

Buffalo's destiny derailed in dramatic loss at Kansas City

Poyer and the Bills still looking to win the big one

Just as the Oakland Raiders felt after losing the "Immaculate Reception" game in 1972, and the Minnesota Vikings felt after dropping the famed "Hail Mary" game in 1975, so to are the Buffalo Bills feeling this week, following their 42-36 overtime loss Sunday to the Kansas City Chiefs, in one of the greatest post-season games in NFL history.



GARY HENLEY

In fact, the Bills are likely feeling the lowest they've felt in a long time, after coming oh-so-close, yet again.

As in, 13 seconds close. After taking a 36-33 lead late in the fourth quarter in the AFC divisional playoff at Arrowhead Stadium, all the Bills had to do was keep the Chiefs from driving 40 yards in less than 13 seconds to kick a game-tying field goal, to send the game to overtime.

As many of us watched in disbelief, Patrick Mahomes drove the Chiefs 43 yards, kicker Harrison Butker booted a 49-yard field goal to tie the game, and Kansas City took the opening kick in overtime and drove another 75 yards for the winning score, right into the history books.

It's likely that Jordan Poyer — the Astoria High graduate and Buffalo's All-Pro safety — is also feeling pretty low this week. But, buck up Jordan. Your day will come.

At one time, the destiny for the Kid from Astoria was to lead the Fishermen football program to their first ever state title. Along with other talented athletes in December 2008, mission accomplished.

Then the goal became to finish his high school career with another state title in baseball, like the one the Fishermen won in June 2009.

From there, Poyer's destiny was to play big time college football. Which he did for four years at Oregon State University, finishing with All-American status in 2012.

The next step was the



Buffalo Bills free safety Jordan Poyer kneels on the field after Sunday's loss in Kansas City. The Chiefs won the dramatic game in overtime, 42-36.



Buffalo Bills

Jordan Poyer, selected as a first team member of the 2021 Associated Press All-Pro team.

2021-22 season, Poyer can finally call himself an "All-Pro." His fans in Clatsop County have known that for years.

For the longest time, Poyer would show up on the most underrated lists. No longer. Poyer made the NFL's Associated Press first team all-pro team this season, as one of the top two safeties in the game, along with Kevin Byard of Tennessee.

Despite making the NFL's All-Pro first team, selection to the Pro Bowl game still eludes Poyer.

Even as Sunday's announcers, Jim Nantz and Tony Romo, questioned during the game, referring to Poyer and teammate Micah Hyde, "how do you have two all-pro safeties, and zero pro bowlers on your defense?"

Poyer's statistics and accomplishments are there, for all to see. The rest is out of his hands.

As Poyer also said last summer, a Pro Bowl selection "would be nice, just to have that at the end of the day. I know what I've done in the league, people know and see what I've done. I just want to keep bettering myself, and everything else will fall into place."

next level — to the NFL, where Poyer was a seventh round draft choice of the Philadelphia Eagles in 2013. Poyer made the final cut, then the Eagles released him after just three games. Not smart, Philadelphia.

Picked up by the Cleveland Browns, Poyer spent (or, endured) three years with the Browns, who are still seeking their destiny, whatever that might be. Seventy-seven years as an organization, the Browns have yet to play in a Super Bowl.

Poyer took one step closer to his ultimate destiny in 2017, when he signed a free agent contract with Buffalo.

With an 0-and-4 record in previous Super Bowls, Poyer's destiny became tied in with that of the Bills — to win a Super Bowl.

After a long absence from the post-season, the Bills have spent the last three years knocking on destiny's door, which includes a 2021 AFC Championship loss at Kansas City, and now a dramatic overtime playoff loss to the Chiefs.

But with the core of their team returning next fall, the Bills will be back, knocking louder than ever on destiny's door.

"I want to win a Super Bowl," Poyer told The Astorian last summer, "and do it with the guys that I'm with now. It's definitely been a fun ride, but we're not done yet. The job's not finished."

Interviews, historic losses, lessons learned

With Sunday's loss, Poyer joins a sort of informal list I've kept: "Defensive backs I've interviewed who were on the field for famous plays."

Years after their pro careers were over, I had the chance to interview two Dallas Cowboy defensive backs (Mike Gaechter and Mel Renfro) who were on the field in 1967 when Green Bay's Bart Starr scored on a quarterback sneak to win the famed "Ice Bowl."

A few years later, I had interviews with a couple more former Cowboy safeties (Dennis Thurman and Charlie Waters), who were on the field when Joe Montana and Dwight Clark hooked up for "The Catch," to help San Francisco beat Dallas in the 1982 NFC Championship. The Niners went on to beat Cincinnati in Super Bowl XVI, 40 years ago.

Likewise, Poyer was on the field Sunday for the last play, when Mahomes hit another future No. 87 Hall of Famer, Travis Kelce, for the winning touchdown in overtime.

Thurman took the high road after Dallas's loss to the Niners in '82, telling me, "What a great game that was, and to have been a part of that was fun. It took a magnificent play by two great football players, Mon-

tana to Clark, to knock us off.

"You look back and say, if there was one play you could have over again, you'd take that one, and see how it would fall the next time. But you can't do that in sports, and that's the beauty of it. You have to move on."

For what it's worth, Renfro and Waters each finished their careers with two Super Bowl rings. Thurman played in a Super Bowl, and was Buffalo's defensive coordinator in 2015 and 2016.

In this case, Jordan Poyer and the Buffalo Bills aren't going away. They will be right back next season, destiny still intact, challenging for a spot in Super Bowl

LVII.

Despite the heartbreaking loss for Poyer and the Bills, I still "Bill-ieve" that Buffalo's — and Poyer's — destiny is to eventually win a Super Bowl.

As he told Buffalobills.com after Sunday's game, "I think everything that happens in life is a lesson. We've got to learn from it and use that. I know we said that last year. I don't want to say it again this year. But it's something you're going to have to feed off in the off-season and continue to learn from."

But, he added, "This one's going to hurt for a little while."

Poyer, All-Pro safety
On the plus side to the

SCOREBOARD

PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE

TUESDAY

Boys Basketball — Astoria at Seaside, 6 p.m.; Willamina at Warrenton, 7:30 p.m.; Knappa at Vernonia, 7:30 p.m.
Girls Basketball — Astoria at Seaside, 7:30 p.m.; Willamina at Warrenton, 6 p.m.; Knappa at Vernonia, 6 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Girls Basketball — Perrydale at Jewell, 5:30 p.m.
Boys Basketball — Perrydale at Jewell, 7 p.m.

BASKETBALL COACHES POLLS

4A Boys
(First place votes in parentheses)

- Junction City Tigers (9) 133
- Marshfield Pirates (3) 126
- Cascade Cougars (1) 104
- Philomath Warriors 103
- Stayton Eagles 78
- Seaside Seagulls 71**
- La Grande Tigers 44
- Banks Braves 38
- Henley Hornets 22
- Corbett Cardinals 14
- Others: Baker 10.

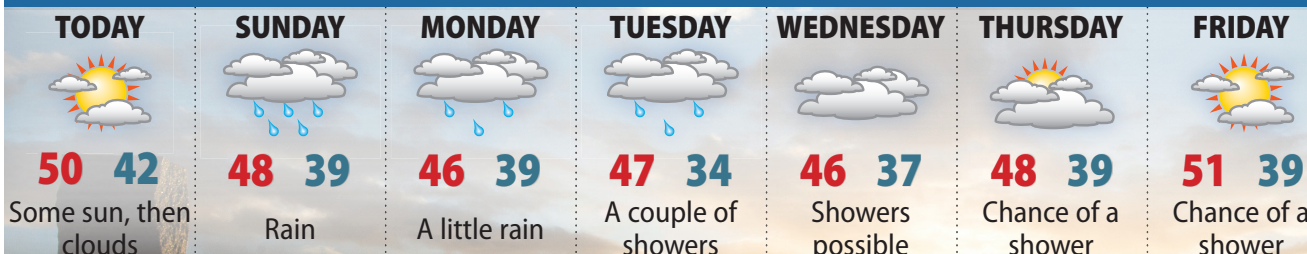
- 2A Boys**
- Salem Academy (6) 105
 - Western Christian (1) 94
 - Knappa Loggers (4) 93**
 - Illinois Valley Cougars 78
 - Jefferson Lions 76
 - Kennedy Trojans 73
 - Bandon Tigers 39

- Regis Rams 30
- Heppner Mustangs 26
- East Linn Christian 23

WIAA (WASHINGTON) RANKINGS

- 2B Boys Team, record**
- Kalama Chinooks 12-1
 - Chief Leschi Warriors 12-1
 - Ilwaco Fishermen 13-1**
 - Okanogan Bulldogs 15-2
 - Napavine Tigers 12-2
 - Coupeville Wolves 11-0
 - Liberty (Spangle) Lancers 11-2
 - Columbia (Burbank) Coyotes 15-1
 - Adna Pirates 12-4
 - Brewster Bears 12-5

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA



ALMANAC

Astoria through Thursday

Temperatures

High/low	59/31
Normal high/low	50/38
Record high	60 in 1988
Record low	15 in 1957
Precipitation	
Thursday	0.00"
Month to date	13.47"
Normal month to date	9.36"
Year to date	13.47"
Normal year to date	9.36"

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2022

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: Venus emerges into southeast morning sky before sunrise.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today 7:42 a.m.
Sunset tonight 5:16 p.m.
Moonrise today 5:59 a.m.
Moonset today 2:10 p.m.

	New	First	Full	Last
	Jan 31	Feb 8	Feb 16	Feb 23

TODAY'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks	Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
10:01 a.m.	9.3	4:09 a.m.	3.9	none
9:39 a.m.	9.4	3:18 a.m.	-0.3	11:47 p.m.
11:47 p.m.	7.1	4:42 p.m.	-0.8	11:54 p.m.
7.3	5:02 p.m.	-1.1	9:56 a.m.	9.7
3:53 a.m.	4.0	11:58 p.m.	7.5	5:21 p.m.
-0.5	10:38 a.m.	9.5	5:10 a.m.	3.4
none	6:38 p.m.	-0.5	8:52 a.m.	9.6
2:46 a.m.	4.3	11:01 p.m.	7.2	4:14 p.m.
-1.1				

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	38/26/s	53/34/s
Boston	22/11/sn	25/12/pc
Chicago	21/18/pc	29/17/pc
Dallas	67/40/s	69/44/s
Denver	51/22/s	52/26/s
Honolulu	81/67/s	79/66/s
Houston	61/41/s	68/49/s
Los Angeles	69/47/c	73/48/s
Miami	59/38/pc	59/43/s
New York City	22/13/sn	28/20/s
Phoenix	73/47/pc	70/45/pc
San Francisco	60/45/pc	58/49/pc
Wash., DC	29/16/c	35/24/pc
Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.		

REGIONAL FORECAST

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

