

Coach Roberts is back in the saddle again



GARY HENLEY/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Gio Ramirez is already striking the "Heisman" pose, as he makes the switch to running back.

By Gary Henley
Seaside Signal

Jeff Roberts is back for more, and looking to pick up where he left off.

Well, maybe not right where he left off. In his last year as the Seaside football coach, the Gulls were a disappointing 1-4 in league, just two years after going 8-3 and making the state playoffs.

Roberts stepped down following the 2015 season to focus on his job as the Seaside principal, but Chad Smith left the post after 2016, which is why Roberts is back in the saddle again.

And he's got work to do, as Seaside finished 0-5 in league last season.

On the plus side, the Gulls

have four returning all-league players, including a running back and a receiver. And after missing much of last season with an injury, their quarterback could be one of the best in the Cowapa League.

The Cowapa

In his previous four years with the Gulls (2012-15), Roberts' best record in league was 3-2, accomplished in 2013 and '14. It's a tough league, with the challenge always being the same three teams — Astoria, Banks and Scappoose.

"The history of the league the last five or six years, (the league title) runs through Banks and Scappoose, with us and Astoria battling it out the last few years," Roberts said.

It's going to run through

Astoria this year, as the Fishermen are the defending league champs with a 5-0 mark in league play last year.

The Fishermen have won nine of the last 11 Clatsop Clash meetings, although Roberts is quick to note, "Howard (Rub) and I are 2-2 against each other," he said. But, "We've got some making up to do. We didn't perform well last year (a 50-12 Astoria win), and the kids are hungry. It left a bad taste in their mouth, and that's a huge motivator for some of these kids. They're hungry and ready to roll, and we look forward to a real successful year."

The Gulls

Big offensive lines always equal big success. The Gulls

had a big line when Roberts had Calvin Pollard in the backfield during his last stint as coach. And they've got another big line this year.

Seaside's strength, however, is "Our overall athleticism," Roberts said. "Even the guys up front. It reminds me a lot of the 2013 class, when (Aaron) Tadei, Andrew Owens ... Kevin (LaCoste) and Calvin (Pollard) were juniors — it reminds me a lot of that class from an athletic standpoint."

Although, he said, "I had the luxury of handing the ball to Pollard 30 to 35 times a game, and we're just not built that way this year. With that being said, I've got a lot of kids to hand the ball to and not have to rely on one kid to tote the ball that many times."

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