

High school sports back in full swing

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

Oregon high school sports are expected to feature a full spring season in 2022. After canceled games and events in 2020 and a shortened schedule in 2021, fans of local teams may find that little has changed. Warrenton and Knappa baseball teams are still favored for league titles while Seaside boys golf is looking as strong as ever. Meanwhile, the addition of new talent will make Astoria softball a

state power. It all begins this month, when games, events and meets get underway, weather permitting.

Local teams and events to watch

Astoria's Colton McMaster looks to end his high school career by setting new school records in the discus and shot put and adding state titles in both, as well as adding to his track and field resume. The senior triple sport athlete will attend Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, in the fall.

On the diamond, there was no baseball season in 2020, and no official championship in 2021. Warrenton baseball has the distinction of playing in the last "real" 3A state championship game at Volcanoes Stadium, the 2019 title contest won by La Pine.

In Warrenton, look for the Warriors and their returners to score another Coastal Range League title this spring, and to be among the top contenders for a state title. Warrenton picked up a first place vote in a preseason 3A coaches poll, while

Knappa scored the most first place votes at the 2A level.

Another Northwest League championship win is likely for the Knappa Loggers, who have gone unchallenged in league play for the last 10 years. The Loggers have not lost a league game since April 18, 2017, and hold a 127 to 3 record in league play since 2013, with undefeated seasons in 2014, 2015, 2018, 2019 and 2021. Knappa baseball should sweep its way through another perfect league season in 2022. At the 4A level, look for Astoria,

Seaside and Banks to battle for the top spot in the Cowapa League.

In softball, Astoria has added some notable new talent and will challenge Banks for the Cowapa title, while the Knappa Lady Loggers are always in contention for the Northwest League championship.

On the links, the Seaside boys golf team may have missed out on chances to win state titles in the last two years, but the Seagulls still have Carson Kawasoe. The senior has reportedly been recruiting in the halls

to help Seaside golf in his final season for head coach Jim Poetsch.

Talent on the track includes throwers for Astoria, Seaside and Warrenton. Senior Maddie Sisley could be a medalist in numerous events for the Astoria girls team, while distance runners from Astoria, Warrenton and Knappa will be running for spots in their respective state meets.

In addition, The Daily Astorian Invitational track meet makes its return this year, hosted by Astoria High School on April 21.

Pickleball popularity picks up on the North Coast

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

Pickleball is king among many recreational enthusiasts on the North Coast.

With the coming of spring weather, pickleballers will soon be taking to the outdoor courts.

Pickleball is readily available indoors, including at the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District gym in Seaside. The gym is open on Mondays and Thursdays from 9 to 11 a.m.

Admission is \$3 for those who live in the Sunset Recreation District and \$4 for all others. Discounts are also available for those involved in senior programs.

Gearhart features two outdoor courts at Pacific Way and South Marion Avenue, which are both free and open to all. The Camp Rilea gym in Warrenton also has courts

available on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. for a \$3 playing fee. No reservations are needed and all levels are welcome, with friendly coaching available. Loaner paddles and balls are also provided.

If you don't mind traveling a little farther, four outdoor courts are available for the Nehalem Bay Pickleball and North Coast Recreation District in Nehalem.

On the north side of the Columbia, visit the Lighthouse Resort in Long Beach, Washington, where pickleball turnouts are good on Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. At the resort, a professional player watches competitors as they tackle a game or two, then sets up a small tournament based on the players' skill level.

For more information on local pickleball spots, visit www.northcoastpickleball.org



The Lighthouse Oceanfront Resort in Long Beach hosts a Thursday night pickleball league.

Nikki Davidson/The Astorian

Researchers track health of gray whales

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Giants are passing by the Oregon Coast right now: Gray whales migrating north, heading to the Bering Sea from calving grounds in Baja California, Mexico.

After several years of seeing "skinny" gray whales — whales apparently not finding enough food en route — and varied improvement amid shifting ocean conditions, researchers have been concerned about issues in the animals' food chain.

Leigh Torres, an associate professor with Oregon State University and part of the Oregon Sea Grant extension, leads a team in field work along the coast each summer to collect important data on gray whales.

Last year, whales were few and far between, she said. Torres is hoping to see more and healthier whales this year. Some of the underfed whales they spotted in years past have not recovered to where researchers think they should be.

"So we're hoping that they show up in relatively good body condition and gain weight throughout the summer," she said.

Gray whales are the most



A gray whale breaching in the Pacific Ocean.

commonly sighted whale species on the West Coast and were the first marine mammals to be recovered through the federal Endangered Species Act, according to the state. Though they are no longer listed as endangered, they still face a number of threats, including boat collisions, entanglement with fishing gear and other disturbances, such as climate change.

The information Torres and her team collects informs not only ongoing research into gray whales, but also discussions about the overlap between humpback and blue whales and

fishing activities.

Oregon celebrates two different gray whale watching weeks each year: one in the spring and one in the winter. In pre-pandemic times, these weeks brought trained volunteers to coastal lookouts to help visitors spot and identify gray whales.

This year, Oregon State Parks will bring back a popular whale watching livestream, available on the Oregon State Parks YouTube channel beginning on Monday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily through March 25. The Whale Watch Center in Depoe Bay has been closed throughout the COVID-19

pandemic. It will reopen to visitors in late spring.

As people head to overlooks and viewpoints to watch gray whales pass by, Torres hopes they keep several things in mind.

"Everybody's connected to the ocean with the day-to-day actions we do," she said.

One of the main way whales can be impacted is by people's shopping choices.

"When we buy things that come from China, they all come on a boat and that boat makes a lot of noise and has ship strikes to the whales," Torres said. "We are more connected than we realize."

DINING on the NORTH COAST

Great Restaurants in:
GEARHART • SEASIDE
CANNON BEACH

WANT TO KNOW WHERE THE LOCALS GO?

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner
- Junior Menu
- Lighter appetite menu



BEST BREAKFAST IN TOWN!

Fish 'n Chips • Burgers • Seafood & Steak
Friday & Saturday - Prime Rib
Lounge Open Daily 9-Midnight
All Oregon Lottery products available

1104 S Holladay • 503-738-9701 • Open Daily at 8am

CHOCOLATE CAFE
Cannon Beach
Chocolate Cafe
COME VISIT US!
MILKSHAKE HAPPY HOUR
3PM-5PM, \$1 OFF ALL MILKSHAKES
232 N. Spruce • Cannon Beach, Oregon
503.436.4331
Starting in October: 9am-5pm daily,
closed on Tuesday and Wednesday

Call Sarah Silver
503.325.3211
ext 1222

YOUR RESTAURANT AD HERE.

Find Your Next Regular Customers!

Park district offers scholarships for swim lessons

Seaside Signal

Kate Besse, a long-time patron who swims at Sunset Pool, has funded an annual scholarship for

children with disabilities to receive private swim lessons to become water safe.

The Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District announced the les-

sons will be taught by instructor and swim coach Carolyn Heymann, who tailors lessons to the individual needs and abilities of each swimmer.

In 2021, the Sunset

Park and Recreation Foundation provided almost \$22,000 in scholarship funds. The foundation is committed to providing more access to district programs.