



Summer 2020 sports season now in session

The Astorian

The official unofficial opening of the summer youth sports season took place Tuesday, with two teams holding practices at Astoria's Tapiola Park.

Five members of the Lower Columbia Baseball Club met at Ernie Aiken Field, while the Future Fish softball team held a full practice nearby.

Based out of Longview, Washington, the club is an American Legion AAA team and includes five players from the local region (three players from Warrenton, one each from Astoria and Naselle),

all class of 2020 graduates.

Coached by Joe Bair, Lower Columbia was holding practices in small groups starting Monday. Assistant coach Tyler Lyngstad of Astoria ran Tuesday's practice as the team prepares for its season opener Saturday.

The Future Fish softball team is a tournament team of 10-and-under players, coached by Adam Svensen. All players wore face masks for Tuesday's practice.

Tournaments are scheduled to start in mid-June and continue through August. Their season opening tournament is slated for June 13 through June 14 in Rainier.

From left, Future Fish softball players Kilee Svensen, Khloe Painter and Adrienne Sterkel take infield during a Tuesday practice.

Gary Henley/The Astorian

Cafe: Chef used local ingredients

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Sowa and his wife, Debbie Anderson, originally from Seaside, bypassed opportunities at Portland restaurants after a visit to Ecola State Park.

"I looked at that vista, and I said, 'This is where I want to be.' We changed our whole game plan," Sowa said.

He and Anderson opened Lil' Bayou in Seaside 20 years ago, at the location of a former pizzeria.

Sowa built a reputation for using local ingredients and innovative presentation, all with a distinct Creole-Cajun flavor.

He moved operations to Cannon Beach in 2007, at first serving lunch only, then expanding to a full dinner menu featuring local produce, meats and fish, prepared with the distinctive notes of New Orleans.

Over the next 14 years, Sowa attracted a loyal clientele of visitors and locals alike, bringing musicians,

diners and others into an intimate but sophisticated setting.

A string of awards and accolades helped burnish his reputation as one of the county's top chefs.

On Friday nights, he said, the cafe was filled "shoulder to shoulder."

Sowa closed the cafe in March because of government restrictions on seated dining to stem the spread of the coronavirus. He eventually reopened for takeout on the weekends.

Three weeks in, Sowa rejected the takeout model.

"You eat with your eyes first," he said. "There's not much eye appeal in a plastic box, or a cardboard box. What I do at the window here is just not going to make up for the three seats inside. I certainly couldn't bring in the same quality or the same quantity of food that I'm used to doing, and I'd have to almost go down to a fast-food operation. That's not what I want to do."

While Sowa won't be operating in Cannon Beach, he announced plans to team up with Silver Salmon Grille owner Jeff Martin in Astoria to work as the restaurant's executive chef.

The restaurant's traditional menu will be pared down, with Sowa's Cajun offerings added, Martin said.

"His restaurants have been our favorites," Martin said. "It's a fantastic collaboration. I'm looking forward to it. I'm excited to learn something new."

Will an intimate cafe like Sweet Basil's ever come back to the North Coast dining scene?

"We're going to recover from this, but we're going to recover differently," Sowa said. "Because I don't ever see it going back to exactly how it was before March 23. Not in my lifetime. I'm 76. I hope it comes back, because it's part of my life. We just have to wait and see. It's something we don't have control over."

Fort George: Numerous safety measures have been put in place

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of the reason the brewery is able to bring some people back.

The state approved Clatsop County to enter a first phase of reopening May 15, allowing restaurants and bars to open with limited seating, increased sanitation and face masks for employees. On June 5, the county could enter a second phase, allowing larger social gatherings and fewer restrictions on restaurant operations.

Astoria Brewing Co., the city's oldest active brewery, reopened soon after the state approved the county to enter the first phase of reopening, along with its sister bars, The Chart Room and The Desdemona Club. Hon-do's Brewery, the city's smallest, also reopened in the first phase.

Reach Break Brewing in Astoria is also open with outdoor patio seating.

The city's other major brewery, Buoy Beer Co., has not yet decided on a reopening plan, general manager David Kroening said in a text message. Buoy Beer created a local delivery service for its beer and spirits from Pilot House Distilling, owned in part by members of the brewery's ownership.

Fort George, hoping to avoid an outbreak, recently released new safety guidelines for returning workers, who will have their temperatures checked daily. The brewery has installed numerous safety measures, including plexiglass, hand-sanitizing stations and cameras to monitor a new entrance and exit.

A third and final phase

of reopening would allow large public gatherings, but likely won't come until there is a reliable treatment for the coronavirus. Nemlowill said Fort George will likely not reopen further until a third phase.

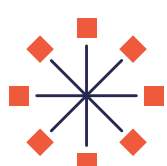
Fort George's downstairs solarium will continue with to-go sales through online ordering. The brewery has also started a delivery service. The brewery will also start shipping the popular beer directly to customers in Oregon and Washington state.

Fort George has canceled its Lupulin Ecstasy beer festival, usually held at the Flavel House Museum in June to celebrate the release of its regionally popular 3-Way India pale ale, a partnership with two other Pacific Northwest breweries.

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