

Sports: ‘Athletics are so important for so many kids’

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“There’s some overlap that takes place, so if you’re in a playoff run, there’s a potential that a kid could still be participating in a sport while their next sport is practicing,” Warrenton football coach and athletic director Ian O’Brien said. “Schools will have to play it smart in how to transition a kid from one sport to the next.”

O’Brien was part of an OSAA contingency group that came up with the plan.

“Within the contingency group, it was unanimous that we wanted to make sure our kids had an opportunity to play sports in some capacity.

“That goes for all sports,” he said. “I’ve talked to a handful of people, and they’re ecstatic that kids are just going to have an opportunity to play all three sports.”

Of course, that’s assuming there are no coronavirus outbreaks on teams or in schools.

“As far as playoffs, they’re leaving that up in the air and to the discretion of each district, but the main thing is that they are allotting an equal number of weeks for each sport,” Rub said.

The plan “is a good step in the right direction,” O’Brien said, “but none of us can tell the future or even what the beginning of January holds.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The fall sports season has been delayed until spring because of the coronavirus.

There’s so many things that are out of our control. You just take the guidelines from the state and Oregon Health Authority, and try to adjust. Is it the perfect plan? I don’t think anyone has a perfect plan. But it does afford to give our kids an opportunity to play sports.”

O’Brien said there is uncertainty about state tournaments.

“There’s so much emphasis on the rankings and playoffs ... throw those things out the window,” he said. “I would take more games for kids to play over having playoffs. You could have something local. If Knappa and Warrenton football had decent six or seven-game seasons, and at the end we’re able to meet up, I think people in Clatsop County would be excited for that. The same goes for Astoria and Seaside.”

The past five months have “been a wild ride,” he said, “and I’m hoping that we’re coming to the end of that ride. Athletics are so important for so many kids. I hope this is the

light that keeps kids charged up. The value on athletics, you can’t measure it.”

Student reactions

The OSAA’s outline drew mixed reactions from students.

Tristyn McFadden, a Seaside senior who plays volleyball, basketball and golf, said

the “sports calendar I feel is good because it gives athletes some more time to practice before their season starts, and in all honesty at least we have a chance of playing. Overall, I am happy with what they made of it.”

Duane Falls, a Warrenton senior who plays football, basketball and baseball, was disappointed.

“Honestly, coming down to heart it was truly disappointing hearing that most sports are either going to be moved around from winter to spring, or having shortened seasons or being indefinitely canceled,” he said.

“Honestly though, nothing good came out of this. We all got stuck with the same virus.”

Avyree Miethe, a Warrenton junior who plays volleyball, basketball and softball, said the “sports schedule for this year will be a good way for athletes to show their resilience, and help create a deeper appreciation for not only their sport but everyday activities they’ve taken for granted.

“We are so lucky to even be getting shortened sports seasons. I think it is a light at the end of a dark tunnel, and something all student athletes are going to look forward to; especially given the fact we will most likely be online schooling this year.”

Hotel: Hollander has 20 days from the decision to appeal the denial

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The City Council could have granted Hollander an extension had he shown substantial progress or that economic conditions are too bad to proceed. Hollander and his attorney, Steven Hultberg, shared letters from lenders describing the difficulty in financing, along with a market analysis showing the slumping performance of hotels during

the coronavirus pandemic.

“We’ve seen a lot of tough times in this industry, but this is absolutely the worst,” Hollander said. “This is a nationwide, worldwide phenomenon. A lot of hoteliers are just hanging on by the skin of their teeth right now.”

But in their denial, city staff argued that Hollander had neither made substantial progress nor proven that economic conditions aren’t right for building a new

hotel.

Two other hotels in Astoria are making progress: the Bowline Hotel being constructed out of a former sardine cannery near Buoy Beer Co. and a Hilton Home2Suites developers hope to open near the New Youngs Bay Bridge. The city faces a high amount of building permit activity that has continued through the pandemic.

Mayor Bruce Jones and City Councilor Tom Brown-

son, who had approved the hotel in 2018 because it met the existing development rules, shared their surprise that Hollander didn’t see the writing on the wall and start building earlier.

“It was very predictable that the city would not choose, in a discretionary fashion, to grant an extension to a project which the community and the code now opposed,” Jones said.

Brownson said Hollander

squandered an opportunity to help the community he aspires to be a part of by creating construction and hospitality jobs.

“I would suggest that Astoria’s still a great market,” he said. “And I would look forward to you coming back, if you so desire, with new plans, with a new motel — hotel — that meets the standards in every way that we have established.”

City Councilor Jessamyn

Grace West noted that none of the letters from lenders described Hollander as having applied for or been denied a loan to build a hotel.

“It’s really not the city’s responsibility to ensure that you secure financing for this project, which again could have been done prior to the pandemic,” she said.

Hollander has 20 days from the decision to appeal the denial to the state Land Use Board of Appeals.



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