



ASTORIA GIRLS BASKETBALL

Coach: Mike Jacobson, 6th year

2018-19: 19-8 (7-1 Cowapa)

State Playoffs: Lost first round to Marist (39-48)

All-League losses: None

All-League returners: Kelsey Fausett, Jr., Brooklynn Hankwitz, Sr., Halle Helmersen, Jr., Julia Norris, Sr., Hailey O'Brien, Sr.

SCHEDULE

Dec. 6-7 at White Buffalo Classic, Madras

Dec. 10 Cascade 5 p.m.

Dec. 13 Scappoose 6 p.m.

Dec. 19-21 at South Coast Les Schwab Tournament

Dec. 27-28 Dulcich Tournament

Jan. 2-4 at Pepsi/Denali Invite, Anchorage, Alaska

Jan. 10 at Molalla 5:30 p.m.

Jan. 11 Corbett 3 p.m.

Jan. 14 at Estacada 4 p.m.

Jan. 17 Gladstone TBA

Jan. 21 Seaside 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 24 Banks 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 28 at Tillamook 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 31 at Valley Catholic 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 7 at Seaside 6 p.m.

Feb. 11 at Banks 6 p.m.

Feb. 14 Tillamook 6 p.m.

Feb. 18 Valley Catholic 6 p.m.

Makings of a championship

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

The 2019-20 Astoria girls basketball program could be going places where Astoria girls basketball has never been before.

It's no secret that the Lady Fishermen will be one of the top teams in the state at the 4A level. A league championship and a trip to the state tournament seems almost assured.

The Lady Fish and head coach Mike Jacobson have indeed set some lofty goals, and the Astoria players may have already set the tone.

"As the girls say, we have some 'unfinished business' to take care of this year," said Jacobson, who says the top teams at the 4A ranks are "probably Philomath, North Marion and Marist. I would think we should be right up there, I hope."

Astoria lost a first round playoff at home to Marist last season.

Jacobson, last year's Cowapa League Coach of the Year, returns with five all-league players.

As a result, don't be surprised to see Astoria girls basketball holding down the No. 1 spot in the 4A coaches poll for most of the season. The Lady Fishermen were ranked third in a pre-season coaches poll (behind Philomath and Marist), with one first place vote.

The Cowapa

Astoria and Banks had to share last year's league championship, with 7-1 league records. No one else was even close (Tillamook was third at 4-4).

The Braves lost five seniors, including all three of their first team all-league players. Cowapa Player of the Year Aspen Slifka, who was also the league's Defensive Player of the Year, graduated, along with Rylie Kind and Gracie Nelson.

Still, with four teams in last year's Sweet 16, the Cowapa will be the toughest league, top to bottom.

"Banks will still be pretty good, as will Valley Catholic," said Jacobson, who finished the season with 318 career victories, one ahead of former Astoria coach Tighe Davis. Jacobson previously took teams from Knappa and Seaside to state tournaments.

Astoria had three first team all-league players last season, and all three return, as well as two honorable mention all-leaguers.

With a league championship theirs for the taking, the Lady Fishermen may see their best competition in the pre-season.

Non-league games against 5A teams Hood River Valley and Scappoose will be followed by an appearance in the Les Schwab Invitational



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Shelby Rasmussen goes for a layup during the second practice of the season for the Astoria girls basketball team.

at Marshfield and a very long road trip to the Pepsi/Denali Invitational in Anchorage, Alaska (Jan. 2-4).

The Lady Fishermen

The projected starters — each one an all-league player — are seniors Brooklynn Hankwitz, Julia Norris and Hailey O'Brien, and juniors Kelsey Fausett and Halle Helmersen.

They will be joined by 6-foot-2 senior post

Kajsa Jackson, and transfer Kailee Fisher, a 5-10 junior post.

Others on the roster include seniors Haley Norman (a transfer from Jewell) and Taileigh Cole, with juniors Elle Espelien, Sophie Long and Shelby Rasmussen and sophomore Mollie Mathews.

Jacobson's assistant will be Alex Eterno, with Corey Jacobson coaching the junior varsity.

Prediction: Thinking big. All the pieces are in place for an Astoria state championship.