

Spring sports: Players were a bit rusty

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Rosters have a different look

Rosters and teams around the state looked a lot different than last seen.

In Oregon, the 2019-20 high school sports year ended in March 2020, abruptly bringing state basketball tournaments to a close just as they were set to begin.

Baseball and softball players, along with golf and track athletes, got the short end of the stick, so to speak.

Individuals and teams competing in spring sports never made it to the field, as their seasons were completely canceled.

Couple that with a short preseason, and it's been a while since spring sport athletes have seen the field, which made for a few errors in season openers.

Typical of most games Tuesday, the Clatsop Clash baseball game got off to a slow start, with a combined eight runs on one hit, seven walks and a couple of big errors in a 40-minute first inning.

In softball, "we only (had) six days of practice before our first game, and we came in realizing that we're barely into the season, and we'll put forth what we have," Flaigg said. "A couple of us were a little late on our timing, but we haven't seen live pitching for two years."

On the other hand, "Gracie (Rhodes, the Seaside pitcher) was on fire tonight. She had some amazing pitches. Erin (Owsley) made an amazing stop on a big line drive. We were definitely a little rusty at the start, but came out of it."

The Warrenton baseball team will eventually make its return, as the Warriors scheduled a game with Ilwaco for Wednesday.

"I was pleased with the way the guys responded" at Tuesday's postponement, Wolfe said. "We're going to look at it in a positive way. Even if we have to play a lot of games in a short amount of time, we're going to be playing. If we have to play six games in six days or less, so what? I don't think we'll ever take it for granted again."

"It's what we say every year: the biggest thing to play for is fun. Maybe we'll



appreciate it more. More than ever before, people are just happy to get back out there again."

The games

In baseball action, Astoria and Seaside opened 2021 with a Clatsop Clash at Broadway Field, where the Gulls scored their third win in the last four meetings, also giving new coach Brett Wolfe a victory in his Sea-

side debut. It was career win No. 495 for Wolfe, after 494 at North Medford.

Seaside had an inside-the-park home run from Jarred White in the first inning, a three-run double by Andrew Teubner in the second, and a solo inside-the-park HR from Riley Kuhl in the fifth.

Shortstop Lawson Talamantez turned in a few web gems, as did Kuhl behind the

TOP: Astoria's Halle Helmersen and Mercedes Walter yell at pitcher Emma Biederman to throw the ball to first base. LEFT: Seaside pitcher Gracie Rhodes winds up. BELOW LEFT: Helmersen connects with a pitch.

Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

plate in the seventh inning.

In a Northwest League game at Gaston, Knappa rallied from a 6-3 deficit after five innings to top the Greyhounds, 10-9.

In softball, Seaside topped Astoria 16-12, snapping a string of 13 straight Astoria wins going back to 2015.

The Lady Gulls led 11-5 after four innings, then held off a rally by the Lady Fishermen.

Seaside's Erin Owsley was 3-for-3 with four runs scored, four RBIs and a home run.

Emma Taylor and Ila Bowles were each 2-for-4.

Elsewhere, Willamina won 13-4 at Warrenton, and Gaston defeated Knappa 16-13 in NWL action at Knappa. Hannah Dietrichs led the Loggers with three doubles and four RBIs, and allowed seven hits with 11 strikeouts.

On the track, the Astoria Fishermen held their first meet of the season Monday — against themselves — and junior Colton McMaster set the first of what will likely be several school records this spring, with a throw of 183 feet, 7 inches in the discus. The mark shattered the previous record of 165-3, held by Jason Thiel for over 30 years.

Bus route: 'We want to get the message out that we're safe'

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"The idea is the individual agencies after that first round would have to operate it on their own," he said. "Well, because of the pandemic ... we were never able to build the ridership to what its potential could have been in that two years, and develop the funding for it."

The state provided \$60,000 for Sunset Empire to hire a consultant to work on a marketing plan.

"As we come out of the pandemic, we want to get the message out that we're safe," Hazen said. "We've done everything that we can to protect our drivers and riders."

The marketing plan could include a rebranding, Hazen said, such as when the agency went by the moniker The Bus.



Edward Stratton/The Astorian

The state will provide \$784,000 to help keep the Lower Columbia Connector going between Astoria and Portland for at least two more years.

"Sunset Empire Transportation District is really a long name," he said. "So what can we do to brand it? Tillamook County Transportation District, they're The Wave. They go by The Wave. Their logo has a wave incorporated in it."

The Tillamook transit agency received \$598,000 on behalf of NW Connector, a partnership between bus providers on the North Coast to provide better transit regionally, to build three new stops in Clatsop, Tillamook and Lincoln counties.

They include a new stop at Ensign Lane and U.S. Highway 101 with a dedicated pullout for buses, a large shelter, bike racks and a repair station with pressurized air and basic tools. Hazen estimated the stop could cost around \$250,000.

Hazen said Sunset Empire could be in line for more grant money, including up to \$500,000 in federal stimulus becoming available in July that he hopes to use to transport people receiving coronavirus vaccines. The state has still not decided on how to distribute the money received from the most recent \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan, he said, but the transit district will be seeing even more funding from that stimulus.

"There's going to be a lot of money coming, a significant amount of money," he said.

College: Reported nine virus cases since last spring

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The college was in the process of notifying others who may have come into contact with the two employees and coordinating with the Clatsop County Public Health Department.

"The college is still open, but we won't have any individuals on campus," Breitmeyer said.

The college facilities crew will wait several days "to allow things to settle"

and then conduct a deep cleaning, he added. Only essential personnel will be allowed on campus and buildings will be locked.

At the end of the seven days, "the college will reevaluate our campus's COVID risk level to determine if it is prudent to resume on-campus class and activities," states an announcement on the college's website.

"We urge every member of our community to con-

tinue to strict adherence to basic health and cleaning habits to help prevent contracting and spreading illnesses," the announcement continued. "We must not relax our prevention habits yet as we are still trying

to decrease the number of cases in our area and keep the risk low for those who have not yet been able to get vaccinated."

The college has reported nine coronavirus cases since last spring.

County reports eight new virus cases

The Astorian

Clatsop County has reported eight new coronavirus cases over the past few days.

On Wednesday, the county reported four cases.

The cases include a male under 10 and a woman in her 60s living in the northern part of the county. The others live in the southern part of the county and involve a woman in her 30s and a woman in her 60s.

All four were recovering at home.

On Tuesday, the county reported four cases.

The cases include a man in his 20s and a woman in her 80s living in the northern part of the county. The others live in the southern part of the county and involve a male between 10 and 19 and a man in his 60s.

One person was hospitalized and the others were recovering at home.

The county has recorded 874 cases since the start of the pandemic. According to the county, 21 were hospitalized and eight have died.

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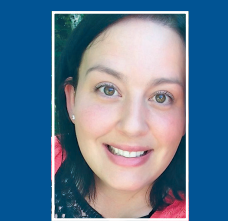
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