

CONTACT US

Gary Henley | Sports Reporter
ghenley@dailyastorian.com

SPORTS

FOLLOW US

facebook.com/
DailyAstorianSports

Lady Fishermen miss out on title chance

Virus fears cancel tournament

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

“For all sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these, ‘It might have been.’” — John Greenleaf Whittier

If they don’t know the quote, that’s at least what players on the Astoria girls basketball team were probably thinking, when they heard the news shortly before noon Thursday.

Only about a half-hour from their final destination, the Lady Fishermen — on their way to the 4A state tournament in Forest Grove — learned that the tournament had been canceled because of the coronavirus outbreak.

The news hit everyone hard, especially five seniors who were all set for the swan song of their high school basketball careers.

And they weren’t the only ones. Statewide, 24 girls teams and 24 boys teams saw their seasons come to a premature end when the OSAA announced the cancellation of the 4A, 5A and 6A state tournaments. Some games in the 5A and 6A tournaments had already been played.

The state dance and drill competition was also canceled.

In a jolt to the sports world, the National Basketball Association, the National Hockey League and Major League Soccer suspended their seasons over concerns about the spread of the virus. Major League Baseball suspended spring training and delayed opening day.

And the NCAA’s March Madness basketball tournament — always one of the country’s most anticipated annual events — was canceled.

In less than 24 hours, senior athletes at the high school level in Oregon saw their winter sports careers come to an end.

“It hit them pretty hard,” said Astoria coach Mike Jacobson. “Our five seniors had worked hard for a long time and were building up towards this. We felt we had a good chance of winning it, too.”

Taileigh Cole, Brooklynn Hankwitz,



Astor Elementary School students cheer, ‘Let’s go Fish! Let’s go!’ as the Astoria girls basketball team rides by.

Kajsa Jackson, Julia Norris and Hailey O’Brien were the five seniors on this year’s team.

Most of the Astoria players will now turn their attention toward spring sports, and a few will continue their basketball careers at the college level.

Hankwitz and O’Brien plan on playing next season at Linn-Benton Community College, while Norris will finish up high school as Astoria’s starting pitcher in softball, then will play softball next year at Clackamas Community College.

“Everyone was pretty upset when we found out about the tournament,” Norris said.

Jacobson had been attending a coaches meeting in Forest Grove, and learned about the cancellation five minutes before the meeting.

He texted his wife, Nikki, who informed the team, which was still en route to Forest Grove. Everyone then met in Beaverton for lunch.

“Coach came in and hugged us, and everyone got really emotional,” Nor-

ris said. “I thought we had a very good chance of winning it all. We played Philomath, and we only lost to them by one (51-50). We hung with them the whole time.”

“Everyone was superhyped,” she said. “I will definitely remember this season more than the others. We were all super-bonded. (The seniors) have been playing together since the third grade.”

The Lady Fishermen officially finished the basketball season at 22-3 overall, the program’s most wins in one season since finishing 22-5 in 2000-01.

As the No. 4 seed in this year’s tournament, Astoria was set to play La Grande in a Thursday quarterfinal, with the winner to play either Cottage Grove or No. 1-ranked Philomath on Friday.

The potential Astoria vs. Philomath matchup was one of the most anticipated games of the tournament.

Now, Astoria will just pick up the pieces and rebuild for next season.

Several key players return, and with the addition of a few talented players up

from the junior varsity level, the Lady Fish will hopefully find themselves right back in contention.

The team still plans to hold a season-ending awards banquet, while Astoria principal Lynn Jackson said the recent outbreak of the coronavirus has disrupted far more than just sports.

“It affects much more than just the athletics,” Jackson said, citing changes or cancellations involving the dance and drill team, Future Farmers of America, the robotics team, the Cesar Chavez Leadership Conference and the Astoria-Waldorf (Germany) student exchange program.

“It’s a statement on how enriching and important student activities are to the student body,” he said. “You could see the disappointment on the faces of the students today.”

Jackson’s daughter, Kajsa, was one of the five seniors on the team, and is preparing to play a lead role in the school’s spring musical.

“As a parent, I’m sorry to see her athletic career come to an end, even though we know why (the tournament) was canceled. Peter Weber (OSAA executive director) and the rest of the OSAA staff took everything into consideration and made the decision based on everyone’s safety.”

The status of spring sports, as far as the games and competitions, is “yet to be determined,” Jackson said.

After Gov. Kate Brown announced that schools would be closed from Monday through March 31, the OSAA suspended practices and contests for sports and activities through the end of month.

During this suspension, the OSAA “will evaluate the evolving public health situation with the Oregon Health Authority, the Oregon Department of Education, the OSAA Executive Board, the OSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and member school administrators from throughout the state to determine when, or if, to resume the spring season.”

As for Astoria girls basketball, Jackson said, “that 22-3 record will have to come with an asterisk.”

DEL’S O.K. TIRE

pointS

TIRE and AUTO SERVICE





Del Thompson, former owner of
OK Rubber Welders.

Klyde Thompson, current owner
Mike Barnett, manager

Come See Us to have your
Studs Removed by March 31st!

YOUR #1 SOURCE
FOR TIRES
CUSTOM WHEELS
AUTOMOTIVE SERVICES

Over 71 years of the Thompson
family putting you first!

(503) 325-2861

35359 Business 101, Astoria

MON - FRI 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
SAT 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

pointstire.com/astoria

By State of Oregon Governor Directive

Clatsop County Chapter
Oregon Hunters Association

March 21, 2020

Doors open at 4:00 pm, Dinner at 6:00 pm
Many ways to win Prizes
Over 70 firearms available at the Banquet!

Clatsop County Fairgrounds
92937 Walluski Loop, Astoria, Oregon 97103
Great Food, Raffles, Games, Silent Auction, Live
Auction, Youth & Adult Walls of Arms and More!!!

COME JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF FAMILY FUN at
Clatsop County's Premier Hunter's Banquet

Limited Number of Dinner Tickets available!
All Tickets must be purchased by March 16th, 2020.

Email clatsopoha@gmail.com or place a phone order
by calling 503-791-0549 or 503-738-6962
Ticket order forms are available for download at:
clatsopcountyoha.com

BANQUET CANCELLED

Until Further Notice

