

KNAPPA LOGGERS

SPRING 2019 | BASEBALL • SOFTBALL • TRACK

Rest of the state is still chasing Knappa

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

For the last four years, the Knappa Loggers have certainly been the class of Class 2A baseball. Appearances in the state title game in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018, with championships in three of the four years. For the Loggers, the only goal from one year to the next is, “How do we improve?”

Just one thing: How do they improve on perfection?

The Loggers were 24-0 last season, two years after going 27-0. Nationally, Knappa went into the season with the nation’s longest win streak, which reached 42 until a recent loss.

Time to start a new run with a new team.

Not surprisingly, the 2019 Loggers were voted No. 1 in a preseason coaches poll, and that’s likely where they’ll stay. For the past four years, the only legitimate question in Oregon 2A baseball has been: Who will Knappa play in the state championship?

There may be new challenges from one year to the next, but the one constant has been the Loggers.

Knappa lost some key seniors, but then again, so did everyone else.

“Every year you lose ‘em,” said Knappa coach Jeff Miller, of last year’s talent-laden roster, which included three players now on college baseball rosters. “Obviously there was a core group of seniors last



Knappa has one of the best pitchers in the state on the mound, in junior Eli Takalo.

Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian

year that had been through a lot of games and success together.

“Even if you bring back all nine starters, it’s a brand new year and you’re starting all over again.”

The rest of the state, meanwhile, has been trying to catch the Loggers for the last three years. And they still haven’t caught ‘em.

Until someone does, Knappa is the likely favorite

to win the state title this year and next. (When you’ve got a junior pitcher on the roster who has a 2-0 record in state championship games, who else would it be?).

THE NWL

New league member St. Paul “is a top four or five team in the state, and they return everybody,” Miller said. “They have one of the better pitchers in the state,

a lefty, (Justin) Herberger. They lost that dramatic upset to Monroe in the playoffs last year.

“They return everybody this year, with a new coach (Dwayne Nowlin). With their proven talent on the field, they would be a favorite in the Northwest League. They’re not going to lose many baseball games.”

Before they start thinking league championship, how-

ever, the Buckaroos should keep in mind that Knappa is the team with a 99-3 league record over the last five years.

Elsewhere, “Portland Christian is back. I saw them beat a good Rainier team last year,” Miller said. “They’re on their way back up.

“Nestucca will have one of the better pitchers in the league (Mitchell Richwine), and the state for that matter.

KNAPPA BASEBALL

Coach: Jeff Miller, 18th year

2018: 24-0 (12-0 NWL)

Playoffs: Defeated Pilot Rock in state championship, 7-1

All-league losses: Dale Takalo (MVP), Reuben Cruz, Mason Hoover, Kaleb Miller, Colton Weirup.

All-league returners: Logan Bartlett, Sr., Ryker Coffey, Sr., Shaun Lackey, Sr., Eli Takalo, Jr.

They will be capable of beating anyone in the league.

“It’s going to be very competitive. It should be a good year for the Northwest League.”

THE LOGGERS

While the Loggers lost first team all-state pitcher Dale Takalo (the state Player of the Year), they replaced him with an offseason transfer, senior Tristin Wallace from Astoria.

But it all starts with Eli Takalo, the junior who is unbeaten in state championship games.

“Eli will certainly be one of the better pitchers,” Miller said. “Actually 2A is pretty loaded this year, pitcher-wise. Reedsport, Umpqua Valley and some other places, they’ve got some top-end pitchers.

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Vernonia, Knappa will clash for league title

By GARY HENLEY
The Daily Astorian

It will be a Logger vs. Logger battle for the title this year in Northwest League softball.

With co-league champion Gaston possibly out of the picture, last year’s other league champ — Knappa — may find itself locked in a battle with Vernonia for this year’s title.

“Gaston lost a lot,” including pitcher Charity Hall, said Knappa coach James Nichols, who wasn’t too sad to see Hall move on. “Honestly, I think it will be between Vernonia and us. They’ve got Jordan Walters and Joyce Everett back, and Jordan’s younger sister (freshman Brooklyn Walters), who I think will be pretty good.”

Joining the Northwest League this year are Perrydale, Portland Christian and St. Paul, which pushes the league schedule to 21 games. Delphian is no longer in the league.

In the six-team NWL last year, Knappa and Gaston were the only teams with winning overall records. The Loggers finished the league season with three wins over Delphian (12-0, 20-0 and 23-0), then lost a first-round state playoff game at home to North Douglas, 6-4.

The Loggers did not have much time to prepare for the 2019 league season. Knappa’s doubleheader March 15 at Western Christian was cancelled, so the Loggers opened the NWL season



Madelynn Weaver will do the majority of the pitching for Knappa softball.

Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian

March 19 at Perrydale.

THE LOGGERS

Pitching is a large part of softball, and the Loggers have one of the best in junior Madelynn Weaver.

“Madelynn is stronger this year,” Nichols said. “We’re working with three pitchers right now. Madelynn, Emily Nicholson (Jr.) will pitch a little and Hannah Dietrichs (Fr.) is a left-hander who will be pretty good. But Madelynn is our No. 1.”

A big hole in the lineup to replace will be behind the

plate, where Knappa lost Kaitlyn Truax to graduation.

Junior Sophia Carlson and sophomore Vicki Ramvick, along with junior Katie Denny are the leading candidates to replace Truax at catcher.

The Loggers also lost most of their hitting power with the graduation of Mikayla Rethati and Truax.

“We hit three home runs last year — K.K. (Truax) hit two and Mikayla had one,” Nichols said. “So we’ll be a single-hitting team this year. Not a lot of power.”

In the field, Knappa has

KNAPPA SOFTBALL

Coach: James Nichols, 7th year

2018: 14-9 (13-2 NWL)

Playoffs: Lost state playoff vs. North Douglas, 6-4

All-league losses: Jaden Miethe, Aiko Miller, Mikayla Rethati, Kaitlyn Truax

All-league returners: Madelynn Weaver, Jr. (MVP), Sophia Carlson, Jr., Laicee Hendrickson, Sr.

senior Hannah Hellberg back for her fourth year at first base. Sophomore Raven Corcoran will also see action at first.

Nicholson is at second base, replacing Aiko Miller, senior Laicee Hendrickson has moved from third base to shortstop, and junior Bayle McCall will be the primary starter at third base.

In the outfield, the Loggers have Corcoran in left field (with senior Katie Patterson slated to return from a basketball injury later in the season), with Ramvick or Dietrichs in center, and possibly Weaver when she’s not pitching. Junior Katie Denny holds down the spot in right field.

Some Knappa newcomers this year include sophomore left-hander Chloe Shepard, and freshmen Rachel Ball and Dawn Beck.

Nichols is assisted by Mike Denny and Andrea Weaver.

Philip, Piña-Morton will run tough for Knappa

The Daily Astorian

Seven was not exactly a lucky number for the Knappa track team last season. Seventh is where the Logger track teams both finished in the district meet, as the Knappa boys placed seventh out of eight teams, and the Lady Loggers were seventh out of nine.

Then again, any league with five private schools is going to be tough in track, as it was last year in the District 1/2A.

Three of the top four teams on the boys’ side were Delphian, Faith Bible and Columbia Christian, while Faith Bible won the girls’ title.

Still, the Loggers had their moments and high-lights in the district meet.

The Knappa boys sported one of the fastest sprinters on the track, as sophomore Kanai Philip took second in the 100-meter final and placed third in the 200.

And the Loggers were pretty good in the longer races as well, with sophomore Robert Piña-Morton taking second in the 3,000 meters and fifth in the 1,500. The junior is back and looking to improve on those finishes.

In the field events, it was sophomore Spencer Teague clearing 5-feet-10 to take second in the high jump.

The seniors scored most of the points for the Knappa girls. Ressa Inman



Gary Henley/The Daily Astorian
Knappa’s Robert Piña-Morton is one of the top distance runners in the region.

was third in the discus and fourth in the shot put, and Paris Vanderburg took third in the javelin.

Last year’s coaches both return — head coach Amada Isom and assistant Christina Tucker — and bring with them a good mix of youth and experience.

Seniors on this year’s team for the boys will include Josh Fulton and Josh Jones in the throws. They will be joined by junior Victor Carlborg.

Philip is back in the sprints as a junior, while Piña-Morton returns for his junior season, and will handle the distances on the track. In the first meet of 2019, seven of Knappa’s 14 competitors were freshmen.

The Knappa girls had just seven on the roster in their first two meets, with sophomores Ashley Feldscher and Megan Hellberg, and five freshmen including Taylin Regier, a promising thrower.

Go Loggers!

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