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The North Coast Merchants' 10U team, following a tournament championship.

Photos by North Coast Merchants

Merchants' softball brings home trophies

The Astorian

The North Coast Merchants' summer of fun continued recently, when the 10-and-under softball team went 4-4 in a weekend tournament at Willamette Park to bring home another championship.

"I am so impressed with their journey," said Ian O'Brien, who coaches the Merchants' 12-and-under squad. "The success of this team is the exact reason NCM (North Coast Merchants) is a thing. Showing girls through softball that they can start with limited experience and skill and through hard work they will show the world they are champions."



North Coast Merchants, 16U team.

After pool play, the No. 1 seed Merchants' 10U team opened the championship bracket with an 8-2 win over the Rose City Darlings.

The Merchants knocked off the Lake Oswego Renegades 13-10 in the title game.

In addition to the 10U's, the O'Brien's 12U team also brought home a trophy, finishing

second in their last tournament.

The Merchants won two games, then lost the championship contest to the Tigard Blast, 5-4.

The 12U's placed in every tournament they took part in this season.

"How incredible is that?" O'Brien said. "This group

of girls has a bright future ahead of them, and their respective high school teams will be fun to watch in the near future."

The North Coast 16U team (coached by Warrenton's Staci Mieth) recently placed third in their second tournament of the year, at Crater. The Merchants lost a heartbreaker in the semi-finals, but bounced back strong in the final game with a walkoff RBI single to win in the final inning, 4-3 over the Lady Dragons.

"They are so fun to watch," O'Brien said. "I couldn't be prouder of all the players and coaches for what they are accomplishing."

Locals find success in big track meets

The Astorian

Astoria's John Clement took fifth place in the 2,000-meter steeplechase final at the recent Junior Olympic (Region 13) track championships, held July 4-7 in Tacoma, Washington.

The freshman-to-be at Astoria High School ran the race in 7 minutes, 14.53 seconds.

Clement also placed 11th in the 3,000 meters, finishing in 10:40.48.

In addition to Clement's postseason performances, a strong showing of athletes representing Warrenton, Knappa and Astoria competed at the TrackTown Youth League championship, June 29 at Lane Community College in Eugene.

Four of the local athletes had top three finishes to earn appearances on the awards stand.

In the age 13-14 boys turbo javelin, Moses Peitsch had the first-place finish with a toss of 113 feet, 7 inches. In the 13-14 boys long jump, Xavier Phanthonghay came in second with a leap of 17-1, and Clement placed third (15-11).

Phanthonghay also took third in the 100 meters (12.93 seconds), and Ayden Woodby was close by in fourth place (13.08).

Clement placed sixth (4:53.34) in the 1,500 meters.

For the 13-14 girls, Ella Zilli took second in the 1,500 (5:39.38), while



Lisa Clement

Astoria Middle School runner John Clement.

Pele Starr-Hollow posted a fourth-place finish in the 400 (1:09.24) and fifth in the 100 (13.85).

Other local athletes who participated in the meet were Aleaha Seely (11-12 girls turbo javelin), Baylee Bishop (7-8 girls 100 and turbo javelin), Donovan Daniels (7-8 boys turbo javelin and long jump), Ella Smith (7-8 girls 100 and 400), Grady Ayers (11-12 boys 100), Gunar Puffinburger (11-12 boys 100 and long jump), Jack Colquhoun (13-14 boys 1,500), Mersadies Miravalle (13-14 girls 100), Orrick Evans (9-10 boys 100 and 400), Maximus Ralston (7-8 boys javelin and long jump) and Mulu Starr-Hollow (11-12 boys javelin and long jump).

Seaside baseball team fourth at state

The Astorian

Seaside's Junior National baseball team took fourth place out of eight teams at the recent Junior Baseball Organization (JBO) state tournament, July 12-14 at Bob Smith Memorial Park in Lebanon.

The JBO youth team (for players in grades 5-6) opened the tournament with a 14-8 win over Estacada early Friday morning.

Later in the day, Yamhill-Carlton defeated Seaside 11-9, dropping the locals into the consolation bracket. Seaside topped Corbett, but then lost a 15-4 decision to Mt. Angel, which went on to place third behind state champion Stayton and second-place Yamhill-Carlton.

In addition, the Seaside team was chosen for the Sportsmanship Award.

Elsewhere, Seaside's Senior American team (grades 7-8) placed fourth at districts, and was also selected for the Sportsmanship Award by the umpires, coaches and tournament directors.



Photos by Seaside Baseball

Fourth place at state for Seaside baseball's Junior team.



Seaside baseball's Senior American team, fourth place at districts.

Francis has big hopes as GM of Seattle's new NHL club

By CHRIS TALBOTT
 Associated Press

SEATTLE — Ron Francis has all kinds of eye-popping statistics attached to his Hall of Fame career. He averaged more than a point a game, is second in NHL history in assists behind Wayne Gretzky and fifth in career points.

When CEO Tod Leiweke and the ownership group of the Seattle NHL expansion team looked at his playing

resume, though, they were most impressed by another statistic: Francis was voted captain by three teams for 14 of his 23 years, first earning the role at age 21.

That leadership ability spurred them to hire Francis on Thursday as general manager of the yet-to-be-named team — well ahead of their schedule.

They believe the 56-year-old Francis is that person, announcing his hiring at a news conference that was

attended by the mayor and a state senator. He'll have complete control of building the organization under Leiweke. He said he's already drawn up an organizational chart that will guide hiring as the team prepares to open play in 2021 as the NHL's 32nd franchise.

And he's already started daydreaming about how his team will look.

"I think if you look at my past experience, it's a team that's fast," Francis said.

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