

Cross country team sets pace as Cowapa League champions

By Gary Henley
EO Media Group

WARRENTON — When it comes to Class 4A boys cross country, the top three high school teams in Oregon were all on display Wednesday, Oct. 21, at Camp Rilea, site of the annual Cowapa League Championships.

And the best of the best?

Seaside settled that question with a dominating performance on the soggy, 5,000-meter course.

The Gulls had three of the top four finishers and literally ran off with the Cowapa boys' team championship, as Seaside finished with 35 points, followed by Tillamook (48) and Valley Catholic (59).

Along with the entire boys' team, the Seaside girls will send two athletes to the state meet, Oct. 31 in Eugene.

Coaches around the state have already voted Seaside as the best boys' team at the 4A level — and the Gulls will be the favorites once they line up to run at Lane Community College.

Seaside's first six runners finished in the top 21 in Wednesday's race, and ("Good grief," says the rest of the Cowapa League) none of them are seniors.

"We knew this meet would be a smackdown," Seaside coach Neil Branson said. "In the hypothetical results, the Cowapa meet was Tillamook, ourselves and Valley Catholic (for first, second and third); and statewide, it's Tillamook, Valley Catholic and ourselves."

Individually, the Gulls picked up the bulk of their points with a 2-3-4 finish. After Tillamook senior Eulises Cruz-Vieyra (first in 16 minutes, 44 seconds), it was Seaside junior Bradley Rzewnicki (second, 16:49); junior Hunter Thompson (third, 16:56); and sophomore Rafi Sibony (fourth, 16:58). Junior Jackson Januik was eighth in 17:11.

A key finish came from sophomore Colton Carter (18th, 17:56).



Seaside runners are on

FIRE

Seaside's Katie Zagata, left, runs along the course during the Cowapa League Championships, slightly ahead of teammate Josie Smith. Both qualified for the state meet.

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was real happy with (the time)."

Teamwise, "I really wanted our team to make it this year," he said. "It's the first time we've had a really good team."

Said Branson, "From the 3,000-meter mark on, the boys really got after it today. It was a sight to behold."

Branson said this will be the best representation at state for the Seaside boys, "By far. It's been 31 years — 1984 was our last one (league championship)."

The top finisher for Astoria was junior Lucas Caruana, 10th in 17:13.

The state expectations are definitely high for Seaside — from the Gulls themselves.

"Teamwise, I hope we win," Thompson said. "We should. This (meet) was harder than the actual state meet. That's what

we were thinking."

"Just do our best," Rzewnicki said. "I think if we all have a really good performance, we'll place well."

In the girls' race, Scappoose sophomore Linnaea Kavulich was the runaway winner in 19:57, ahead of Tillamook's Kara Putman (20:43).

Tillamook won the team title, followed by Scappoose, Banks, Seaside, Valley Catholic and Astoria.

Individually, Seaside freshman Katie Zagata and junior Josie Smith finished fourth (20:53) and fifth (21:03), respectively, both qualifying for state.

"Katie and Josie ran great races," Branson said. "Katie really stepped it up, and Josie, with about 900 meters to go, was running with (Astoria's Kaylee) Mitchell, and you can't get into a sprint with her. Josie responded right away and created some distance there."

Mitchell finished seventh in 21:23, and teammate McKenzie Burnett was 16th in 22:42.

"When they scored the hypothetical meet, Colton was 25th," Branson said. "We knew he wasn't going to be back there. And he will be even tougher at state, as far as being competitive."

Seaside junior Juneau Meyer was 21st in 18:27.

Thompson, Sibony, Januik, Meyer and Carter — all soccer players — had played a game the night before vs. Tillamook.

Not a concern, Branson said.

"It is what it is. It doesn't do a lick of good to get excited about it," he said. "They just do what they do. They're kids, and I just knew that everybody would come out here and get after it."

"Our theme was 'courage' — let's just show courage," he said. "And they did. This is the largest contingent we've had in many, many years. We had 37 kids running today, and we haven't had that in a long, long time."

The second-place Rzewnicki said, "I felt good. It's a slower course, and I



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Astoria's Megan Bergeron, No. 13, fights for possession with Seaside's Lizzy Barnes, No. 4, during their soccer game at CMH Field Thursday, Oct. 15.

Girls soccer closing in on top three finish

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Seaside 3, Tillamook 0

TILLAMOOK — The Seaside Gulls are closing in on a top-three finish in the Cowapa League, as they scored another shut-out win Tuesday, Oct. 20, 3-0 at Tillamook.

Seaside improves to 4-4, tied with Banks for third place with two regular season games remaining. Tillamook drops to 0-12 overall. The Cheesemakers have been outscored 89-1 this season.

Boys Soccer

Seaside 2, Tillamook 1

The Seaside boys locked up a share of the Cowapa League title Tuesday, Oct. 20, at Tillamook, as the Gulls defeated the Cheesemakers 2-1.

Elsewhere in Cowapa boys soccer, Valley Catholic defeated Astoria, 2-0.

Volleyball

The volleyball playoffs are set for two local teams.

Warrenton, ranked 21st in the latest OSAA rankings, hosted 18th-ranked Portland Christian Thursday at 6 p.m. in a Lewis & Clark League playoff.

The Royals and Warriors both finished 5-6 in league play.

Elsewhere, Knappa played at Gaston Thursday (6:30 p.m.) in a Northwest League playoff.

The winner of that match advances to play the winner of Vernonia vs. Nestucca Saturday, and the winner of Saturday's match secures the league's No. 3 seed to the state playoffs.



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