

BASEBALL

Gulls, Fisherman earn all-league honors



Jarred White, Seaside

Becky White

The Astorian

Despite rough seasons on the field, the Astoria and Seaside baseball teams still placed a combined eight players on the Cowapa League's all-league team.

League champion Banks had eight all-leaguers, including two juniors, three sophomores and a freshman, as the Braves finished their last season at the 4A level as the No. 1-ranked team in the final Oregon School Activities Association rankings. The Braves will drop into the 3A Coastal Range League next school year.

Banks seniors Colten Hesselman and Charlie White were selected as both the Cowapa's Players of the Year and Pitchers of the Year, while Joe Baumgartner of Banks and Matt Strang of Tillamook were Coaches of the Year.

Astoria and Seaside had four players each earn all-league honors.

The 66-player 4A all-state team included Astoria junior pitcher Niko Boudreau (honorable mention).

COWAPA ALL-LEAGUE TEAM

Players of the Year: Colten Hesselman, Banks; Charlie White, Banks

Pitchers of the Year: Colten Hesselman, Banks; Charlie White, Banks

Coaches of the Year: Joe Baumgartner, Banks; Matt Strang, Tillamook

First Team

Colten Hesselman, Sr., Banks

Charlie White, Sr., Banks

Merrick Benesch, So., Astoria

Niko Boudreau, Jr., Astoria

Ashton Crossen, So., Banks

Ben Cupani, Jr., Valley Catholic

Connelly Fromwiller, Jr., Astoria

Junior Gonzalez, Sr., Tillamook

Bryce Hamerl, Jr., Tillamook

Wyatt Hesselman, So., Banks

Drew Ilg, Sr., Valley Catholic

Logan Kind, Jr., Banks

Trevor Leonnig, Jr., Tillamook

Parker McKibbin, Jr., Tillamook

Nik Radosavljevic, Sr., Valley Catholic

Cade Ross, Jr., Tillamook

Lawson Talamantez, Sr., Seaside

Justin Walters, So., Banks

Honorable Mention

Will Erickson, Fr., Valley Catholic

Harry Gardner, Fr., Banks

Karson Hawkins, Jr., Astoria

Tanner Kraushaar, Jr., Seaside

Seth Landolt, Jr., Tillamook

James Pearson, So., Valley Catholic

Wyatt Selleck, Jr., Banks

Jake White, Fr., Seaside

Jarred White, Sr., Seaside

Trevor Yee, Fr., Valley Catholic

BASEBALL

Atwood is league MVP, Wolfe is top coach

The Astorian

The Coastal Range all-League baseball team reflected the results on the field in 2022, as the league champion Warrenton Warriors backed up another league title with eight selections to the all-league squad and the top two individual honors.

Warrenton junior Dylan Atwood was selected as the league's Player of the Year, and Lennie Wolfe

collected his 11th league Coach of the Year award.

Among the Warrenton players on the all-league team were two seniors, three juniors and three freshmen. Rainier had a league-high 10 selections.

The 3A all-state team, announced last week, included three Warriors: Atwood (first team utility player), senior Ethan Caldwell (second team catcher) and senior Joshua Earls (honorable mention outfielder).



Gary Henley/The Astorian

Boomer Bjaranson, right, puts the tag on ex-Warrior Michael Davis in one of the recent Warrenton baseball alumni games.

ALUMNI GAME PART OF BJARANSON'S LOVE OF BASEBALL

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

WARRENTON — He's been "Boomer" Bjaranson for so long and to so many people, his real first name — Ryan — has become more of a nickname.

"I've always gone by Boomer," said the 1993 Warrenton graduate and long-time assistant baseball coach at Warrenton High School. "If anyone yells, 'Ryan!' I wouldn't even look."

Bjaranson is in his 14th season as an assistant to Warrenton head coach Lennie Wolfe, and in the past served as an assistant boys basketball coach. "Boomer," and the Bjaranson family in general, is well known in all circles of the community.

His current project — and one he's been in charge of for years, is organizing and running Warrenton's annual alumni baseball game, which is getting to be a big deal for the small town.

"I anticipate 20 to 30 guys showing up this year," Bjaranson said of the ninth alumni game, set for July 3 at the high school. "Last year was a smaller turnout, but I'm putting some pressure on people to come this year. Michelle (Wolfe) will be doing her barbecue, all fam-

ilies and friends are welcome, and it will be Fourth of July weekend, so I'm hoping for a good turnout."

There's no charge for fans to attend the alumni game. A suggested \$20 donation for Warrenton graduates to play in the game goes to the Warrenton baseball summer program.

The event is "kind of established now, so people know about it," Bjaranson said. "But it's still a challenge for guys to overcome their fear of pulling a hamstring, or getting in the batter's box after a decade or more of not playing."

A big concern is always bringing in a former catcher or two. In other words, someone with good knees.

"My biggest fear is that we won't have any catchers show up," he said.

The process for the game itself is like a sandlot game. "We pick a couple captains and let them select who they want. Guys can play first base, shortstop ... wherever they want," he said. "They can just take one at-bat or move around in the middle of an inning. There's no rules. It's just a good time."

There's also a home run derby. At the end of the day, "everybody's smiling and having a great time," Bjaranson said. "It's more of an 'old

timers' game. It's about family bonding and reconnecting with your old teammates. I know it's real enjoyable for coach Wolfe to see his former players."

The Warrenton coach since 1992, Wolfe is now coaching the children of former players.

"He's a Hall of Fame coach, won a lot of games, and Lennie is obviously more than just the baseball coach here. He's really helping kids along the way, developing the facilities and much more."

"Boomer" was a nickname "my mom and grandmother gave me when I was little," Bjaranson said. "I'd pound on the wall when I was a little baby, and when I'd wake up, they'd just hear 'boom, boom, boom' on the wall. And the name stuck."

Boomer's four siblings all attended Warrenton: Brothers Jeff, Jason (Jay) and Adam, and Boomer's twin sister, Missy.

Bjaranson sells for a real estate franchise, working remotely for a company out of Utah. Adam Bjaranson is a television sports announcer for KOIN 6 in Portland, well known by followers of the Portland Trail Blazers and Oregon sports.

The family was stunned by the death of Jay Bjaranson in 2012 — one of four who

died when the fishing boat Lady Cecelia sank 20 miles west of Leadbetter Point, Washington.

"We try to honor Jay and his memory in any way we can," Boomer said. "Two of my brothers were fishermen. We have friends who are in the fishing industry, so we know things like that can happen, and unfortunately it did."

"It's still a little surreal looking back. Jay and I were close. He graduated in '91. He was a wrestler. He was a fisherman, loyal to his family and friends ... just a tough loss."

As for the alumni game, the coronavirus pandemic kept participation down the past two years, so Bjaranson is hoping the alumni contest will bring some happiness back to the community.

Bjaranson's ultimate goal is to have an alumni tournament for the county, with former players from Astoria, Seaside, Warrenton and Knappa meeting on the field to decide who's really the king of baseball. Wherever it's held, a one-day tournament would surely bring out the fans.

"I love baseball, and this is my chance to give back to the community," he said. "Just a way for me to be around the game I love, and hopefully have an impact on kids."