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Gary Henley | Sports Reporter
 ghenley@dailyastorian.com

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SEASIDE TOPS BANKS IN COWAPA SHOWDOWN

Gulls win state
 championship preview

By **GARY HENLEY**
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Cowapa League boys basketball, Banks vs. Seaside.

It's roughly the Oregon high school hoops equivalent of the collegiate Atlantic Coast Conference, and North Carolina vs. Duke.

Tuesday night's battle by the ocean went to Seaside, which rallied from an early eight-point deficit for a 60-51 win at the Gulls' Nest.

The victory puts Seaside back atop the Cowapa standings, but before the Gulls get comfortable in the No. 1 spot, Tuesday's contest was just the first of three meetings between Banks and Seaside. The Braves will host the league season finale Feb. 14, and — odds are — both teams will be there, March 9 at Forest Grove High School, to decide another state championship in another sport.

"We'll see them down the road again," said Seaside coach Bill Westerholm, whose team improves to 16-2 overall, 4-0 in the Cowapa League. "We'll see them in the playoffs. Should be some exciting games."

But at this point, there are no other candidates. The Braves and the Gulls are the class of Class 4A basketball. Tuesday's game had all the appearances of a state championship preview.

Banks brought an 18-game win streak into the game, while the Gulls had won 12 in a row, including a victory over defending 5A state champion Thurston.

Banks was (and still is) rated No. 1 in the OSAA RPI poll, and Seaside is ranked No. 1 in the 4A coaches poll.

So something had to give, and it turned out to be the Braves.

Banks couldn't handle the Gulls' pressure defense, and had eight turnovers in the first half.

Combined with numerous missed shots from close range, the Braves let their 15-7 lead turn into a 16-15 deficit late in the first quarter, following baskets by Seaside's Chase Januik, Ryan Hague and Brayden Johnson.

A 9-2 run by the Gulls midway through the second quarter gave Seaside a 34-27 advantage, but the Braves closed the first half on an 8-3 run of their own, even taking a brief lead.

Seaside's final three points of the half came the dramatic way, with Januik sinking a shot at the buzzer from just beyond the midcourt line.

Still, "We didn't finish the half very well," said Seaside coach Bill Westerholm. "We should have been up six or



Payton Westerholm drives to the basket for Seaside.

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

eight. Instead we had two turnovers in a row and they scored on both to go up one, then Chase hits the half-court shot."

And the Braves had one more rally in their system, in the third period.

A jump-hook by Blake Gobel and a 3-pointer by Jarred Evans had the Braves in front, 44-43, but that would be their final lead.

Januik hit two free throws and scored on a short jumper over the 6-foot-7 Gobel, and Hague converted an offensive rebound for a 49-44 lead.

Banks was within 49-47 at the end of the third quarter, but the Gulls scored the first five points of the fourth, and that was enough for the win.

Once Seaside had built a 51-47 lead with four minutes remaining, the Gulls simply played keep-away with the ball, and allowed the Braves to score just four points in the final period.

"The kids have been doing this since they were in the fourth grade," coach Westerholm said. "They see they have a lead, and they start milking the clock. That has nothing to do with me. With

just under four minutes left, we got patient and took about a minute off the clock.

"We knew they had to foul, so we got to the free throw line, and shot free throws pretty well in the fourth quarter."

Seaside made just one field goal in the fourth period, and did the rest from the free throw line, making 9-of-14 to finish the game 17-for-24 at the line, to Banks' 4-for-9.

Hague led Seaside with 20 points, followed by Januik with 16 and Payton Westerholm with 10.

Dakota Bunn had 13 for the Braves. Gobel finished with nine, but the big senior post made just one field goal through three quarters, thanks in part to a tough defense from Seaside's Duncan Thompson.

"Duncan is kind of an unsung hero," Westerholm said. "He only had three points tonight, but we always give him the opportunity to guard the 6-7 or 6-8 kid for the other team. And he's a workhorse. The success we've had comes down to our little tiny post player."

The coach said there were plenty of

accolades to go around.

"I was very proud of the kids, the way they played full court," he said. "We went from baseline to baseline. We've been in kind of a funk the last week and a half. We didn't play great tonight, and we have a lot of room for improvement.

"We'll have to improve a lot if we want to win a league championship. We have to play at Banks, and we have to take care of Valley Catholic here."

Overall, "I was proud of our effort," Westerholm said. "We ran a couple plays for Ryan to start the game, and he made them.

"The last game, Beau (Johnson) goes for 18, and tonight Ryan goes for 20. Chase is always going to have 14 to 20 points, and Payton can get his points. They tried to slow us down with that zone, so we got patient.

"And we got them out of sync a little," he said of the Braves. "If you go half-court with those guys, they're going to 'Gobel' you to death."

Instead, the Gulls "Chased" and "Hagued" the Braves right out of the gym.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE TODAY

Girls basketball — Ilwaco at Ocosta, 7 p.m.
Wrestling — Astoria at Seaside, 5 p.m.

THURSDAY

Girls basketball — Knappa at City Christian, 6:30 p.m.
Boys basketball — Knappa at City Christian, 7:30 p.m.; Ocosta at Ilwaco, 7 p.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Seaside 60, Banks 51

BAN (51): Dakota Bunn 13, Vandehoy 10, Gobel 9, Slifka 7, Evans 5, Exline 3, Markham 2, Klein 2, Cameron, Hiestand.

SEA (60): Ryan Hague 20, Januik 16, Westerholm 10, BeJohnson 6, BrJohnson 5, Thompson 3, Meyer.

Banks	17	18	12	4—51
Seaside	16	21	12	11—60

JV: Seaside 58, Banks 41

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Banks 50, Seaside 37

BAN (50): Aspen Slifka 24, Streblov 4, Hailey 4, Belden 3, Toledo 3, Shook 3, Buliga 2, Hernandez 2, Johnson 2, Kind 2, Merritt 1.

SEA (37): Morgan Blodgett 14, Taylor 6, Garhofer 6, Kiser 6, Douglas 3, Turner 2, McFadden, Goin, Zagata, Angulo.

Banks	9	18	6	17—50
Seaside	8	6	9	14—37

Warrenton 72, Taft 17

WAR (72): Claire Bussert 31, Diego 12, Alvarez 9, Ramsey 9, Miethe 6, Kapua 4, A.Heyen 1.

Warrenton	21	21	17	13—72
Taft	4	9	0	4—17

Faith Bible 69, Knappa 36

FB (69): Izzy Steerman 32, Lohman 22, Bolton 9, Goodloe 6.

KNA (36): Sophia Carlson 15, Miller 6, Dietrichs 6, McCall 4, Weaver 3, Corcoran 2, Walter, Tischer.

Faith Bible	22	18	12	17—69
Knappa	11	8	9	8—36

HOOPS ROUNDUP

Slifka helps Banks slip past Seaside girls

The Daily Astorian

The Seaside Lady Gulls had plenty of looks at their favorite shot, firing up 24 3-pointers — but only seven went in, and that wasn't enough to stay with the Banks Braves in a Cowapa League girls basketball game Tuesday night.

Banks led from start to finish in a 50-37 win over the Gulls, who otherwise played a good game against the No. 2-ranked Braves.

"I thought our kids played pretty well," said Seaside coach Mike Hawes, "though Banks kept their foot off the throttle somewhat, with no full court press, which we'll see (Friday) against Astoria."

Morgan Blodgett had 14 points and 10 rebounds to lead Seaside, which had 38 rebounds total.

The Gulls simply couldn't keep pace with the Braves' Aspen Slifka, who led all scorers with 24 points.

"We still have turnover spots where Aspen said 'thank you very much' and then laid it in," Hawes said. "Without the turnovers (20) we were pretty even in the half court, but dang if they don't count them."

Taft upsets Warrenton boys for second time

The No. 19-ranked Warren-



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
 Lilli Taylor, center, launches a shot for Seaside.

ton Warriors slipped below .500 mark in league play, following a 47-33 loss Tuesday night at Taft in a Coastal Range League boys basketball game.

It was just the second win in league play for the Tigers (2-7), both victories over the Warriors.

Warrenton falls to 4-5 in league, two-and-a-half games behind Clats-

kanie, which hosts the Warriors in another crucial league contest Friday.

Warriors cage the Tigers, 72-17

Warrenton jumped out to a 17-0 lead Tuesday night in a Coastal Range League girls basketball game at Taft.

And the 17 points would equal Taft's total for the entire game, as the Warriors left Lincoln City with an easy 72-17 win over the Tigers.

Warrenton's Claire Bussert scored 31 points in 20 minutes of playing time, and Sagi Diego chipped in a career-high 12 points for the Warriors, who play Friday at Clatskanie.

Knappa boys keep pace with first-place Knights

With second place in the Northwest League standings locked up, the Knappa boys basketball team still has an outside chance at catching first-place Columbia Christian.

The Loggers remained within a game-and-a-half of the Knights following a 66-43 win Tuesday over Faith Bible on Senior Night at Knappa.

An upstart Falcons' team — now 2-10 in league — trailed just 20-17 at halftime, before the Loggers outscored Faith Bible 46-26 over the final two quarters.

Knappa plays Thursday at City Christian, followed by a big showdown Saturday at Columbia Christian. The two teams will also play a third time in the league playoffs, to decide the league's No. 1 seed to state.

Faith Bible defeats Knappa girls, 69-36

The Knappa girls basketball team came up short on Senior Night in front of their home fans Tuesday, as Faith Bible scored a 69-36 Northwest League win over the Loggers.

Kourtney Tischer and Jordan Walter were the only two seniors in uniform for Knappa, with Katie Patterson still sidelined by an injury.

Faith Bible's Izzy Steerman stole the show for the Falcons, as the sophomore scored a game-high 32 points. Freshman teammate Ashley Lohman added 22.

Sophia Carlson led the Loggers with 15 points and three steals, and Aiko Miller added six points, five steals and four boards.

Knappa plays Thursday at City Christian.