduations have definitely taken a toll on the Astoria Fishermen over the last two seasons.

It’s not often when your rebuilding year needs a rebuilding year. That’s where the Fishermen found themselves last season.

Astoria finally has some experience on the roster.

“We’re not too young for once,” said coach Kevin Goin. “We’ve got some depth in our senior class, and we’re pretty big, overall. We have a lot of size. We’ll be much improved. We competed at times last year, but struggled to score.”

He adds, “There was just such a lack of bodies in the past, this is kind of the first time we haven’t had to move kids up before they were ready. I definitely see a big difference offensively.”

THE COWAPA

Considering that three Cowapa League teams ended up in the Final Four at the state tournament, Astoria’s 0-10 league record last year wasn’t as bad as it looks.

Seaside defeated Cowapa League foe Valley Catholic in



Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian

Opponents will have a tough time trying to get past the big wingspan of Astoria’s Ian Hunt.

last year’s state championship, while the state title game as had at least one Cowapa team participating every year for the past four years.

The Gulls will be the 4A favorite heading into the new season.

“Seaside brings just about everybody back, and Banks brings a lot back,” Goin said. “They lost (Dalton) Renne, but (Blake) Gobel is tough and their JVs had a lot of depth.

Valley Catholic will be tough. They lost a lot of seniors, but they have a lot back and should still be decent.”

Scappoose moved to Class 5A, resulting in just an eight-game league schedule. The Cowapa will have a league playoff at the end of the season, with all five teams competing.

Statewide, “you definitely have to look at Seaside, with everybody coming back,”

Goin said. “I still think Banks will be right there. Banks was very junior-dominated. They might even be a step better than they were last year. That class was really deep. Marshfield also brings a lot back. They have the two bigs and a bunch of guards. I would probably put those three at the top.”

For the Fishermen, “I’m hopeful that we can be above Tillamook, and that we can

compete with Valley,” Goin said. “Banks and Seaside are the very class of the state. It’s one of those years where you can be third in our league, and be top eight or 10 in the state.”

THE FISHERMEN

For both size and experience, “we’ll have Josh Olson and Ian Hunt back,” Goin said. “Both are about 6-5, 6-6. Ian had a good year last year, and Josh did a lot of little things

ASTORIA BOYS

Coach: Kevin Goin, 5th year
2017-18: 3-21 (0-10 Cowapa)
Playoffs: None
All-league loss: Karsten Johnson
All-league returner: Ian Hunt, Sr.

for us. I expect him to score a little more this year, where Ian averaged about 10 per game.”

Elsewhere, Astoria has returning seniors Peter Johnson, Conner Long, Tryton Matlock and Taylor Palmberg, with seniors Dylan Ploghoft, Henry Samuelson and Marcus Soderstrom making the jump up from junior varsity.

The junior class has Isaac Brockman, while Ephraim Tice has moved. Ryan Stenblom broke his leg in the first summer league game, but should be cleared to play soon.

Xander Marincovich was the only freshman on varsity last year, and returns as a sophomore, and sophomore Dylan Junes was added to the varsity.

Most players in the Astoria lineup are 6-foot-2 and over.

“Our big question mark is returning guards,” Goin said. “(Tice) moved away, but we’ll have Isaac Brockman back, who started in the backcourt. Our third guard will probably be Mike Moore (So.), who played last year with the JV II team, which didn’t lose a league game.”

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