

Gulls to make another run at league 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."



JOSHUA BESSEX/THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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

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."

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 working 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.

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."

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