

Coach: ‘Was sure we would have gotten a school record in the discus’

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“These are just sure-thing kids in those events,” Ellsberg said, “and in a year where we’re getting great weather, they’re not getting to show off.”

But topping the list is a thrower who, according to Ellsberg, would have rewritten the Astoria school record book this season — and still has two years of throws to make, Fishermen sophomore Colton McMaster.

In the first two weeks of practice before the season was canceled, Ellsberg said, “We had to go out and get netting — I had some fishermen buddies — one provided a net, and the other made two 80-foot nets. I had to put them alongside the track, over by the press box, because (McMaster) was throwing the discus and hitting the track, and bouncing it into the stands. That is so far over the school record, it’s just nuts.”

Astoria legend Laura Bobek, who competed four years at the University of Oregon, occasionally had her discus throws skip on to the track.

For Astoria’s next home meet — whenever that takes place — be careful where you park.

“Anytime you have someone throwing and you have to buy safety equipment because you don’t want him hitting anybody on the track, it’s a legitimate problem,” Ellsberg said. “Colton’s throws were just flying across the track. Some of them went over the fence behind the press box. On the fly.”

He added, “We measured one of his junk throws at 166 (feet), which would have been a school record. Another thing is, we have a brand new track, and we don’t want to put holes in it.”

The current Astoria discus record of 165 feet, 3 inches was set by Jason Thiel in 1990, and has stood for 30 years.

“Colton is getting stronger, he’s a tremendous worker, he helps other kids ... he’s got everything going for him,” Ellsberg said. “His attitude and work habits are great.



‘THE THING I’LL MISS THIS YEAR IS SEEING KIDS MEET THEIR DREAMS. SEEING THEM SUCCEED AND LETTING THEM KNOW.’

Astoria coach Bob Ellsberg

From the moment I saw him as a freshman, I told him ‘you’re going to be my record-holder.’ And he will be.”

According to Ellsberg, McMaster’s goal “is to be one of the top 10 athletes to graduate from Astoria High. That’s a great goal, but it’s tough when you have a whole season wiped out.”

If the 2020 season had taken place, “I would have seen him in the 180s,” he said. “You never know. Potential is one of those curses. But I think he and the kid from Banks (senior Jacob Slifka) would have been competing for the state championship. I’ve had a few once-in-a-lifetime athletes, and Colton is definitely one of them.”

Ellsberg’s once-in-a-lifetime list is a short one, and includes Thiel and Bobek from Astoria.

Tim Barnett was the latest big-time boys thrower from Astoria, while Thiel was an All-America hammer thrower at Pacific Lutheran University. “Jason Thiel was the best we ever had at Astoria,” Ellsberg said.

Bobek won a combined six state titles in 2006, 2007

and 2008. She went on to set the Ducks’ school record in the discus, 184-8 in 2014.

“Tim scored more state medals (six) than any boys athlete we’ve ever had,” Ellsberg said. “And we’ve had girls who have won 13 or 14. We’ve had a good supply of really good throwers.”

And Ellsberg has coached ‘em all. Even if they didn’t throw for Astoria, Ellsberg cheers them on anyway.

“We’ve been really strong here in the throws,” he said of Clatsop County. “Of course, (Seaside’s) Gretchen Hoekstre did wonderfully last year. She and Bobek were two of the top five throwers ever in the state. For my money, in the discus and shot combination, Gretchen was the best ever at our level.”

Other area schools also have top-notch coaches in the throws, including Krystal Pike at Seaside, and Warrenton’s Darlene Warren.

But Ellsberg is considered the Jedi master of throwing events for the locals. He has coached high school sports for 50 years, beginning with rowing in Berkeley, California. He and wife Claudia



Photos by Gary Henley/The Astorian
ABOVE: Bob Ellsberg, at Hayward Field with Laura Bobek, center, and Jamie Coggins, who finished 1-2 in the shot put at state in 2007. LEFT: Astoria sophomore Colton McMaster, throwing the javelin in last year's Daily Astorian Invitational track meet.

came to Astoria in 1977.

Track coaches from other schools sometimes send their athletes to learn from Ellsberg in the off-season.

“Bob Ellsberg has been the rock of the Astoria track and field throwing program for over three decades,” said Astoria High School principal Lynn Jackson, who spent 10 years as the Astoria track coach.

Ellsberg was the throwing coach for Jackson during those 10 years, worked for Carl Dominey before him, and now assists current Astoria coach Garrett Parks.

Jackson lettered in track and threw the javelin for four years at Brigham Young University, where Hoekstre was set to begin her freshman season this spring.

Jackson said, “As a result of (Ellsberg’s) dedication, competitive spirit and tenacity in supporting students to reach their goals, his throwers have risen to high levels of achievement at district and state levels, coaching many to state championships as individuals and teams.

“He has provided many of his throwers the foundation necessary to extend their throwing careers to the collegiate level,” and “his dedication extends well beyond the spring sports season from 3:30 to 5:30. He offers his time and resources to support

student-athletes in summer camps.”

January setback

Even before this year’s season had been canceled, Ellsberg thought for a time that he had seen his last spring, period.

He suffered a heart attack Jan. 16. “It was 50-50 going into the hospital,” he said. “I’m fine now. I had a blood vessel pop in a clot, and it got into my heart. I got to the hospital and they couldn’t fly me out, the roads were frozen, and it took about three hours to drive. I thought I was done.

“I had a couple guys at the hospital, people that I had taught in school, and when I went in I said, ‘No problem. If something happens, I’ve had a great life.’”

He recovered, and managed to attend some basketball games toward the end of this season.

Bouncing back

Like Ellsberg, the high schoolers who return next season will look to pick up where they left off this year.

“Kids can bounce back,” he said. “They’re resilient. From this area, we had some returning who had won state medals last year as freshmen and sophomores. This could have been a terrific year. I was sure we would have got-

ten a school record in the discus with Colton. That would have been a no-brainer.”

A resident of the city for the last 43 years, Astoria is the place to be for Ellsberg.

“We moved here in ‘77, and I love the place,” Ellsberg says. “I was lucky enough to get on the City Council with Willis (Van Dusen), and had eight years with him, then I got on the county commission and spent time on the school board.”

While the head coaches have come and gone, Ellsberg has been the constant for Astoria track.

“Carl coached for 30 years, and he built the program up from nothing,” he said. “I got to coach with Lynn for 10 years, and that was fabulous. I’ve never met a more competent human being in my life.

“And Garrett is a very kind guy, and he’s very busy,” he said of Astoria’s current coach, who led the Astoria girls to a trio of state championships in 2015, 2016 and 2017. “It’s a job that takes up so much time. He was a great kid in high school, and he has a great bunch of coaches.”

The Fishermen were looking forward to big seasons in all spring sports.

In track, “there’s Sophie Long, who was trying to defend her (800 meter) championship,” Ellsberg said. “The big one we lost was our overall captain, Liz Barnett. She could have medaled in the high jump, long jump, triple jump, pole vault ... the whole thing. It would have been her chance to really shine.”

Ellsberg plans on being right back with the Fishermen in 2021.

“I’ll coach as long as I’m upright and they want me back,” he said. “The thing I’ll miss this year is seeing kids meet their dreams. Seeing them succeed and letting them know.”

As a coach, “I have the satisfaction of knowing that I helped someone improve, and they get the satisfaction of knowing that someone cares for them.”

Astoria fisherman reels in big award

Postlewait makes national fishing team

The Astorian

Forty-nine of the most outstanding high school anglers from across the country have been named to the 2020 Bassmaster High School All-State fishing team.

And one of the 49 is from Astoria.

Astoria High School senior Michael Postlewait made the list, providing a nice finish to his bass fishing career at the high school level.

The students were selected for the honor based on their success in bass tour-



Walt Postlewait
Astoria senior Michael Postlewait, at about this time last year, following a fishing event in California.

nament competition, academic achievement and leadership in conservation

and community service.

Some states such as Tennessee and Texas had as many as six all-state selections (first team plus honorable mention).

While Washington state and California had no selections, Postlewait was the only angler selected from Oregon, while Luke Van Norman of Roseburg was one of 54 honorable mention selections nationwide.

To be considered for the all-state fishing team, a student must have been nominated by a parent, coach, teacher or other school official. Students enrolled in grades 10-12 with a current-year grade point average of 2.5 or higher were eligible.



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SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
55 42	59 42	58 44	57 45	57 42	58 41	59 42
Clouds and sun; cooler	Low clouds may break	Partly sunny	A shower in the p.m.	Cloudy, rain possible	Showers possible	Showers possible

ALMANAC

Astoria through Thursday

Temperatures

High/low 70/39

Normal high/low 56/41

Record high 80 in 1947

Record low 32 in 1982

Precipitation

Thursday 0.00"

Month to date 0.41"

Normal month to date 3.04"

Year to date 30.50"

Normal year to date 28.13"

Forecasts and graphics provided by

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UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: Sunsets now after 8:00 p.m. through Aug. 25.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today 6:23 a.m.

Sunset tonight 8:07 p.m.

Moonrise today 5:10 a.m.

Moonset today 3:49 p.m.

New First Full Last

Apr 22 Apr 30 May 7 May 14

TODAY'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks

Time High (ft.) Time Low (ft.)

11:03 a.m. 6.7 5:18 a.m. 2.4

none 5:44 p.m. 0.7

Cape Disappointment

10:50 a.m. 6.7 4:55 a.m. 2.8

11:49 p.m. 7.1 5:09 p.m. 1.0

Hammond

11:40 a.m. 6.9 5:07 a.m. 2.6

11:56 p.m. 7.5 5:20 p.m. 0.9

Warrenton

10:58 a.m. 7.1 5:02 a.m. 2.5

11:57 p.m. 7.8 5:28 p.m. 0.8

Knappa

11:40 a.m. 7.0 6:19 a.m. 2.1

none 6:45 p.m. 0.6

Depoe Bay

10:06 a.m. 6.7 4:21 a.m. 2.8

11:04 p.m. 7.2 4:33 p.m. 0.9

NATIONAL CITIES

Today Sun.

City Hi/Lo/W Hi/Lo/W

Atlanta 72/50/pc 67/56/t

Boston 42/36/sn 59/45/pc

Chicago 56/44/s 55/34/pc

Dallas 68/60/t 81/54/c

Denver 54/31/pc 58/32/pc

Honolulu 83/68/s 84/69/s

Houston 73/69/t 82/61/t

Los Angeles 65/55/sh 66/56/pc

Miami 90/76/pc 90/79/pc

New York City 52/40/r 63/47/pc

Phoenix 80/58/pc 84/62/s

San Francisco 66/52/c 64/51/c

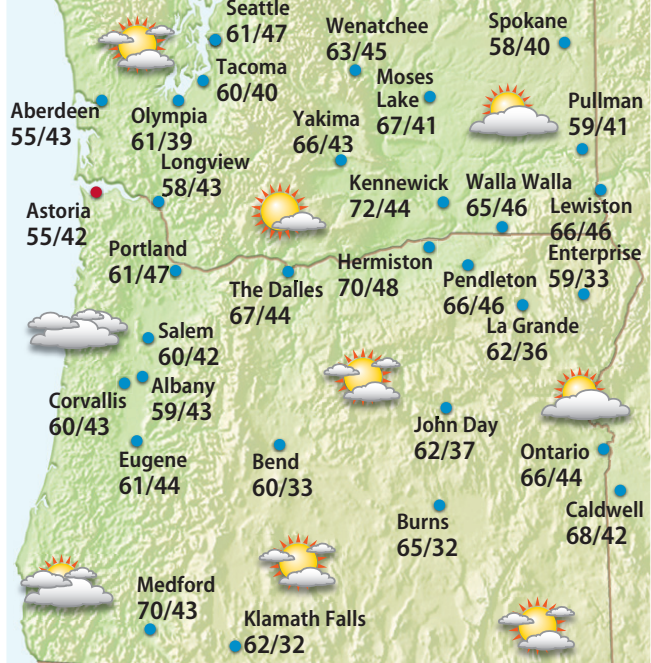
Wash., DC 60/41/r 65/51/pc

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.

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REGIONAL FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W	City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W
Baker City	65/33/pc	64/32/pc	North Bend	55/45/c	57/42/pc
Brookings	54/45/c	55/44/c	Roseburg	65/46/c	69/43/pc
Ilwaco	54/43/pc	56/42/c	Seaside	54/42/pc	57/41/c
Newberg	59/42/pc	65/41/pc	Springfield	61/46/c	67/41/c
Newport	53/43/c	56/42/pc	Vancouver	60/46/pc	66/44/pc