

A sea of red greeted the Gulls in Forest Grove.
Jeff Ter Har

MARCH REDNESS



A SEA OF RED, BUT BRAVES TOP GULLS IN TITLE GAME

By GARY HENLEY
Seaside Signal

FOREST GROVE — Fifteen minutes following the completion of the 4A state championship game — without even knowing the score — it was pretty obvious what the results were.

The Banks Braves were still on the main court with their fans, jamming to Kool and the Gang's "Celebration."

At the same time, the Seaside Gulls were back in their locker room, feeling about as low as they've felt in four years.

You guessed it. The final score from Forest Grove High School, for the record, was Banks 62, Seaside 56.

The Braves overcame a 33-22 deficit in the opening minutes of the third quarter, and rallied behind the hot hand of Bret Cameron to score the victory, preventing a Seaside three-peat and giving Banks a second state championship win over the Gulls in a four-month span.

In basketball, it was just the second

loss for the Gulls since Dec. 20. Both losses came at the hands of the Braves. On the plus side, Seaside (24-4 overall) also defeated Banks (27-3), twice.

Still, "They're feeling low," Seaside coach Bill Westerholm said of his players. "These kids have come a long ways. Most of our seniors have either played in or been on the bench for three straight championships. So it hurts 'em to lose."

At first — and actually through three quarters — the game had the appearance of just another easy win for the Gulls.

Two quick scores by Seaside's Payton Westerholm and Ryan Hague gave the Gulls their largest lead of the day, 33-22, just seconds into the third quarter.

That's when Cameron — who had no points in the first half — hit his first jumper of the second half, sparking the Braves to a 14-4 run.

A 3-pointer from Cameron brought Banks to within 37-36.

Dylan Meyer answered with an offensive rebound score, which was followed by perhaps the biggest play of the day.

As time expired in the third quarter,

Gobel launched a desperation shot from half-court. The shot missed, but Gobel was fouled in the attempt. He made all three free throws, tying the game at 39-39.

Said Roche, "When Blake got fouled on that 3-pointer from half court, and he made all three free throws ... it was 'go time.' We knew we had a good chance after that."

But not before the teams traded five straight lead changes on five baskets to start the final period.

Duncan Thompson's score gave the Gulls a 44-43 lead with 5:25 left, but little did anyone know, that would be Seaside's final lead of the season.

Shifka answered with a jumper to give Banks a 45-44 advantage, and more importantly sparked a 9-0 run for the Braves.

Still, the Gulls didn't fold.

Trailing 55-46, Beau Johnson nailed a 3-pointer (his fifth of the game), and Hague converted a three-point play, bringing Seaside to within 57-54 with 1:41 remaining.

Banks came right back with a free throw and a fast break layup from Dakota Bunn, which secured the Braves' victory.

Summing up Seaside's season, coach Westerholm said, "You can't finish first every year. We got beat by a good Banks team. We stretched it out to 11 points in the third, and we just got stagnant."

Gobel — who scored the go-ahead touchdown in the state championship football win — said the friendly rivalry with the Gulls was a highlight of his high school sports career, which will finish this spring in baseball.

"We have so much respect for all those guys," said Gobel, who finished with 24 points and 13 rebounds, both game highs. "It's been one hell of a ride, and we still have one more sport to go. It's been fun, and I appreciate all their coaches, families, players ... everybody on their side."

As for the Gulls, don't count 'em out for a fifth straight title game appearance next year.

"It's been a great ride with these seniors," Westerholm said. "We have a good young group coming in, so we're going to be just fine. But it's been a fun ride, hanging with these seniors. I've learned a lot from them."



Duncan Thompson battles for the ball.

Jeff Ter Har



Chase Januik shoots over Banks' defenders in the second-half of the championship game.

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Job well done!

SEASIDE
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