

SPORTS

# Utti's last season ends at Gill Coliseum

By GARY HENLEY  
The Astorian

It was a fitting place for Maddi Utti to play the last game of her college basketball career.

A fifth-year senior at Long Beach State in California, Utti and her team unfortunately ended the season with a 70-59 loss March 17 at Oregon State in the first round of the Women's National Invitational Tournament.

Utti was in early foul trouble, but still finished with seven points, four steals and a team-high 10 rebounds.

The game was played at Gill Coliseum, the same building where, arguably, the Legend of Utti began.

As a freshman at Seaside High School, Utti made the all-state tournament team and helped the Lady Gulls to a fifth-place finish in the 2013-14 state tournament, the highest finish ever for

Seaside girls basketball.

Also, the 23 wins for coach Wally Hamer's team that year was and still is a school record.

Meanwhile, Utti eventually landed at Fresno State, where she had a successful four-year career with the Bulldogs.

After the 2020-21 season, Utti and other seniors — because of the NCAA's lost season to COVID — were granted a fifth year of eligibility. Utti entered the transfer portal, went to Long Beach State, and started 27 of the team's 28 games, and was second in minutes played at 36.4 per game.

She also led the team in scoring with 366 points (13.6 per game), and had more than twice as many rebounds (238) as any player on the roster, to go with 86 steals and 24 blocks (both team highs) and 79 assists, second on the team. The 86 steals led the Big West Conference, and her 3.19 steals per game was eighth in the

entire nation at the Division I level.

Long Beach State finished 19-9 overall, and Utti was a first team all-conference selection. In addition, she was named the Big West's Defensive Player of the Year.

Utti's best season at Fresno State was 2019-20, in which she started all 32 games, was twice named the conference Player of the Week, and ultimately selected as the Mountain West Player of the Year.

Utti's coach at Long Beach, Jeff Cammon, told the school's student newspaper, The Daily Forty-Niner, that if Long Beach State had won the conference, Utti would have been named the Big West Player of the Year. "She should have been Player of the Year. I mean, she's the best player in the conference," Cammon said.

Utti suffered a torn labrum the year before at Fresno State, and started training for the 2021-22 sea-

son just four months after suffering an injury.

"I put in a lot of work on just understanding our defense and really working hard on that defensive end," Utti told The Daily Forty-Niner. "All my hard work paid off, and I try to pride myself in rebounding."

Utti was not allowed to take part in contact drills over the summer, but was always finding ways to get better.

"There's not many kids that do that," Cammon said. "Most kids you tell 'hey, you can't go' they're going to sit on the side, watch practice and cheer. She's over there trying to get better and that's why she is who she is."

When Cammon was recruiting Utti, he was looking for more than just a basketball player.

He told The Daily Forty-Niner that Utti is an amazing person, and was a perfect fit when she came down to check out the school on an informal visit.

"From the jump, she came in, there's no ego," Cammon said. "You can imagine a Player of the Year coming in from another conference, they can be a little arrogant, and they've accomplished a lot. But she didn't come in with any of that. She's an amazing basketball player that helped take our program to another level."

When Utti entered the transfer portal after 2020-21, Cammon said he had coaches from the Pac-12 calling and asking questions about her.

"I'm just blessed that she decided to spend her last year here," he said. "I wish we had more time with her because she's an amazing young lady."

As the season came to an end, Utti said she was thankful for the program, and said it was the best decision she could have made. She still has aspirations of one day playing basketball professionally.

"I'm surrounded by the



Long Beach State Seaside's Maddi Utti, in action against UC Davis during her one season at Long Beach State.

best people, they're really a family here and I felt like they welcomed me into that family so easily," Utti said. "It's just a great environment to be in and I'm lucky to have been a part of it this year."



Gary Henley/The Astorian  
Seaside's Carson Kawasoe tees off on the seventh hole in Monday's invitational at the Astoria Golf & Country Club.

## Elite teams take part in Seaside Invitational

The Astorian

Some of the best in Oregon high school boys golf was on display Monday at the Astoria Golf & Country Club, where Seaside was the host team in the nine-school Seaside Invitational.

Individually, one of the top golfers at the 6A level was medalist, as Clackamas senior Alex Lasko fired a three-under par 69 in the not-so-ideal conditions, with rain showers over much of the front nine.

McNary's Colby Sullivan carded a one-under par 71, with two Valley Catholic golfers at 73.

McNary, a 6A school, took the team title with a 305, ahead of Valley Catholic (324), Clackamas (328), Oregon Episcopal (352), Madras (377), Seaside's blue team (389), North Marion (396), Astoria (417), Seaside red (451) and Estacada (473).

Seaside senior Carson Kawasoe — who was medalist in all five of his first events this spring — was sixth individually, with an 80.

"Carson's perfect season ended today, but if the streak was to be broken, it was better to happen today than next week," Seaside coach Jim Poetsch said, as districts approach. "Our other Carson, Bates, broke into the 90's today, and he should keep getting lower as his career progresses."

Besides Bates, "it was a pretty rough day out there for our blue team, which has been our varsity most of the season," said Poetsch, who had two squads competing. "Again, better to happen now when only our egos are on the line."

Also scoring for the Gulls was Ever Sibony and Carter Perrigo, each with a 105; and Riley Wunderlich (111).

Judd Field led Astoria with a 94, followed by Dietrich Allen (103), Tayden Cole (108) and Jack Phillips (112).

Astoria was missing its top golfer, Ian McHone, along with Jase Junes.

**Tillamook tops Seaside**  
Kawasoe made it 5-for-5 in the medalist department

last Tuesday against Tillamook, but the Gulls came up short again in the team scoring, with the Cheesemakers scoring a 346-362 win at Gearhart Golf Links.

Kawasoe birdied two of the first three holes to go two-up on the co-medalist from last season's state championship, Elliot Lee, of Tillamook. Lee birdied the seventh hole to get back to within one, where it stayed most of the day. Kawasoe birdied two of the last four holes to walk away with medalist honors, carding a one-under par 71, to Lee's 74.

Nick Gitchell shot 87 to lead the Cheesemakers.

Seaside scorers included Sibony (92), Perrigo (97), Bates (102) and Wunderlich (112).

"Carson is five-for-five this season and has played against some very good players the last two days," said Poetsch. "We finally got a couple players into the 90s to help him out a little, but it wasn't enough today."

**Braves defeat Seaside**

Kawasoe was medalist for the fourth time in four events this season, but Banks was the team winner last Monday in a Cowapa League boys golf match at Quail Valley Golf Course.

Kawasoe shot a 75 to easily outpace the Braves' Aaron Brown and Jake Walters, who each shot 82.

Banks countered with Ben Cost (86) and Bo Wormington (87), and the Braves finished with a 337 team score, to Seaside's 390.

Wunderlich (101), Perrigo (105), Bates (109) and Sibony (111) rounded out the Seaside scoring.

"Carson has been the cream of the crop in each event this season," said Poetsch. "He is playing well as we get close to the post-season. Our other guys hit some really good shots, but they haven't quite figured out how to put together a full round."

He added, "The big numbers are really hurting us. The Braves had three holes of triple bogey or worse and we had 25."

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