

SPORTS

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Seaside's three-peat halted by Banks

Braves complete second-half rally

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

FOREST GROVE — Fifteen minutes following the completion of Saturday's 4A boys basketball state championship game, it was pretty obvious what the results were — even if you didn't know the score.

The Braves Braves were still on the main court with their fans, jamming to Kool and the Gang's "Celebration."

The Seaside Gulls were back in their locker room, feeling about as low as they've felt in four years.

The final score from Forest Grove High School, for the record, was Banks 62, Seaside 56.

The Braves overcame a 33-22 deficit in the opening minutes of the third quarter, and rallied behind the hot hand of Bret Cameron to score the victory, preventing a Seaside three-peat and giving Banks a second state championship win over the Gulls in a four-month span.

In basketball, it was just the second loss for the Gulls since Dec. 20. Both losses came at the hands of the Braves. On the plus side, Seaside (24-4 overall) also defeated Banks (27-3), twice.

Still, "They're feeling low," Seaside coach Bill Westerholm said of his players. "These kids have come a long ways. Most of our seniors have either played in or been on the bench for three straight championships. So it hurts 'em to lose."

Banks vs. Seaside IV certainly lived up to the hype.

Both teams were hot from the field in the opening minutes, especially Seaside's Beau Johnson. The junior wing downed a pair of 3-pointers for the Gulls' first two scores.

Brayden Johnson added a third 3-pointer for a 9-7 lead, and Beau Johnson's short jumper beat the buzzer to end the first period for an 11-7 advantage.

In the second quarter, Seaside stayed hot, and the Braves did not.

Two mid-range jumpers by Seaside's Chase Januik made it 15-9, Brayden Johnson's second 3-pointer of the half gave the Gulls an 18-11 lead, and a layup by Beau Johnson off an assist from Januik had Seaside in front, 20-11.

Seaside's Ryan Hague got in on the scoring act in the final minutes of the first half, scoring three baskets, including an offensive rebound putback as time expired for another buzzer beater and a 29-22 halftime lead for the Gulls, who thrilled the crowd with circus shots and long-range bombs.

Blake Gobel kept Banks within striking distance, finishing the first half with 11 points and six rebounds. But the Braves knew they were in trouble.

"We just needed to slow it down on offense and not hurry so much," said Banks coach Marcus Roche.

"We needed to calm down and finish the layups," Gobel added. "Just 'be slow' at the rim, and let it go in. We couldn't let the crowd noise get to us or anything like that. We figured it out the second half, that's for sure."

But first, it got worse for the Braves before it got better.

Two quick scores by Seaside's Payton Westerholm and Hague gave the Gulls their largest lead of the day, 33-22, just seconds into the third quarter.

That's when Cameron — who had no points in the first half — hit his first jumper of the second half, sparking the Braves to a 14-4 run.

Baskets by Dakota Bunn and Jacob Slifka were followed by a 3-pointer from Gobel, an offensive rebound score by Slifka and a Cameron 3-pointer that brought Banks to within 37-36.

Dylan Meyer answered with an offensive rebound score, which was followed by perhaps the biggest play of the day.

As time expired in the third quarter, Gobel launched a desperation shot from half-court. The shot missed, but Westerholm was called for a foul. Gobel made all three free throws, tying the game at 39-39.

"Payton got that foul on Gobel, who hits all three free throws and we're tied going into the fourth," coach Westerholm said.

Said Roche, "When Blake got fouled on that 3-pointer from half court, and he made all three free throws ... it was 'go time.' We knew we had a good chance after that."

But not before the teams traded five straight lead changes on five baskets to start the final period.

Duncan Thompson's scored gave the Gulls a 44-43 lead with 5:25 left, but little did anyone know, that would be Sea-



Jeff Ter Har

Seaside's Brayden Johnson launches a shot over Jacob Slifka of Banks.

Gulls fly past Stayton Eagles in semifinal

All-Cowapa League final for third year in a row

The Daily Astorian

The Gulls locked up their fourth straight trip to the state championship game with a 49-40 win over Stayton in a semifinal of the 4A boys tournament Friday afternoon at Forest Grove High School.

Seaside's victory set up a rematch of the football state title — and a matchup that most Cowapa League fans saw coming weeks ago — the Gulls vs. Banks for the state championship.

It's the third straight year that two Cowapa teams have met in the final, with Seaside defeating Valley Catholic in the previous two 4A championship games.

The Gulls punched their ticket to this year's final by rallying from an early deficit, taking a 23-22 lead at halftime, then taking control in the fourth quarter.

Stayton grabbed a quick lead to open second half on a 3-pointer by Riley Nichol for a 25-23 advantage. That would be Stayton's final lead of the day.

The Eagles featured 6-foot-8 Kaleb Anundi and the 6-7 Nichol, but Seaside makes a living off beating bigger teams. The Gulls just moved their game outside a little.

After making five 3-pointers in the first half, Seaside drained three in the opening minutes of the third quarter, including back-to-back bombs by Payton Westerholm and another from Beau Johnson that gave the Gulls a

side's final lead of the season.

Slifka answered with a jumper to give Banks a 45-44 advantage, and more importantly sparked a 9-0 run for the Braves.

Cameron hit a 3-pointer at the 4:18 mark, Gobel scored on an offensive rebound, and Cameron's steal and basket made it 52-44 with 3:36 left.

"When I got fouled (at the end of the third quarter), I think that's where it kind of turned," Gobel said. "Then Bret Cameron got really hot and started knocking down some shots. That really lifted us and got us going."

Said Westerholm, "It's tough — you use a lot of emotion to go up 11, then when the other team goes up, it's hard to get that emotion back."

Still, the Gulls tried.



Jeff Ter Har

Seaside's Beau Johnson, left, battles for a loose ball with Logan Classen of Stayton.

commanding 36-27 lead.

The Eagles tried to keep it close — and they did, for a while.

Consecutive scores by Micah Jenkins had Stayton within 38-37 early in the fourth quarter, but that's as close as the Eagles would get.

Westerholm scored on a floating jump shot, Ryan Hague made two free throws, Westerholm converted four straight, and the Gulls held on from there.

Januik scored 15 points with five assists, and Westerholm added 14 points, eight rebounds and five assists.

After Cameron's third 3-pointer of the half gave Banks a 55-46 lead, Beau Johnson nailed a triple (his fifth of the game), and Hague converted a three-point play, bringing Seaside to within 57-54 with 1:41 remaining.

Banks came right back with a free throw and a fast break layup from Bunn, which secured the Braves' victory.

"When Seaside gets a lead, they don't usually give it up," Roche said. "So for us to make some plays and make some shots, that was just huge."

Summing up Seaside's season, coach Westerholm said, "You can't finish first every year. We got beat by a good Banks team. A team that hit some shots in the second half. Cameron hit two or three threes that were big for them. We stretched it out to 11 points in the third,

SCOREBOARD

PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE TODAY

Baseball — Clatsop jamboree, at Seaside, 4 p.m.
Softball — Clatsop jamboree, at Astoria (CMH Field), 4 p.m.
Girls golf — Astoria at Oregon Episcopal, 11:30 a.m.
Boys golf — Astoria at Oregon Episcopal, 10 a.m.

BOYS BASKETBALL

Banks 62, Seaside 56
SEA (56): Beau Johnson 19, Ryan Hague 17, Duncan Thompson 6, Brayden Johnson 6, Chase Januik 4, Payton Westerholm 2, Dylan Meyer 2. BAN (62): Blake Gobel 24, Bret Cameron 13, Dakota Bunn 9, Jacob Slifka 7, Jarred Evans 5, Hayden Vandehy 2, Tyler Exline 2, Ryan Hiestand, Nathan Klein, Blake Markham.
Seaside 11 18 10 17 — 56
Banks 7 15 17 23 — 62
Field goals: Seaside 23-54, Banks 23-53. 3-point FG: Seaside 7-20 (Be. Johnson 5, Br. Johnson 2), Banks 6-13 (Cameron 3, Gobel 2, Evans). Free throws: Seaside 3-3, Banks 10-16. Fouls: Seaside 14, Banks 7. Assists: Seaside 17 (Januik 6), Banks 8 (three with 2). Rebounds: Seaside 26 (Hague 5), Banks 39 (Gobel 13). Steals: Seaside 6 (Januik 5), Banks 10 (Cameron 3). Turnovers: Seaside 11, Banks 13. Players of the Game: Beau Johnson (Seaside), Blake Gobel (Banks).

Seaside 49, Stayton 40

STA (40): Riley Nichol 18, Kaleb Anundi 12, Micah Jenkins 6, Logan Classen 4, Jordan Butler, Ben Rash, Jacob Axmaker.
SEA (49): Chase Januik 15, Payton Westerholm 14, Brayden Johnson 8, Beau Johnson 5, Ryan Hague 4, Duncan Thompson 3, Skye Higdon, Dylan Meyer.
Stayton 11 11 11 7 — 40
Seaside 11 12 15 11 — 49
Field goals: Stayton 15-41, Seaside 15-44. 3-point FG: Stayton 3-12 (Nichol 3), Seaside 8-26 (Januik 3, Westerholm 2, Br. Johnson 2, Be. Johnson). Free throws: Stayton 7-8, Seaside 11-17. Fouls: Stayton 16, Seaside 12. Fouled out: Stayton, Classen, Jenkins. Assists: Stayton 10 (Butler 4), Seaside 12 (Januik 5, Westerholm 5). Rebounds: Stayton 30 (Anundi 9), Seaside 29 (Westerholm 8). Steals: Stayton 1 (Rash), Seaside 5 (Br. Johnson 2). Turnovers: Stayton 14, Seaside 4. Players of the Game: Kaleb Anundi (Stayton), Chase Januik (Seaside).

Saturday's finals

4A state tournament

Boys
Championship: Banks 62, Seaside 56
3rd/5th: Stayton 49, Woodburn 42
4th/6th: North Marion 77, Marist 65

Girls
Championship: Baker 51, Marist 48
3rd/5th: Newport 52, Philomath 40
4th/6th: North Marion 48, Banks 38

4A boys all-tournament

First team
Kaleb Anundi, Sr., Stayton
Blake Gobel, Sr., Banks
Ryan Hague, Jr., Seaside
Chase Januik, Sr., Seaside
R.J. Veliz, Sr., Woodburn (unanimous)

Second team
Sergio Jimenez, Jr., North Marion
Riley Nichol, Sr., Stayton
Andrew Reynolds, Sr., Henley
Jacob Slifka, Jr., Banks
Nick Stice, Jr., Marist
Sportsmanship: Woodburn

and we just got stagnant.

"(The Braves) picked it up a little defensively, and we didn't get some buckets when we needed to."

Seaside finished 7-of-20 from the 3-point line, but "We didn't get many inside points tonight," he said. "All of our points seemed to be coming from deep. Beau shot the ball well, but you can't win the game by just shooting threes. You have to get some points inside, and we didn't get many in the first half or the third quarter."

Gobel — who scored the go-ahead touchdown in the state championship football win — said the friendly rivalry with the Gulls was a highlight of his high school sports career, which will finish this spring in baseball.

"We have so much respect for all those guys," said Gobel, who finished with 24 points and 13 rebounds, both game highs. Cameron finished with 13 points. "It's been one hell of a ride, and we still have one more sport to go. It's been fun, and I appreciate all their coaches, families, players ... everybody on their side."

For the Braves, the postgame fun was just beginning.

"It hasn't really sunk in yet," Gobel said. "It's going to be one celebration, that's for sure. I thought football was great, then we do this. It's something that I will be able to look back on, and be very happy and proud of everybody that had a part in it."

Roche said, "Coming from behind made it even sweeter. The kids have a lot of heart and a lot of grit. And they're all great kids. That's the best part."

As for the Gulls, don't count 'em out for a fifth straight title game appearance next year.

Beau Johnson and Hague — both juniors — combined for 36 of Seaside's 56 points. Januik had six assists and five steals in his final game in a Gulls uniform.

Januik and Hague were both selected all-tournament, the only team with two players on the first team.

"It's been a great ride with these seniors," Westerholm said. "We have a good young group coming in, so we're going to be just fine. But it's been a fun ride, hanging with these seniors. I've learned a lot from them."