



Gary Henley/Seaside Signal

Tristyn McFadden is hoping to be on target for the Seaside girls golf team this season.

More golfers should equal more success for Lady Gulls

By Gary Henley
Seaside Signal

Rarely does a team nearly triple its number of athletes from one year to the next, but that's what Mike Verhulst and the Seaside girls golf program has done.

The Lady Gulls finished the 2018 season with just three golfers in the district tournament — not even enough to score in the team standings. Seaside and three other schools finished with incomplete team scores.

Through three weeks of the 2019 spring season, Verhulst had eight golfers on his roster.

For smaller schools such

as Seaside, fielding a complete team in golf is sometimes half the battle. And now that the Gulls have plenty to score as a team, anything is possible.

The three returners are all back. Sophomore Tristyn McFadden — who entered the 2018 season as Seaside's No. 1 golfer as just a freshman — is back, and scoring well.

In last year's Cowapa League tournament, McFadden fired a 107 for Seaside's top score. A week later in the district tournament, McFadden shot a 108 on the first day and 102 on the second — the Gulls' best score by 27 strokes.

The first time out in 2019, McFadden shot a

96 in a tournament at Tillamook, where she parred two of the first five holes and finished the front nine with a 47.

Individually, she finished third, and more importantly, the Gulls were just two strokes behind Astoria for third in the team standings.

In the same tournament, junior Caitlin Hillman had a 114 — also topping her scores from the district tournament.

Junior Sydney Rapp is Seaside's third varsity returner.

Rounding out the 2019 Seaside roster will be senior Ella Eronen, junior Frida Ruff, and freshmen Emma Arden, Paris Johnson, Anna Knoch and Elise Seppa.

Seaside seeks third state title

By Gary Henley
Seaside Signal

The Seaside Gulls may have come up short in their bid for state championships in football and basketball ... but the school year ain't over yet.

Seaside has won one state title in a boys sport in each of the last five school years, and the Gulls don't intend on breaking that tradition.

Their best chance this spring will be in boys golf, where the Gulls head into the year ranked No. 1 in a pre-season coaches poll.

We all know pre-season polls aren't worth much, but this one appears to be fairly accurate.

Seaside opened its season March 20 by posting a 313 team score, its best round of golf since the 2015 state championship season.

Head coach Jim Poetsch led the Gull golfers to state titles in 2014 and '15. In his other job as an assistant coach in boys basketball, Poetsch has four championship rings over the last five years. He's hoping to add one for the thumb this spring.

Seaside recently added a big victory in their annual trip to The Dalles, where the Gulls defended their tournament title from last season and posted their best team score (335) at The Dalles since 2006, and better than scores posted by their state championship teams.

There will be challengers (Marist, maybe Cascade), but the Gulls are once again definite contenders for a state title.

"Potentially this could be one of our top three teams," Poetsch said. "This team is probably better than our first state championship team."

Score-wise, Seaside's best year was 2006.

This year's team may not match the team scores posted



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Two of the state's best golfers of the present are also the future of the Seaside boys golf team, Carson Kawasoe, left, and Curtis Kunde.

in '06, "because I scheduled some tough courses," Poetsch said. "(Emerald) Valley's a tough course and that's where state is. We'd rather get them ready for that, than go out and shoot a bunch of low scores on easy courses."

THE GOLFERS

The Gulls lost their top golfer from last season — Jackson Kunde — to graduation.

Out goes Kunde, in comes freshman Carson Kawasoe. And Seaside's best golfer at The Dalles was sophomore Curtis Kunde. This team is already great, the golfers are young, and the season has barely started.

"We lost Jackson and replaced him with Carson," Poetsch said. "We didn't lose a step, and the kids worked hard all summer, so I think we're in pretty good shape. We're going to be right in there."

Rounding out the Seaside's top five, he said, are "Samson Sibony and Connor Merrell, Mason Shamion and Curtis from last year, and Carson. Any of them can beat the others on any day."

Kawasoe, son of Astoria golf pro John Kawasoe, is the golfer who will make Seaside contenders for the next three years. Locals certainly

know the freshman, and the rest of the state soon will.

"Hopefully it doesn't put too much pressure on him, because he is just a freshman," Poetsch said. "He's played some golf, but he's only 15. He's pretty level-headed though."

THE STATE

"State-wide, Marist (now Class 4A) won the 5A state title last year, and they have three good golfers back," Poetsch said. "Stayton and Cascade have a lot of good kids back. Woodburn was in the 5A tournament last year and they've dropped (to 4A), and they have all five kids back. And Mazama has four of its five back. The Cowapa League is not going to go 1-2-5 at state like last year."

Valley Catholic won the 2018 state title, ahead of second-place Scappoose, and Seaside was fifth.

The good teams will usually step to the front of the pack by mid-season.

Until then, "You just have to start reading papers from around the state, and hope that they put their scores in," Poetsch said. "Usually by the halfway point of the season, we've had enough tournaments to figure it out, but right now it's guess work."