



JEFF TER HAR PHOTO/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

Jaxson Smith drives to the basket against Liberty. Liberty defeated the Gulls 57-51.

Falcons leave Gulls' nest with 57-51 win

By Gary Henley
EO Media Group

There's no question that Seaside will be a major player in 4A boys basketball by the end of the season — the Gulls just had a tough time against the 5A level Friday night, Dec. 4, as Liberty came to Seaside and left with a 57-51 win.

The Gulls rallied from a 40-28 deficit in the third quarter to take a 48-46 lead with 3:51 left in the fourth, only to see the Falcons go on an 11-3 run to close out the intense nonleague game.

Liberty's Jacob Mast hit four straight free throws in the closing minutes, and scored on a layup at the 2:15 mark that put the Falcons ahead to stay, 52-51.

Moments earlier, Seaside's Austin Eagon scored off his own steal, drew the foul and made the free throw to give the Gulls a 51-50 advantage.

Seaside had two crucial turnovers down the stretch,

however, and the Falcons converted the miscues into points for the win.

Hunter Thompson scored 15 points to lead Seaside, with eight points apiece from Jackson Januik and Jaxson Smith.

Seaside 86, Rainier 43

Seaside bounced back from last week's loss to Liberty by doubling the score on Rainier Tuesday night at home, as the Gulls pounded the Columbians 86-43 in nonleague action.

The Gulls jumped out to a 17-0 lead and finished with five players in double figures.

Jackson Januik led all scorers with 19 points, followed by Hunter Thompson (17), Austin Eagon (14), Atikin Babb (12) and Jaxson Smith (11).

"We got off to a fast start, then got kind of lackadaisical on defense," Seaside coach Bill Westerholm said. "(The



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Austin Eagon makes a move against Liberty.

Columbians) got to within eight or nine in the second quarter, but then we came out and had a big third quarter,

and held them to only one field goal."

The Gulls play at Cascade Friday.

Utti scores 36 as Lady Gulls win opener

By Gary Henley
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The Seaside Lady Gulls just confirmed what we already knew — it's going to be another winning season in Seaside.

For the second year in a row, the Gulls opened their season with a win over Liberty, a Class 5A school from Hillsboro.

On Friday, Dec. 4, Junior Maddi Utti showed that she's already in Player of the Year form, as the Cowapa's best player for the last two years poured in 36 points, and the Gulls cruised in a 60-53 win over the Falcons.

Seaside jumped out to a 13-3 lead, but Liberty — which was 1-for-14 from the field in the first quarter — staged a second half rally and made the game close.

The Falcons had a chance to tie late, but Utti took control and scored three consecutive field goals to help the Gulls pull away. Utti and teammate Sydney Villegas were a combined 6-for-6 from the free throw line in the final two minutes.

Seaside shot a blistering 69 percent from the field (22-for-32).

Utti had 18 points in each half, while Seaside had just one other player in double figures (Villegas with 11).

"Maddi had a great game and played like her hair was on fire," Seaside coach Wally Hamer said. "Brittany West did a good job, as did Sydney Villegas on the glass."

Numerous fouls had the Liberty starters in foul trouble right from the start, and three key players eventually fouled out.

Liberty was whistled for 30 fouls on the night, and the Gulls took advantage by making 22-of-42 free throws. Utti alone was 12-for-18 at the line, in a game that featured a combined 55 fouls, 70 turnovers and 35 missed free throws.

"We survived, even though we committed too many turnovers and missed our free throws," Hamer said. "That was a great first game for our kids."

"Liberty played great defense and pressured us all night," he said. "They are a much-improved team from last year. They made several runs at us so we had to play with some toughness."

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