

SPORTS

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Kristina Reid Mitchell
Kristina Reid Mitchell and daughter Kaylee at the NCAA championship meet.



Former Astoria runner Kaylee Mitchell (588) runs in the NCAA Division II championships in Pittsburgh.



Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian
Kaylee Mitchell, in her track and field days at Astoria High School.

Mitchell earns all-America recognition

By **GARY HENLEY**
The Daily Astorian

The years she spent running in the rain on the North Coast are finally paying off for Kaylee Mitchell.

The former student-athlete at Astoria middle school and high school (who later graduated from Sprague High School) is now a freshman on the cross-country team at Seattle Pacific University.

And she came up big in her latest race, held last Saturday on a muddy course at Schenley Park in Pittsburgh for the NCAA Division II cross-country championships.

Mitchell finished 35th out of 264 runners, good enough for All-American honors. She also helped the SPU women to a 15th-place finish in the team standings.

Running in less than ideal conditions, Mitchell completed the six-kilometer course in 23 minutes, 24.9 seconds.

“The course — oh my goodness! It was just one step at a time, running in ankle-deep mud,” Mitchell said. “I was lucky enough not to fall, but there were many slips. It was just a matter of not letting the mud get to us and just being fearless.”

She added, “My dad always tells me just to smile. I went into it telling myself, ‘Just run. You know how to run, and just smile.’”

By placing in the top 40, Mitchell became the 17th cross-country All-American in SPU history, and first in nine years. The last Falcon runner to earn that honor was Jessica Pixler in 2009 when she won the third of her three straight national titles.

“Getting All-American in cross-country is incredibly hard to do,” SPU assistant coach/distance coach Chris Reed said.

“For her to do that in her first NCAA meet and her first college season shows her maturity and the belief she has in herself.”

Seattle Pacific checked in with 466

points, putting it into the upper half of the 34-team field. It was the second straight top-15 finish for the team.

“There are already enough factors as it is, with it being December, it’s the national championships, and it’s a long season for a lot of teams,” Reed said. “Then add in the elements, which made it a really hard, tough, slow course.”

“To come through all of those variables and still have a really good team finish is awesome. We finished pretty close to where we were ranked coming in (No. 13), so it was unquestionably a successful season.”

The already-muddy course was made even muddier after 261 men ran five loops around it in their 10K race. And, while the rain held off for most of the men’s race, it was drizzling shortly before the women started, and pouring by the time the gun went off.

Mitchell was back in the mid-70s of the

264-runner field as they passed the first timing pad on the course, located at the 700-meter mark. By the 1.8-kilometer mark, she had moved all the way up to 31st, and stayed within that cluster of runners for the rest of the race.

Through the remaining four kilometers, Mitchell moved up as high as 29th, and dropped back to as far 39th before coming through the wire in 35th.

“I didn’t want to go out too fast, with it being so muddy and with all the hills,” Mitchell said. “After I got through the first loop, I thought, ‘OK, all of this is doable.’ There wasn’t a part of it where I thought ‘oh my gosh, I’m going to fall.’ By the third loop, I knew where to step and where not to step.”

Added Reed, “She wanted to run a controlled early part of the race. Once she got into her own rhythm, she could decide what to do with it. She moved up to an All-American spot and never let go.”

NCAA penalizes Oregon for hoops, track and field violations

By **ANNE M. PETERSON**
Associated Press

The NCAA has imposed two years of probation on Oregon after finding the school violated rules related to the men’s and women’s basketball teams and the track and field program.

The decision issued Wednesday said women’s basketball coach Kelly Graves failed to “monitor and promote an atmosphere of compliance in his program.” He must serve a two-game suspension this season. The team is 7-0 and ranked No. 3 in the country.

That infraction stemmed from an assistant strength coach’s participation in on-court activities during and after practices, which caused the team to exceed the number of allowable coaches.

The NCAA found men’s coach Dana Altman failed to properly monitor his director of basketball operations, who took part in or observed at least 64 individual voluntary workouts in violation of NCAA rules.

Also, the NCAA said an adjunct instructor changed a grade for a track and field athlete, allowing the competitor to remain eligible.

The decision said the football program improperly used an electronic reader board in the team’s facilities for recruiting purposes. The team immediately stopped after being told it may be out of compliance.

Oregon received notice of the allegations last December. At that time, the university said it self-reported the infractions and acknowledged that they occurred, but disagreed with the level that the NCAA assigned to

some of them, including the charges involving the head coaches. Oregon said it had already taken steps to address the issues.

“I regret that some members of my staff made errors of judgment, and I have taken actions to ensure that it doesn’t happen again,” Graves said in a statement when the university received notice. “I am steadfastly committed to building a winning program at the UO that operates in full compliance with NCAA bylaws and is committed to the highest levels of integrity.”

The director of basketball operations, Josh Jameison, was suspended by Altman for one month. He must also attend NCAA rules seminars for the next two years.

The school said the faculty member changed the grade of the track athlete from failing to passing contingent on the athlete completing the work. The university removed the athlete from competition and reported the violation to the NCAA, which determined it was an impermissible academic benefit.

The name of the athlete was not made public by the NCAA. All records in which the athlete participated in while ineligible must be vacated.

In addition to the probation and Graves’ suspension, the NCAA said the men’s team must reduce the number of coaches at a regular practice by five hours this season, which the women’s team much do the same for 10 hours this season. The school was also fined \$5,000 plus 1 percent of the men’s and women’s basketball budgets.



AP Photo/Young Kwak
Gonzaga forward Rui Hachimura shoots the go-ahead basket while defended by Washington forward Sam Timmins. Gonzaga won 81-79.

Hachimura’s shot lifts No. 1 Gonzaga over Washington

By **NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS**
Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — In the closing seconds of a tie game, Gonzaga guard Josh Perkins dribbled out high looking for somewhere to pass the ball.

He spotted Rui Hachimura near the free throw line.

“They left Rui open where he is automatic,” Perkins said.

Hachimura sank a turnaround jumper with 0.6 seconds left, lifting the top-ranked Bulldogs to an 81-79 victory over in-state rival Washington on Wednesday night.

Hachimura had 26 points for Gonzaga (9-0), which has won 12 of its past 13 games against the Huskies.

“We wanted Rui to take that shot in that situation,” teammate Zach Norvell Jr. said. “He shoots that shot a lot.”

Washington missed a halfcourt try as the final buzzer sounded.

Norvell finished with 14 points, Corey Kispert added 13 and Brandon Clarke had 10 points and 11 rebounds for Gonzaga, which struggled against Washington’s zone defense.

“It’s a handful,” Zags coach Mark Few said. “They adjust really well.”

Jaylen Nowell scored 26 for Washington (6-3), which was in the preseason Top 25 before losing at No. 8 Auburn. Matisse Thybulle added 18 points.

“We did a good job in the second half slowing the game down and finding the open man on offense,” Washington coach Mike Hopkins said. “We showed a lot of heart and a lot of toughness.”

The Bulldogs were held well below their season average of 98 points per game, which ranked second in the nation.

Hachimura, a junior from Japan who leads the team in scoring, had 18 points as Gonzaga took a 40-30 halftime lead.

Washington shot just 39 percent in the first period, while Gonzaga shot 41 percent and sank all 10 of its free throws.

Washington opened the second half with a 12-2 run, and Nowell’s 3-pointer tied the score at 42. Nowell followed with another 3 for a 45-42 lead, as Gonzaga made just one of its first 11 shots in the second.

Gonzaga replied with a 7-0 run for a 49-45 advantage.

The teams traded a flurry of baskets, and a pair by Clarke gave Gonzaga a 65-58 lead.

Nowell’s bucket cut it to 79-75 with a minute left, and Thybulle’s bucket trimmed the deficit to two.

Nowell went to the free throw line with 9.4 seconds left and sank two to tie the score at 79, setting the stage for Hachimura’s dramatic shot.

Washington outscored the Zags 49-41 in the second half.

“We probably didn’t get enough stops at the end,” Norvell said.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE

THURSDAY

Girls basketball — Jewell at Perrydale, 5:30 p.m.

Boys basketball — Semiahmoo, BC at Astoria, 7 p.m.; Jewell at Perrydale, 7 p.m.; Ilwaco at South Bend, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY

Girls basketball — Astoria at Scappoose, 7 p.m.; Seaside at Philomath Tournament, TBA; Warrenton at Neah-Kah-Nie, 6 p.m.; Jewell at SW Christian Challenge, TBA

Boys basketball — Astoria at Scappoose, 5:30 p.m.; Seaside at Marshfield, 7 p.m.; Warrenton at Neah-Kah-Nie, 7:30

p.m.; Jewell at SW Christian Challenge, TBA; Ilwaco at NW Christian, 5:45 p.m.

SATURDAY

Girls basketball — Seaside at Philomath Tournament, TBA; Santiam Christian vs. Warrenton (at Clatsop CC), 6 p.m.; Knappa at Portland Adventist, 7:30 p.m.; Jewell at SW Christian Challenge, TBA

Boys basketball — Seaside at Marist Catholic, 5 p.m.; Warrenton at Vernonia, 6 p.m.; Jewell at SW Christian Challenge, TBA

Swimming — Astoria Andrew Nygaard Invite, 10:15 a.m.

Wrestling — Warrenton Invitational, 10 a.m.