

Together, on and off the court

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Teamwork is a prized concept for the Lady Gulls basketball program.

“You don’t win league championships without having good team chemistry,” Hamer said.

During the first week of practice, the girls basketball program held an in-town retreat. After splitting off from the junior varsity players for the night, the varsity girls went over their goals for the season, according to senior Whitney Westerholm. This year, she said, they “bonded over the question” of what were their biggest fears for the season.

“You kind of get to know your team on a different level beside basketball,” she said. “We talk about how we’re going to accomplish those goals and how we’re going to overcome those fears as a group. I think that’s another reason why we’re so close as a team. Because we know each others’ fears, and we know what they need to do to overcome them. And we all have the same goal in the end.”

Some of the deep connections between players can be attributed to long-standing friendships forged through many years living in the same small town, attending the same schools and participating in many of the same activities besides basketball. Yet players like senior Jesse Trott, who moved to Seaside from out of state as a freshman, show there is more to it than simply adding up years.

“I had no friends for the first three and a half months,” she said. “When I walked on the basketball court, I kind of just immediately had friends.”

During those months, she said, she felt like an outsider “everywhere else, but not on the basketball court.”



Whitney Westerholm, driving for a lay-up against Estacada, is an important part of the team’s success on and off the field. The Gulls won 64-26.

“I never got treated like a new kid,” she added.

The team’s slogan, created two years ago and brought into re-use this year, is T², which stands for “tough and together,” Hamer said.

“It has been really a cool thing for our girls to think about, always being tough. No matter what the situation is, we’ve got to handle it in a tough manner,” he said. “And we’re going to be together and have each others’ backs, no matter what.”

As student-athletes, the girls approach the game with an understanding that other responsibilities are equally important.

The varsity team practices after school each day and on Sundays. To participate in games, the girls abide by certain criteria. They cannot

be failing more than one of their five classes. They cannot practice if they’ve taken an unexcused absence that day. If they don’t practice the day before a game, they can’t play in at least the first half. If they’re failing a class, they can’t miss that class to go to an event.

Senior Annuka Brown, who plays post, said the coaches encourage them to be “really good people off the court,” which means “having respect and manners” and “treating everyone nicely.”

The girls know basketball doesn’t last forever, and when the game ends, it is what they have learned that will last.

“It’s not just about how good we are and how many points we scored and stuff like that,” Westerholm said. “It’s more about how it re-

lates to the bigger picture.”

The girls hope to be playing basketball into March, at the state tournament as the Cowapa League champions, which “will be tough” goals to accomplish this year, Hamer said. But what the girls will do beyond that is still being set in motion.

Ideue anticipates playing softball, her primary sport, at Centralia College in Washington on a scholarship and possibly playing intramural basketball for fun. Junior Maddi Utti is being scouted as a college basketball prospect.

For West, Brown, Trott and Westerholm, however, they see their days on the court as numbered.

“There are so many other things in the world and so many other avenues,” Trott said.

Gulls’ boys beat defending state champs, girls roll

By Gary Henley
EO Media Group

SCAPPOOSE — The two teams that tied for the Cowapa League championship last year opened the 2015-16 league season Tuesday night at Scappoose, in the Game of the Night in Class 4A boys basketball.

And — as expected — Round 1 went to the Seaside Gulls. But just barely, as the state’s No. 2-ranked team had to hold on for a 59-56 win over the defending state champion Indians.

Seaside led Scappoose by as much as 17 points in the third quarter, only to watch a furious rally by the Indians in the fourth that brought Scappoose to within one point.

Meanwhile, the first half featured four ties and seven lead changes.

A pair of 3-pointers by Scappoose junior Tanner Kramer gave the Indians a 16-11 advantage in the first quarter, but the lead didn’t last.

Scores by Jackson Januik and Hunter Thompson in the second quarter resulted in a 27-23 Seaside halftime lead.

And the momentum carried over into the third period, as a score by Austin Eagon, a 3-pointer by Thompson and a jumper by Januik gave Seaside a 34-26 advantage.

Baskets by Attikin Babb, Eagon and Thompson made it 40-26, and a 3-pointer from Januik gave the Gulls their largest lead at 45-28.

Trailing 49-34 to start the final quarter, the Indians rallied behind Joey Wagenknecht, Robert

Lohman and Ian Donaldson, whose layup with just under a minute remaining cut Seaside’s lead to 55-53.

Jaxson Smith scored inside for the Gulls to push it to 57-53, but Donaldson nailed a 3-pointer seconds later to bring the Indians to within 57-56.

Thompson hit two free throws with 15 seconds left, and Scappoose was unable to get off a potential game-tying 3-pointer.

Eagon led the Gulls with 17 points, followed by Januik with 13 and Thompson with 12.

“We played well for the most part, but we didn’t have good shot selection from about six minutes to three minutes left in the fourth quarter,” Seaside coach Bill Westerholm said. “We didn’t play well for that span. But it’s a big win on the road, in a tough place to play.”

Girls Basketball

Gulls 48, Indians 20

SCAPPOOSE — The No. 2-ranked Seaside Lady Gulls have dominated the Cowapa League for the past two years, and they’re showing signs of doing it again.

Seaside led 20-0 after one quarter Tuesday night at Scappoose, on its way to an easy 48-20 win over the Indians.

Maddi Utti scored 21 of her game-high 25 points in the first half, which ended with a 3-pointer by Utti for a 33-10 lead.

Sydney Villegas scored nine points and Whitney Westerholm added eight for the Gulls, winners of nine straight.



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