

SPORTS

PREP ROUNDUP

Knappa baseball sweeps Vernonia

The league win streak has reached 59 in a row for the Knappa baseball team, which completed a three-game sweep over Vernonia with a 15-0, 11-1 double-header victory Saturday at Tapiola Park.

It was Vernonia’s third game in Astoria in three days, as Knappa defeated Vernonia 14-0 in a single game Thursday at CMH Field.

Knappa pitchers Drew Miller and Treven Moreland combined on a one-hit shut out in Saturday’s first game, and Knappa had 10 hits, including five doubles.

Knappa only had four hits in Game 2, but took advantage of eight Vernonia walks and six hit batters. Knappa snapped a 1-1 tie with five runs in the fourth and five in the fifth.

Pitchers Nick Rusinovich and Jaxon Dietrichs allowed just two Vernonia hits, with eight strikeouts and no walks.

Including a 5-4 win over Gaston on April 5, Knappa has outscored its league competition 124-11 through last week’s games.

Knappa has now gone over the five-year mark since its last loss in league play on April 18, 2017.

Warrenton baseball takes over first place in league

Three wins in two days has the Warrenton Warriors in good shape atop of the Coastal Range League baseball standings.

The Warriors began the weekend with a 5-1, 13-3 doubleheader sweep over Rainier Friday at Hudleston Field. Less than 24 hours later, Warrenton posted a 2-0 win Saturday

afternoon over Taft. In Saturday’s win, Warrenton freshman Talon McGrorty won a pitcher’s dual with Kaden Hindman of Taft. McGrorty tossed a two-hit shutout, with two strikeouts and two walks. Hindman allowed just three hits, with six strikeouts and two walks.

The Warriors scored a run each in the third (Josh Earls, driving in Ryder Sturgell) and the fifth (Brayden Greenawald scoring on a walk, a fielder’s choice and two wild pitches).

Warrenton had just three hits off Rainier’s Austin Stout in Friday’s opener, but two were timely, run-scoring singles by Greenawald. Stout struck out eight but walked nine, while Warrior pitcher Dylan Atwood gave up six hits with four strikeouts in six innings.

Warrenton had eight hits in Game 2, while Dawson Little tossed a two-hitter with seven strikeouts and two walks. He was 3-for-5 at the plate, and Mikey Ulness drove in four runs on two hits. Ethan Caldwell added three RBI.

Now 6-1 in league, the Warriors are in first place, followed by Taft (5-3). Rainier and Clatskanie (both 2-2) are a distant third.

Tillamook tops Astoria, 7-1

Tillamook scored three runs in the first inning and four in the fifth, and that was enough to defeat Astoria 7-1 in a Cowapa League baseball game Friday at CMH Field.

Junior Gonzalez threw a complete game for the Cheesemakers, scattering six hits with 14 strikeouts and one walk. Gonzalez had two doubles at the plate.

Merrick Benesch and Teague Palmberg each had two hits for Astoria.

— The Astorian

Utti’s last season ends at Gill Coliseum

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

It was a fitting place for Maddi Utti to play the last game of her college basketball career.

A fifth-year senior at Long Beach State in California, Utti and her team unfortunately ended the season with a 70-59 loss March 17 at Oregon State in the first round of the Women’s National Invitational Tournament.

Utti was in early foul trouble, but still finished with seven points, four steals and a team-high 10 rebounds.

The game was played at Gill Coliseum, the same building where, arguably, the Legend of Utti began.

As a freshman at Seaside High School, Utti made the all-state tournament team and helped the Lady Gulls to a fifth-place finish in the 2013-14 state tournament, the highest finish ever for Seaside girls basketball.

Also, the 23 wins for coach Wally Hamer’s team that year was and still is a school record.

Meanwhile, Utti eventually landed at Fresno State, where she had a successful four-year career with the Bulldogs.

After the 2020-21 season, Utti and other seniors — because of the NCAA’s lost season to COVID — were granted a fifth year of eligibility. Utti entered the transfer portal, went to Long Beach State, and started 27 of the team’s 28 games, and was second in minutes played at 36.4 per game.

She also led the team in scoring with 366 points (13.6 per game), and had more than twice as many rebounds (238) as any player on the roster, to go with 86 steals and 24 blocks (both team highs) and 79 assists, second on the team. The 86 steals led the Big West Con-



Long Beach State Seaside’s Maddi Utti, in action against UC Davis during her one season at Long Beach State.

ference, and her 3.19 steals per game was eighth in the entire nation at the Division I level.

Long Beach State finished 19-9 overall, and Utti was a first team all-conference selection. In addition, she was named the Big West’s Defensive Player of the Year.

Utti’s best season at Fresno State was 2019-20, in which she started all 32 games, was twice named the conference Player of the Week, and ultimately selected as the Mountain West Player of the Year.

Utti’s coach at Long Beach, Jeff Cammon, told the school’s student newspaper, The Daily Forty-Niner, that if Long Beach State had won the conference, Utti would have been named the Big West Player of the Year.

“She should have been Player of the Year. I mean, she’s the best player in the conference,” Cammon said.

Utti suffered a torn labrum the year before at Fresno State, and started

PREP SPORTS SCHEDULE	
TUESDAY	
Baseball — Astoria at Tillamook, 5 p.m.; St. Paul at Knappa, 4 p.m.	WEDNESDAY
Softball — Tillamook at Astoria, 5 p.m.	
Track — Astoria at Tillamook, 3:30 p.m.; Seaside at Banks, 3:30 p.m.	THURSDAY
Boys Golf — Banks Invitational, 10 a.m.	
Softball — Banks at Astoria, 4:30 p.m.; Valley Catholic at Seaside, 5 p.m.	
Track — NWL meet, at Knappa, TBA	

training for the 2021-22 season just four months after suffering an injury.

“I put in a lot of work on just understanding our defense and really working hard on that defensive end,” Utti told The Daily Forty-Niner. “All my hard work paid off, and I try to pride myself in rebounding.”

Utti was not allowed to take part in contact drills over the summer, but was always finding ways to get better.

“There’s not many kids that do that,” Cammon said. “Most kids you tell ‘hey, you can’t go’ they’re going to sit on the side, watch practice and cheer. She’s over there trying to get better and that’s why she is who she is.”

When Cammon was recruiting Utti, he was looking for more than just a basketball player.

He told The Daily Forty-Niner that Utti is an amazing person, and was a perfect fit when she came down to check out the school on an informal visit.

“From the jump, she came in, there’s no ego,” Cammon said. “You can imagine a Player of the Year

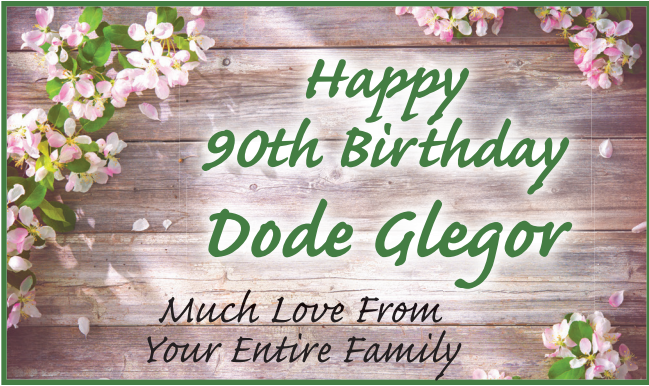
coming in from another conference, they can be a little arrogant, and they’ve accomplished a lot. But she didn’t come in with any of that. She’s an amazing basketball player that helped take our program to another level.”

When Utti entered the transfer portal after 2020-21, Cammon said he had coaches from the Pac-12 calling and asking questions about her.

“I’m just blessed that she decided to spend her last year here,” he said. “I wish we had more time with her because she’s an amazing young lady.”

As the season came to an end, Utti said she was thankful for the program, and said it was the best decision she could have made. She still has aspirations of one day playing basketball professionally.

“I’m surrounded by the best people, they’re really a family here and I felt like they welcomed me into that family so easily,” Utti said. “It’s just a great environment to be in and I’m lucky to have been a part of it this year.”



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