

County plans booster shot rollout against virus

By ERICK BENDEL
The Astorian

Clatsop County plans to hold mass vaccination events once federal authorities approve booster shots for people who have received a COVID-19 vaccine.

The county's tentative plan was to open the clinics later this month, but "I would not be surprised if the launch date is delayed a little bit," Margo Lulich, the interim public health director, said.

The Biden administration set a Sept. 20 deadline to begin making boosters available, but experts at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have said the agencies may not have the information by then to determine when and whether the extra jab is necessary.

The booster shot discussion is happening as the more contagious delta variant circulates on the North Coast and across Oregon, leading to a spike in virus cases and hospitalizations.

The likely locations for the booster clinics will be the Clatsop County Fairgrounds and Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center in Warrenton. Camp Rilea is becoming a coronavirus response hub: tests, vaccinations, boosters, as well as the Public Information Call Center, will all be on site. Tom Bennett, a county spokesman, said the county is seeking volunteers for the call center and vaccination clinics.

The booster is meant to extend a vaccinated person's ability to fight off the virus. As with other vaccines, the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines wanes over time. Breakthrough infections —

cases of vaccinated people getting the virus — do occur but are less likely to lead to hospitalization and death.

For most people, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends a booster at least eight months after receiving the second shot of Pfizer or Moderna or the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

People with weak immune systems — such as those severely infected with HIV or being treated for cancer — can get the booster 28 days after a shot. They often need an extra dose to achieve the normal immunity that others get from one or two doses.

Rebecca Coplin, the interim chief executive of Providence Seaside Hospital, said in an email: "While the CDC only recommends that people with moderately to severely compromised immune systems receive an

additional dose, we encourage anyone who is eligible to do so."

The boosters will be given in the same order of priority as were the first vaccinations: emergency responders and health care workers, then senior citizens and finally the wider population, the county said.

Bennett said the Public Health Department hopes it can inform people who got their vaccinations earlier this year at a county-run clinic when they are due for a booster.

People will not be able to get their first vaccine at booster clinics, he said.

Coplin added: "For everyone, our best defense in the fight against COVID is to get the COVID vaccines you are eligible for, continue to wear masks indoors, outdoors when physical distancing isn't possible, and to keep your hands clean."

SPORTS

Athletes ready for a normal sports season

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

Looking forward to a normal high school sports year?

For Oregon high schools, the fall sports schedules are out, and — barring any unforeseen complications or interruptions — the Oregon School Activities Association has plans for a full school year of sports for the first time since the 2018-19 season.

Over halfway through the 2019-20 school year, the coronavirus brought sports to an end, canceling the entire spring season.

The 2020-21 school year featured shortened seasons, with much-abbreviated schedules. Fall, spring and winter sports — in that order — took place over a five-month span, with unofficial state championships and tournaments held for selected levels and sports.

The 2021-22 academic year promises to be an exciting year for local sports.

The fall season could belong to the Warrenton Warriors, defending league champions in football, volleyball and boys cross-country. And all three squads have enough athletes returning to repeat as league champs and contend for state titles.

Seaside boys soccer was senior-laden in 2020, but the Gulls reload every season, and are always a solid pick



Seaside football players do tackling drills at Broadway Field.

R.J. Marx

to win the Cowapa League. After not fielding a varsity team last spring, the Astoria boys soccer program will be back up and running this fall.

In girls soccer, the Lady Fishermen made the final eight "showcase" tournament last spring, losing 6-2 to Marist. Still, Astoria hopes to pick up where it left off in the regular season, in which the Fishermen won six of its last seven games.

On the gridiron, Astoria and Seaside football will both be hot on the trail of the Banks Braves. The Fishermen's only league loss in the short season came against Banks, 49-18. Astoria will host the Braves on Oct. 1 in what should be the Cowapa's Game of the Year.

At the 2A level, Knappa football survived a rebuilding season last March, as they answered two crushing defeats with two lopsided victories. Knappa may have lower numbers than normal, but so does every team in the Northwest League. The Log-

gers finished the shortened 2021 spring season with league titles in boys basketball and baseball, and will return this fall as the league favorite in football.

As promised, several local up and coming cross-country teams came through with big finishes last spring.

The Warrenton boys placed fourth in the final "state" meet, unofficially the highest finish ever for the Warriors. The Warrenton harriers will look to make it official this fall, when they return all but two runners for a team that will — literally — be in the running for a state championship.

At the 2A level, Knappa sophomore Isaiah Rodriguez finished third behind two seniors in the final meet gathering, making him the top individual returner this fall in boys' 2A cross-country.

The Loggers and coach Amanda Isom hope to have enough runners on the boys' side to score as a team in the big meets.

On the volleyball court, the top spot in the 3A Coastal Range League is reserved for Warrenton, which has won the regular season league title all three years of the league's existence.

Astoria picked up points in the preseason coaches poll for 4A volleyball, while Jewell is ranked eighth at the 1A level. The Bluejays tied St. Paul for last season's Casco League title, with both teams at 6-0 in league. Jewell opened the season with 13 straight victories.

Across the river, everything appears back to normal, as the Naselle Comets will be chasing a league title in volleyball, and Naselle is always among the state favorites at the 1B level in almost every boys' sport. Once again, the Comets will be crushing their league competition on the football field.

Here's to the 2021-22 school year, and — hopefully — a full, fans-in-the-stands, uninterrupted sports season.

PREP ROUNDUP

Gulls football dominates North Marion

Seaside Signal

In local nonleague action last Friday, Seaside won 55-0, and the Gulls finished the game with 427 yards in total offense, to just 11 yards for North Marion.

Astoria hosted Cottage Grove at CMH Field, where the Fishermen won 45-7.

This week, Astoria plays at Gladstone, Seaside hosts Newport, Toledo visits Knappa and Warrenton plays Saturday at Heppner.

Soccer

Seaside dominated the second half and nearly



Seaside players in preseason practice.

Gary Henley

scored a late, game-tying goal last Tuesday night at Newport, but the Cubs escaped with a 2-1 win over

the Gulls in a season-opening boys soccer game.

Newport dominated the first half, scoring goals in

the 13th and 22nd minutes, the second goal by Drake Dougherty after the ball deflected off Seaside keeper Riley Wunderlich.

The Gulls turned the momentum in the second half, and scored a goal in the 51st minute.

Wunderlich kept Seaside within striking distance, making three saves on close-range shots in the final five minutes.

A breakaway attempt by the Gulls in the 78th minute was deflected away by a Newport defender.

The Seaside girls soccer team lost a 1-0 decision to Newport last Tuesday night at Broadway Field.

Hospitals: 'Part of a rollout that's been initiated in phases'

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Columbia Memorial will place the National Guard in environmental services, the emergency department, security, materials and food services, according to Nancee Long, the hospital's director of communications.

Some of the National Guard will also be used at Clatsop County's virus testing site at Camp Rilea, Long said.

The arrival of the National Guard at Seaside's



R.J. Marx

Testing for the coronavirus at Providence Seaside Hospital.

hospital is "just part of the rollout that's been initiated in phases — support went to the areas most in need first," Antrim said.

The surge of virus cases continues to take a toll on

health care workers, said Mary Romanaggi, an emergency department nurse in Seaside.

"As far as the atmosphere at the hospital with all of the caregivers, we are spent,"

she said.

People with symptoms of COVID-19 come daily to the emergency department. "Not every patient that we see with COVID symptoms gets admitted, but it is every day, all day, that we care for this population, and yes, most are unvaccinated," Romanaggi said. "We're tired and short-staffed. I would welcome the National Guard."

Since the pandemic began, the county has reported 1,946 positive virus cases, with 24 deaths.

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