

Gulls aim to unseat Banks, Scappoose for title

By Gary Henley
EO Media Group

Banks and Scappoose. If the Seaside Gulls could take those two schools off the football schedule, they would be 8-1 over the last three seasons.

Unfortunately, the Braves and the Indians are still on Seaside's schedule (although Scappoose could make the move to Class 5A in another year or two).

Losses to the two powers of the Cowapa League have resulted in back-to-back 3-2 seasons for the Gulls, who seem to have no problem in beating everybody else.

The Gulls are back to take another shot at Banks, Scappoose, and whoever else is standing in their way of an elusive league championship.

Like it has every year since 2010, Seaside's season invariably comes down to a three-game stretch: Banks (Oct. 8), Astoria (Oct. 16) and Scappoose (Oct. 23).

The Gulls

One of the first priorities is replacing four first-team all-league offensive players, including quarterback Kevin LaCoste and running back Calvin Pollard.

"There's no doubt there," said Seaside coach Jeff Roberts. "Everybody is keenly aware of that. LaCoste and Pollard are gone, in addition to Josh Chesnut and Daemon Fassler — those guys were huge contributors. But you know those days are going to come, and you hope that you prepare appropriately."

On the bright side, "Alex Barker (Sr.) was all-league last year and tied Pollard for tackles," Roberts said. "He will take over the bulk of the carries at fullback."

"We have a little more depth at running back. Everybody knew that we were going to hand it to Pollard 25 times a game. Why wouldn't you? Now, we have a more balanced attack."



JEFF TER HAR/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

Seaside defenders make a goal line stop at the Football Jamboree, Friday, Aug. 28.

SEASIDE FOOTBALL

COACH: Jeff Roberts, 5th year
2014: 5-4 (3-2 Cowapa)

PLAYOFFS: Lost regional Play-in at Banks, 0-21

ALL-LEAGUE LOSSES: Josh Chesnut, Daemon Fassler, Kevin LaCoste, Calvin Pollard

ALL-LEAGUE RETURNERS: Alex Barker (LB), Sr.; Austin Eagon (OT), Sr.; Zach Marston (TE), Sr.

Jaxson Smith (Sr.) will play a wingback/halfback spot, while Nathaniel Ward (Sr.) has returned. Astor Landwehr (So.) is another running back, and senior Sam Beaudoin will play both guard and fullback.

"In our offense, our best athletes are the two guards and our fullback," Roberts said. "Sammy has worked hard in the weight room."

At quarterback, the Gulls had a preseason battle between Otto Hoekstre and Smith.

"Otto is the front-runner right now, but both are work-

ing really hard," Roberts said. "As long as they pivot the right way and hand it to the right person, we're in pretty good shape. We're not going to sling the ball all over the place. We never have, and I don't anticipate that changing. We've had success and scored a lot of points in the last few years doing what we do."

Elsewhere, the Gulls have all-league tackle Austin Eagon (Sr.) returning, along with all-league tight end Zach Marston (Sr.). Both are two-year starters at defensive end. Saoul Cazarez (Sr.) returns at guard.



JOSHUA BESSEX/THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Seaside's Otto Hoekstre, No. 12, breaks a tackle by Warrenton's Nathan Bighill No. 44, during the Football Jamboree.

Senior Taylor Barnes is "one of the best kickers in the league, if not 4A football," Roberts said. "He will be a weapon for us."

Summing it up, Roberts said, "I like us a lot, one deep. We don't have the depth that I hoped that we would have. We will try to keep guys healthy and practice smarter."

The Cowapa

"The league is tough every year," Roberts said. "Banks returns a tremen-



JOSHUA BESSEX/EO MEDIA GROUP

Seaside's Jaxson Smith, No. 6, breaks several tackles by Warrenton players during a scrimmage game at the Football Jamboree Friday at CMH Field.

dous amount of talent. It would be hard not to make them the front-runners right now. Then Scappoose is always going to be tough, and I think Astoria is going to be vastly improved. I anticipate those three being the ones to gun for.

"Banks is probably the team to beat, and the league will run through Scappoose and Astoria. We have to fight

tooth and nail to get one of those wins."

As always, the Gulls play all three in order, over a three-week span to end the season.

"One way to look at it," Roberts said, "is win the first two, and then all you have to do is win one of the last three and you're in the playoffs. That's my cup-half-full way of looking at things. It's a daunting task."

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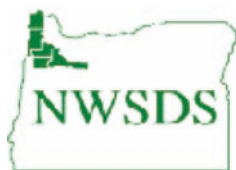
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