

CORONAVIRUS

FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS, A BITTERSWEET FAREWELL TO SPORTS



CMH Field in Astoria empty on a Thursday afternoon.

Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Spring seasons canceled by virus

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

The announcement was not unexpected, yet it still hurt.

Wednesday's decision to cancel the rest of the 2019-20 school year in Oregon extinguished the faint hopes of a spring sports season.

To help prevent the spread of the coronavirus, high school seniors are watching their final semesters slip away, along with graduation ceremonies, proms, grad parties and everything else that comes with the last days of school.

Local coaches and athletes are trying to keep the whole experience in perspective.

"There are so many things going on now that are so much bigger than baseball," said Warrenton coach Lennie Wolfe, someone who lives and breathes baseball.

"I'll admit to some selfishness," he said. "I'm feeling sorry for myself. I haven't had a year without baseball since I was 8 years old, when I started playing."

"But when you think about all the people who are suffering from the coronavirus, one of the things that we have to keep in mind is that we're just talking about losing a season. There are people who have lost their livelihoods and their lives."



Warrenton High School senior Jake Morrow will head to Linn-Benton Community College to play baseball.

Nevertheless, he adds, "it's hard not to be a bit depressed about what our reality is right now. You always feel bad about senior players leaving, so when their season gets cut off, it's more depressing."

"We were all looking forward to having a season, the whole group," said

Wolfe, whose team was ranked fourth in a preseason coaches poll, and was seeking a return to the state championship game. "We had a very productive summer season last year, and we were anxious to see what was going to happen. None of us are feeling cheated, though, because there's no one to blame. I stand in support of protecting the well-being of all of our citizens. We sometimes lose sight of that."

Tougher than rainouts

In the spring — especially in Oregon — baseball and softball rainouts are one thing. Having an entire season canceled is something else.

And the spring sports season was to be a special one, for several reasons, including a deep and talented senior class of athletes in Clatsop County, with some potential state title-contending teams.

It started with a strange and heartbreaking conclusion to the winter sports season.

In March, the Astoria girls basketball team was just hours away from appearing in the program's first state tournament game since 2002 when the Oregon School Activities Association canceled the tournament over the virus.

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Oregon closes clamming to visitors

Limits on recreation to control virus

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Looking to discourage weekend travel, Oregon closed recreational hunting, fishing, crabbing and clamming to people from out of state and again urged residents to stay close to home when outside to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

The new restrictions — in effect at 11:59 p.m. on Friday night — came after appeals from leaders on the coast and others concerned about the potential impact visitors could have on local medical and emergency services.

Washington state closed fishing and hunting to residents and visitors until May 4, which Oregon fishery managers believe contributed to a bump in out-of-state clam diggers at North Coast beaches last weekend.

Recreational fishing for salmon and steelhead on the Columbia River is closed, but other seasons remain open.

Gov. Kate Brown issued a stay-at-home order in March to help control the virus. But many people have traveled to the coast and other popular recreational destinations, loosely interpreting the state's guidance to stay close to home when they go outside to hunt, fish, walk or bike.

"Some have asked us to close seasons to reduce travel," Curt Melcher, the director of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, said in a statement. "We would like to keep seasons open to give locals an outlet during this difficult time, but that doesn't mean it's OK to travel to these communities."

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Sixth case of virus reported

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

A sixth positive case of the coronavirus was reported Thursday in Clatsop County.

The man is between 30 and 39 years old and lives in the northern part of the county. He was at home under quarantine, according to the county's Public Health Department.

Since March 23, the county has reported five other positive cases of the virus.

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Virus undercuts Port progress

Agency's revenue shrinks during crisis

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

Workers with the Port of Astoria have been slowly picking apart the Seafare Restaurant, a popular former gathering spot once fea-

tured in the 1990 film "Kindergarten Cop" that has rotted into an eyesore. Over the coming weeks, the Seafare will be demolished as the Port ponders selling buildings around the West Mooring Basin for money to fix docks.

Will Isom, the Port's executive director, has focused on low-cost projects that benefit the agency and keep staff busy during a massive drop-off in business caused by the coronavirus.

The Port, lauded by the state for Isom's frugal management, had already been coping with the loss

of log exports to a trade war with China. Through February, the Port earned nearly \$500,000 less from operations than expected. But the agency also lowered expenses by nearly \$630,000, turning in an efficient performance Isom said is a testament to the staff's hard work.

"I think that's a huge success story, and it's good to tell it now," Isom said during a recent meeting of the Port Commission held via teleconference. "Because with what's going on, and a loss of cruise

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Edward Stratton/The Astorian

Seagulls lounge on the dock at Pier 1, where the Port of Astoria has lost all log and cruise ship revenue to a trade war and a coronavirus pandemic.



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