

SPORTS

WIAA 3A STATE BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIP



Shelton High School senior bowlers Abby Slone, left, and Morgan Holling, being embraced by Alyssia Paz, share a moment following the 3A state bowling championship Saturday at Narrows Plaza Bowl in University Place. *Journal photo by Justin Johnson*

CRAFTING A LEGACY

Seniors lead Shelton High School to third straight top-six finish at 3A state bowling championship

By Justin Johnson
justin@masoncounty.com

"This is my last roll ever."

The words flowed from senior Dreann Merriman's lips, her face a torrent of barely concealed emotion, toward her teammates gathered tightly together near the ball return of lane seven late Saturday morning at Narrows Plaza Bowl in University Place.

Merriman quickly gathered herself, turning her attention to this one final task of the 14th Baker game, the last moment of two days of grueling determination that composes the WIAA 3A state bowling championship.

She strode forward and let the ball go.

It knocked down two of three remaining pins, resulting in a score of 177 for the game and a sixth-place finish for the Highclimbers.

It was over and the emotion soon followed.

Shelton's four seniors embraced, tears flowed quickly, as did the laughs — a storm of mixed emotions at the end of a long journey.

"Going to state three years in a row was an amazing experience for me," Merriman said. "I didn't place my senior year, but I enjoyed my team so much. My team has made the experience so much better. I'm not satisfied with this

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FAR POST

Being thankful for the chance to witness Senior Night

There aren't many things in high school sports that surpass the emotional wallop that Senior Night brings.

Tears and smiles are everywhere. And that's before the action on the field or court even begins.

As the winter sports seasons are reaching their respective conclusions, I've tried my best to get out and see as many of those senior days or nights as I can.

Last week, I was at Shelton High School's Mini-Dome for both of its basketball senior nights, the boys on Feb. 4 and the girls on Feb. 6.

The week before, I saw Senior Night

for Mary M. Knight's boys and girls basketball teams, Shelton's boys and girls wrestling teams and North Mason's girls basketball team.

Every one of them was unique and touching — the emotions and energy intense.

Senior nights are truly one of my favorite sporting moments to witness.

During the Shelton girls basketball team's senior night — which honored seven players and the Climbers' team manager, first-year head coach Liz Canright told stories of the group and thanked her

players.

At the Bulldog girls basketball team's senior night, it was younger teammates sharing stories and why they looked up to the seniors.

The sporting world can be cutthroat and competitive. Winning triumphs so many things.

On these nights of honor, however, it doesn't really matter if one is the star player or a rarely-used substitute. Those who put in the work and effort to earn the privilege of wearing their school's uniform earn that moment in the spot-



By JUSTIN JOHNSON

light.

As winter sports conclude during the next couple of weeks, I'd just like to give thanks to the senior athletes here in Mason County.

Thank you for your hard work.

Whether you compete on a mat, court, field or pool, thank you for putting in that effort to be the best at what you choose to do.

And from me to you, thank you for letting me tell your stories.

■ *Justin Johnson is the Sports & Outdoors Editor of the Shelton-Mason County Journal. He can be reached by email at justin@masoncounty.com.*

WIAA 3A STATE BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIP

“I hope that the future teams can stay positive and just love bowling as much as our team always has. I hope they can always improve like we did. It’s been so amazing to make such great friends in bowling, and I wouldn’t have wanted it any other way.”

Dreann Merriman, Shelton High School senior bowler



Bowl: Two league titles, three state tournament berths

continued from page B-1

performance, but I just had an off day. I couldn’t change anything but my attitude, and that’s OK.”

Shelton finished the two-day tournament, which spanned a six-game series Friday and a 14-game Baker series Saturday, with a team score of 6,631.

Merriman finished Friday with a score of 1030 to place 19th among individuals.

“The tournament pushes you to the limits and makes you work and be determined,” Shelton senior Alyssia Paz said. “It hasn’t been easy, but it’s been a fun and wild ride over the years.”

This was Shelton’s third consecutive appearance at the 3A tournament, and its seniors have been the driving force behind that success. They shared the South Sound Conference’s regular season title with Capital as sophomores before winning the conference’s post-season tournament and finishing fifth at the state championships.

A year later, as juniors, they won the league title outright and eventually finished sixth at the 3A championships.

“Going to state means the absolute

world to me,” senior Abby Slone said. “I have worked so hard and have dedicated most of my life to this sport. Nothing really matters at the end of the day besides knowing that I gave it my all for the sport I love.”

Shelton’s seniors — Merriman, Paz, Slone and Morgan Holling — have crafted a legacy of excellence during their careers, one that the quartet hopes inspires future Highclimber bowlers to continue to build upon.

“I hope that the future teams can stay positive and just love bowling as much as our team always has,” Merriman said. “I hope they can always improve like we did. It’s been so amazing to make such great friends in bowling, and I wouldn’t have wanted it any other way.”

The state competition format is a labor of love for participants.

A set of three games followed by a short, late afternoon lunch break and a second set of three games means most bowlers have to roll more than 100 times in just a few short hours during the first day of action.

As individuals, Shelton’s bowlers felt they could have each performed better, but were grateful for the op-

portunity to compete side-by-side with their teammates.

“This year at state wasn’t my best, but I did what I could,” Paz said. “Struggling sometimes just happens and as bowlers we learn from our mistakes. I’m glad I made it with my team and we all did our very best.”

Shelton coach Dann Gagnon said he was pleased with the team’s finish against the competition, which included two-time defending champion Wilson High School and this year’s winner — Evergreen High School of Seattle.

“The last six years have been rewarding for me after seeing (the girls) improving each year,” Gagnon said. “I reminded the girls to remember the journey as they finish their senior year. I will miss my seniors who have always been competitive and supportive with their teammates. Parents have also been supportive and encouraging, and that has been greatly appreciated. Without parent support, it would be difficult to have a successful bowling season.”

Shelton finished this year with a 14-4 overall record (11-3 South Sound Conference), to take second in the SSC and third at the 3A West Central Dis-

trict championships.

Paz led the SSC with a bowling average of 190.6, an improvement of nearly 40 pins over her junior season. She had nine games of more than 200 and three series of more than 400, including a league-high 440.

Merriman bowled a league-high game of 248 and had seven games of more than 200. Both Paz and Merriman were named First Team All-League, while Slone earned Second Team honors.

The Climbers’ roster also includes three other seniors: Bethany Comstock, who was an alternate bowler at the state championship, Annaliese Tholl and Realee Wiles.

Holling said this season was the best experience of her career, crediting both her teammates and Coach Gagnon for her improvement and growth. Holling said she has improved from an average of 115 to 131, a gain of 16 pins per game.

“This year, after every good or bad ball, my team was there with cheers, laughs, hugs and words of wisdom for me,” Holling said. “That feeling is something that can’t be replaced and I’ll miss it for years to come.”

SPORTS



North Mason High School volleyball team seniors, from left, Rebekah Fredrickson, Natalie Mathews and Hannah Fredrickson — shown here Oct. 16 in Belfair after practice — have led the Bulldogs to an 8-1 record in Olympic League action entering the week. *Journal photo by Justin Johnson*

FAR POST

Learning the lessons

Athletic competition can be a powerful teaching tool. It is easy to get caught up in wins and losses, awards and other merits.

But sometimes the most important lessons in sports don't occur on the field or court. Sometimes they don't even happen in practice.

Teams from youth leagues to professional squads have a code of conduct,

and coaches and players must be held responsible for their actions on and off the field.

If coaches or players violate that code, there are set penalties for those actions.

It's not being mean. It's not singling an athlete out.

Those rules maintain a standard of accountability that

everyone — from the player at the end of the bench to a team's most visible star — has to follow.

You might think in the moment that it's easy to let those rules slide — especially if you have a team that's struggling. After all, it needs all the players and help it can get. But if you let that stuff slide to get results, it's only a matter of time before it eats away at the team.

That goes for things on the field or court too.

It's really easy to get caught up in wanting to always be No. 1, the best, the center of attention.

If you pay close enough attention to the best teams, however, the results are only part of the equation.

The best teams are generally driven in equal parts by discipline and a process.

There are a lot of words — many more than what would fit in this column space — about the difference between being win-at-all-costs result-oriented and being process-oriented.

Wildly-successful Alabama football coach Nick Saban is a great example of a process-oriented coach.

"Saban's 'Process' is disciplined effort to eliminate 'the mental clutter,' ignore results and instead relentlessly and simply focus on the next task or next play," ABC News reporter Andy Fies wrote

see **FAR POST**, page B-2



By **JUSTIN JOHNSON**

GINGER POWER

Red-headed trio leading North Mason volleyball squad

By **Justin Johnson**
justin@masoncounty.com

It is a chilly, drizzly mid-October evening in Belfair, but inside North Mason High School's Bulldog Gym no one notices.

The squeak of a shoe, the hammering sound of a volleyball striking the court and a few carefully placed words of instruction are the cadence to which the Bulldog volleyball team is training for its next match.

"We have all played together for years now; we have a solid support for one another on and off the court," said senior outside hitter Hannah Fredrickson, the team's fiery offensive leader



North Mason High School students hold up a "Ginger Power" sign at a volleyball match against Kingston Sept. 19 at the Belfair school.

Journal file photo by Justin Johnson

and one of North Mason's aptly nicknamed "Ginger Power" trio. "Our off-court love helps us remember to play for each other on the court."

Ginger — a shade of red often associated with fire — is perhaps the perfect metaphor for this group of Bulldogs, who enter this week's matches against Bremerton and Sequim with an 8-1 record in Olympic League

play.

A pair of wins this week would set the stage for a showdown with North Kitsap on Tuesday in Belfair for the league's regular season title.

"Our season this year has been nothing short of amazing," senior middle blocker Natalie Mathews said. "I believe it all

see **GINGER POWER**, page B-2

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Ginger Power: Bulldog volleyball squad has seven seniors

continued from page B-1

started last year, after our first game, when we had the goal of going to state. We made it to postseason, but sadly our season ended at districts.”

Ginger Power is doing its part to write a different ending this time.

Behind the red-headed leadership of Mathews, Hannah Fredrickson and her twin sister — senior libero Rebekah Fredrickson — the Bulldogs are singularly focused on ending their high school careers on the highest of notes.

“I am very lucky to be a leader on this team,” Rebekah said. “Getting to grow with a significant amount of the same girls all throughout high school has, I believe, strongly been a reason (for) our success. We know one another as more than just people on the court. My experience has made me a strong leader and I always want to lead by example.”

That desire to lead by example is easy to notice with a quick glance at the team’s statistics.

Hannah leads the Bulldogs with 206 kills, an average of almost four kills per set. She’s also second on the team in digs with 193. Rebekah is North Mason’s defensive showstopper with a team-high 252 digs — 4.85 per set. The twins are skilled servers as well, with Hannah leading the team with 50 service aces and a 93.1% success rate in landing her serve in. Rebekah has 24 aces and a 90.2% success rate.

They’re the Bulldogs’ fire and ice. “I honestly couldn’t imagine this team without my sister,” Rebekah said. “She is the reason I get to grow and play the way I do. We push each other and believe in one another and it rewarded us as athletes and people.



LEFT: North Mason High School seniors Rebekah Fredrickson, left, and Hannah Fredrickson listen during practice Oct. 16 in Belfair. RIGHT: Natalie Mathews celebrates a point. Journal photos by Justin Johnson



I believe our dynamic is super valuable and we never let ourselves settle and that is why we have gotten to this point.”

Hannah says playing with Rebekah keeps her at peace, especially when things aren’t going as planned during a match.

“She is such a kind soul that when things aren’t going as planned in the game, I can look at her and think of everything we’ve been through and remember there’s so much more to life than winning a volleyball game,” Hannah said.

There are seven seniors on North Mason’s squad, but there is no fighting over statistics and superlatives.

Practice is equal parts intense focus and gentle laughter.

The Bulldogs are veteran team that

knows the importance of work, yet, perhaps more importantly, knows having fun is the true reward.

When asked what her favorite ginger joke was, Mathews said there is only good one.

“What do you call a ginger when they get mad? ... A ginger snap.”

Rebekah says “people always blame my red hair on my addiction to hot Cheetos.”

Sporting a bit of devilish smile during her reply, Hannah says “people tell me I’m the spawn of Satan because I’m ... a very hard-headed person.”

With veteran confidence and experience, the laughs come naturally to this group of Bulldogs.

Beyond Tuesday’s showdown with North Kitsap is the Olympic League tournament, hosted by the league’s regular season champion. The opening rounds of the District 3 tournament take place the following week at North Mason High School, presenting the team a dream opportunity to play deep into the postseason on its home court.

“Now that (day one of districts) is being hosted here at North Mason, for me at least, it makes me push even harder,” Mathews said. “I wanted to be able to play in front of our fans that have been here all year.”

Rebekah added that getting to play at home is a huge motivator for the team to keep growing and bettering

itself.

“Our town, I believe, is one of the best support systems I’ve ever had in a sport. It’s a blessing,” Rebekah said. “We really cannot settle and need to take this opportunity by the horns.”

Shelton

The Shelton High School volleyball team dropped two matches last week, but got a boost with the return of senior McKenzie Salazar-Fox from an ankle injury.

Shelton fell 25-15, 25-19, 23-25, 25-19 to Peninsula on Oct. 15 at the Mini-Dome in Shelton, and then 25-22, 25-18, 25-21 on Oct. 17 at Yelm.

In the match against the Seahawks, Salazar-Fox had 19 kills and Ne’a Moffett had eight.

Shelton was 0-9 in South Sound Conference action, 7-10 overall at the start of the week.

Mary M. Knight

The Mary M. Knight High School volleyball team dropped a 25-13, 25-18, 25-20 decision to Lake Quinalt on Oct. 15 at Lake Quinalt High School in Amanda Park.

The Owls were 1-4 in 1B Coastal League action, 5-8 overall heading into this week.

Far Post: Follow the process

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following the Crimson Tide’s 2017 national championship game

win in overtime against Georgia.

In a TV interview after that victory, Saban told ESPN’s Scott Van Pelt that it comes down to “just play the next play.”

Being part of a process-oriented team means coming to practice or work every day to get better. It means being accountable to your coaches and your teammates and, most importantly, yourself. It replaces the thinking that an athlete or their team is defined merely by their winning percentage with the idea that results will eventually come if you put in the work, but you can’t just make them happen.

It’s an important distinction.

Here in Mason County, many of our high school sports teams struggle to find consis-

tent success on the field, but that doesn’t make our local players losers. In fact, from what I’ve seen during my time here in the county, we’re blessed to have some very hard-working boys and girls.

They want to work. They want to grow.

Do mistakes happen? Sure they do.

The true measure is the response.

Do they accept responsibility? Do they learn the lesson, even if it’s painful?

Being able to answer “yes” to those two questions is more important than any result ever will be.

■ Justin Johnson is the Sports & Outdoors Editor of the Shelton-Mason County Journal. He can be reached by email at justin@masoncounty.com.

Your Local Tides

For the week of October 24 through October 31

ALLYN | Case Inlet

DATE		HIGH (FEET)		LOW (FEET)		SUN	MOON					
		AM	PM	AM	PM							
24	Thu	2:24	11.0	3:47	14.5	8:58	0.9	10:18	4.0	7:42	6:08	
25	Fri	3:37	11.9	4:24	14.9	9:57	1.3	10:58	2.4	7:43	6:06	
26	Sat	4:41	12.8	4:58	15.2	10:51	1.9	11:38	0.8	7:45	6:04	
27	Sun	5:40	13.7	5:31	15.3	11:42	2.7			7:46	6:03	
28	Mon	6:36	14.4	6:06	15.2	12:18	-0.5	12:31	3.8	7:48	6:01	
29	Tue	7:31	14.8	6:41	14.8	12:58	-1.5	1:21	4.8	7:49	6:00	
30	Wed	8:26	15.0	7:19	14.2	1:39	-2.1	2:12	5.9	7:51	5:58	
31	Thu	9:21	15.0	8:00	13.3	2:22	-2.1	3:08	6.7	7:52	5:56	

SHELTON | Oakland Bay

DATE		HIGH (FEET)		LOW (FEET)		SUN	MOON					
		AM	PM	AM	PM							
24	Thu	3:02	11.0	4:25	14.5	10:04	0.8	11:24	3.5	7:43	6:09	
25	Fri	4:15	11.9	5:02	14.9	11:03	1.1			7:44	6:07	
26	Sat	5:19	12.8	5:36	15.2	12:04	2.0	11:57	1.6	7:46	6:06	
27	Sun	6:18	13.7	6:09	15.3	12:44	0.7	12:48	2.4	7:47	6:04	
28	Mon	7:14	14.4	6:44	15.2	1:24	-0.5	1:37	3.2	7:49	6:03	
29	Tue	8:09	14.8	7:19	14.8	2:04	-1.3	2:27	4.2	7:50	6:01	
30	Wed	9:04	15.0	7:57	14.2	2:45	-1.8	3:18	5.0	7:52	5:59	
31	Thu	9:59	15.0	8:38	13.3	3:28	-1.8	4:14	5.8	7:53	5:58	

UNION | Hood Canal

DATE		HIGH (FEET)		LOW (FEET)		SUN	MOON					
		AM	PM	AM	PM							
24	Thu	1:26	8.5	2:53	12.3	7:50	1.4	9:04	4.0	7:43	6:09	
25	Fri	2:47	9.4	3:30	12.5	8:49	1.8	9:47	2.4	7:44	6:07	
26	Sat	3:53	10.4	4:05	12.6	9:44	2.3	10:29	0.8	7:46	6:06	
27	Sun	4:53	11.4	4:38	12.5	10:36	3.1	11:10	-0.5	7:47	6:04	
28	Mon	5:48	12.2	5:10	12.3	11:27	4.1	11:52	-1.4	7:49	6:02	
29	Tue	6:43	12.6	5:41	12.0			12:17	5.1	7:50	6:01	
30	Wed	7:37	12.8	6:12	11.5	12:34	-1.8	1:07	6.0	7:52	5:59	
31	Thu	8:33	12.8	6:41	10.8	1:17	-1.7	2:01	6.9	7:53	5:58	

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SPORTS



Shelton High School athletic trainer Michelle Carlin, left, tapes junior girls basketball player Carlie Thompson's ankle prior to a Friday game against Gig Harbor at the Mini-Dome in Shelton. Carlin was hired as a full-time athletic trainer in November. *Journal photo by Justin Johnson*

Healing hands

Shelton High School athletic trainer settling into role

By Justin Johnson
justin@masoncounty.com

When Michelle Carlin was a freshman in high school in West Seattle, life kicked her in a new direction.

Quite literally.

"My freshman year of soccer, I was kicked in the head and got a concussion. Since the school didn't have anyone who was able to recognize those types of injuries, my concussion went undiagnosed for two weeks," Carlin said. "As time went on, I realized that there were people who

were able to help in those types of scenarios, and I know I wanted to help."

In November, the 22-year-old Carlin was hired by Shelton School District to be the high school's athletic trainer for its sports programs.

"When I arrived here at Shelton last year, I could not believe we didn't have an athletic trainer," Shelton School District Athletic Director Trevor Leopold said. "Athletic trainers are so important in a high school. They prevent injuries, perform rehab, assess injuries, administer baseline testing for concussions, have on-field protocols, and clear athletes from concussions and other injuries for return to play."

"My first year, the football team had to hire a trainer for their home football games. This past year, we could not find one to help out. If there was a major issue, we did have paramedics on

site for football, but what about other athletic events?"

Carlin graduated in December 2018 from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix and in April became a certified athletic trainer with the National Athletic Trainer Association.

"We were looking for someone who had experience working as an athletic trainer at the high school or college level," Leopold said. "The person needed to possess a National Athletic Trainer Association certificate, have the ability to work independently, demonstrate a caring attitude and establish a positive professional environment within the school. In her interview, she was able to check all the boxes in what we were looking for."

see **TRAINER**, page B-3

FAR POST

Death of Kobe Bryant makes the world a poorer place



By JUSTIN JOHNSON

For several weeks now, I planned to write a column about the Super Bowl in this space.

That changed Sunday morning.

Unless you've been hiding out in the depths of the Olympic Mountains during the past week, by now you've heard that recently retired Los Angeles Lakers superstar Kobe Bryant, his daughter Gianna, and seven other people died when the helicopter they were riding in crashed in Calabasas, California.

Bryant, who retired following the 2015-16

NBA season and scored 60 points against the Utah Jazz in his career finale, was 41 years old.

In honesty, I hated the Lakers when Bryant was playing. I grew up in Utah, and spent most of my formative sports years rooting for the hometown Jazz. I also root for the Portland Trail Blazers due to Damian Lillard's college career at Weber State University.

That didn't stop the news of Bryant's death from being a horrifying shock.

For one, I'm 41.

Bryant was born in Philadelphia on Aug. 23, 1978. I came along 90 days later in Richmond, Virginia.

Bryant graduated from Lower Merion High School in Ardmore, Pennsylvania in 1996, and — straight from high school — was the No. 13 pick in the 1996 NBA draft, before playing 20 years for the Lakers.

I graduated from high school in 1997 and worked part-time at Staples.

see **POST**, page B-2

SPORTS CALENDAR

TODAY

Wrestling—Peninsula at Shelton, 7 p.m., Se-
quim, North Mason at Bremerton, 5 p.m.

FRIDAY

Boys basketball—North Thurston at Shelton, 7
p.m., North Mason at Bremerton, 7 p.m., Tahol-
ah at Mary M. Knight, 5:30 p.m.
Girls basketball—Shelton at North Thurston, 7
p.m., Bremerton at North Mason, 7 p.m., Tahol-
ah at Mary M. Knight, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY

Boys basketball—Peninsula at Shelton, 1:30
p.m.
Girls basketball—Shelton at Peninsula, 1:30
p.m.
Boys swimming—Shelton at South Sound Con-
ference championships, Mount Tahoma High
School, Tacoma, 10 a.m.
Bowling—Shelton, North Mason at West Cen-
tral District 3 bowling championships, Paradise
Bowl, Tacoma, 9 a.m.

Girls wrestling—Shelton at Beserker tourna-
ment, Curtis High School, University Place, TBD

SUNDAY-MONDAY
No Events Scheduled

TUESDAY

Boys basketball—Capital at Shelton, 7 p.m.,
North Mason at Port Townsend, 7:30 p.m.
Girls basketball—Shelton at Capital, 7 p.m.,
Port Townsend at North Mason, 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Boys basketball—Mary M. Knight at North Riv-
er, 5:45 p.m.
Girls basketball—Mary M. Knight at North Riv-
er, 7 p.m.

■ *The sports calendar is compiled by Sports &
Outdoors Editor Justin Johnson. Times, dates
and locations are subject to change. To submit an
item for the calendar, please email information to
justin@masoncounty.com.*

Trainer: Job is to ‘protect and help the athletes stay safe’

continued from page B-1

Carlin said her degree required completing about 1,000 hours in a clinical setting to graduate. She spent the fall working for a high school in Arizona, but was drawn back to Washington by the opportunity Shelton presented.

“The primary reason was that it was an opportunity to start a program from scratch,” Carlin said. “Not a lot of people get to have the chance to make a program the way that they want right off the bat. I knew coming in that it wouldn’t be easy, but I knew it would be worth it in the end.”

On a typical basketball game day, Carlin said she gets to the gym at about 1 p.m. to set up. That includes getting athletes for other sports taped up and ready for practice before setting up for games. Shelton’s junior varsity and C team games begin at about 5 p.m. Varsity tips off at 7 p.m.

“The most challenging thing about being an athletic trainer in general is that it is a large amount of work for one single person and sometimes that can be overwhelming,” Carlin said. “It is always important to recognize when you are overwhelmed and ask for help when you need it. This community at Shelton High School is very willing to help, which makes it easier on me.”

“Working at a high school is challenging because the athletes are still kids and you need to be very aware of the fact they are still growing, which means when there is an injury or a problem you want to address it right away to ensure they are healed properly and it won’t become a problem later down the line.”

Carlin said that despite any challenges it offers, the job of being an athletic trainer is extremely rewarding.

“There is always something that makes you feel like your doing your job right every day,” Carlin said. “If I had to pinpoint one moment that is the most rewarding, it is when you have worked with someone through an injury and you see them go out on the court or field again for the first time back. Whether they come and say thank you or not it is rewarding to know the work you did has put them back in the game they love.”

Leopold said that many schools in



Shelton High School athletic trainer Michelle Carlin, right, helps stabilize the ankle of Central Kitsap High School senior Elijah LaBow after an injury Monday night at the Mini-Dome in Shelton. Journal photo by Justin Johnson

Washington contract companies for a trainer, but that the school wanted someone on staff.

“Some have a half-time trainer, but in a district our size and the number of sports we have, it is a big responsibility,” Leopold said. “With the start of our Health Science Academy, Michelle will not only be our athletic trainer, but eventually teach a few athletic training classes for our students. Also, she will be able to provide CPR and First Aid certifications to our coaching staff.”

During an event, the trainer’s job is to analyze if an athlete is safe or in a life-or-death situation. Carlin recalled an injury on her third day as a trainer at her previous school where a football player suffered multiple leg fractures during a scrimmage. She quickly re-

alized the severity of the injury and called 911 and the players’ parents.

“We analyze the severity of the injury, prioritize injuries if they have multiple, and make a judgment call as to whether we need to activate emergency services,” Carlin said. “Every injury is always a variation of those steps.”

Though Carlin has only been in Shelton for a few months, she feels the athletes and community have been appreciative of her hard work, and are willing to help with set up or take down.

Leopold said that Shelton has used trainers in the past, but not one who was certified.

“By having her on campus, she can clear athletes for concussions and other injuries,” Leopold said. “This

helps so families do not have to go to a doctor and spend money, miss school for an appointment, and be able to get back playing.”

Carlin said it’s incredibly important for schools to have a full-time athletic trainer because it protects the students.

“An athletic trainer’s job is honestly only to protect and help the athletes stay safe and be the best they can be on the court,” Carlin said. “It is important to coaches that there is an athletic trainer because it can help their athletes return to the game faster and at a better place physically and even mentally than if they were just to go to the doctor. For the athletes they know someone is there and looking out for their health at all times, which even makes them feel safer.”

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SPORTS



North Mason High School senior drum leader Emily Gau plays the trumpet during the Bulldog Marching Band's performance during halftime of a football game Nov. 1 at Phil Pugh Stadium in Belfair. *Journal photo by Justin Johnson*

PHOENIX RISING

Senior drum major Emily Gau leads North Mason High School's marching band

By **Justin Johnson**
justin@masoncounty.com

It is perhaps fitting that the North Mason High School marching band chose to perform "Phoenix Rising" for Emily Gau's senior year.

A fiery spin on Igor Stravinsky's "Firebird" suite, the performance

features four movements — prologue, flight, endings and rebirth.

"'Phoenix Rising' was the perfect way to end my high school marching career," said the 17-year-old Gau, a drum major for the Bulldog marching band the past two years. "It was expressive. Each part told an intense part of the story of a phoenix's life — birth, life, death and rebirth,

just like the many phases of my life so far and to come."

As one of two drum majors, Gau conducts the first two movements of the performance from the rostrum, giving way to Austin Williams during the third movement as she takes to the soloist stage to perform a haunting melody on the trumpet signifying endings.

"My favorite part of the performance, as drum major, is getting to be such a strong positive female role model to so many young people," Gau said. "I love to prove to

them that anything is possible, and a positive attitude leads to positive results."

The Bulldog Marching Band performed its final scheduled competition of the year Nov. 9 in Auburn during their city's Veterans Day parade and marching band competition.

The event is one of the largest parades in Washington, with more than 30 other high school bands competing.

"Washington doesn't have a

see **BAND**, page B-3

FAR POST

Creating a racket about the district bracket

In the interest of being fair, I should point out that I'm still a relative newcomer to Washington and the way things are done around here.

I get that no one really likes it when the new guy comes in saying that you're doing it wrong and things should be changed.

That being said, I was left scratching my head during the recent 2A West Central District 3 volleyball tournament.

That tournament, which included 12 teams from the Olympic League and the South Puget Sound League, was played Nov. 7 and Nov. 9 at North Mason High School in



By **JUSTIN JOHNSON**

Belfair and Franklin Pierce High School in Tacoma. The top six finishers advance to the 2A state tournament.

Seems pretty fair, right?

Here's why I disagree.

The structure of the bracket placed North Kitsap High School and North Mason High School, the Olympic League's No. 1 and No. 2 seeds, on the same side. That meant that on Nov. 9, the Vikings and Bulldogs had to play each other in the semifinals of the consolation bracket, with the winner going to state and the loser going home for the year.

I think that was a pretty unfair pairing in a very, very off-balanced bracket. The top two seeds from the same league should never be paired on the same side of a bracket.

The WCD3 tournament was seeded from 1-12, with the Vikings at No. 2 and the Bulldogs at No. 6. By strictly numbers, the teams were where they should have been. My question is, how do you fairly determine the seeds?

North Mason played one non-league match. How is that enough to determine where they sit in some

see **FAR POST**, page B-4

SPORTS CALENDAR

TODAY
Bowling—Shelton at Timberline, Aztec Lanes, Olympia, 3 p.m., North Mason at Sequim, Laurel Lanes, Port Angeles, 3 p.m.

FRIDAY
No Events Scheduled

SATURDAY
No Events Scheduled

SUNDAY
No Events Scheduled

MONDAY
No Events Scheduled

TUESDAY
Bowling—Shelton vs. North Thurston, Westside Lanes, Olympia, 3 p.m.

WEDNESDAY
No Events Scheduled

■ The sports calendar is compiled by Sports & Outdoors Editor Justin Johnson. Times, dates and locations are subject to change. To submit an item for the calendar, please email information to justin@masoncounty.com.

Band: 'Cried while playing my solo ... my last show ever'

continued from page B-1

with the high school being only an eighth-grader."

This year's "Phoenix Rising" performance features 50 students from the school's band and choir classes.

North Mason's band program has made many strides forward in the eight years since Drewry arrived as the school's band and choir director.

"When my wife, Melissa, and I arrived here eight years ago, we worked to change the climate and culture of the band program to something they would be proud to be a part of," Drewry said. "We worked to make this a team that works hard. We worked to make it a family for those who didn't have a family, and we wanted to remove the stigma of 'It's just Belfair.'"

Drewry talked about the band program being a family, a place the kids could come with their problems.

"This isn't a band, it's a band family," Drewry said. "My wife and I have been in this together from the beginning and we show that to our students. With her teamwork, we've pushed the envelope of what is possible in Mason County."

Drewry said his wife helps to bring flare to the musicians and much of the color to the Bulldogs' shows.

"Each year, Melissa adds something to our program that each kid can take away as a small piece of the intangible musical production," Drewry said. "Last year, she made over 60 gem-encrusted skulls that the students wore on their shakos (hats). Each one unique and handcrafted.

"This year, she made 70 handcrafted phoenix feathers that the students wore for every show. The gem-encrusted feathers all represented how there is a small piece of the phoenix within all of us; however without them all, the bird could not take flight. That has always been our approach to the success of the group."

The foundation for the program's continued success under Drewry began during his first year.

"When we didn't have a field to use for practice, we used parking lots," Drewry said. "When we didn't have enough of the same uniforms, we used a band T-shirt and blue jeans so they all looked the same. And from those small successes, we moved forward."

Drewry recalls a moment at the end



North Mason High School color guard member Abbi Dee raises a pair of fiery wings during the rebirth portion of the Bulldog Marching Band's performance of "Phoenix Rising" on Nov. 1 at Phil Pugh Stadium in Belfair. *Journal photo by Justin Johnson*

of the football season during his first year when the band huddled together and he told them, "thank you all for your hard work and determination. Today's success is tomorrow's standard."

That final phrase, Drewry said, became the program's mantra during his tenure; so much so that he had those words tattooed on his right forearm.

"I put it there so every time I pick up my baton to conduct, I'm reminded what we've done and what we're going to do," Drewry said. "Those words keep me moving forward each and every day."

For Gau, the Veterans Day performances were an emotional time knowing that it was her final year and her final marching band performance.

"When I'm soloing, the technical stuff I think about is intonation, posture, tone, and volume," Gau said. "But the emotional side is knowing that this is my last year ever, and trying to make every solo my best like it's my last one. I cried while playing my solo at Auburn — my last show ever."

After her high school graduation, Gau hopes to join the Seattle Cascades

Drum Corps for its 2020 season, and eventually hopes to audition for cruise ship bands and the opportunity to travel the world.

"Not only have I grown as a musician, but monumentally as a person," Gau said. "My confidence has soared, and my ability to lead has improved like crazy. Over these last four years, I have discovered my passion. And believe it or not, it's not music. My passion is helping people."

"I discovered that through climbing the ranks in band leadership and having so many people look up to me. I found out, that while I really like music, what I love most is having the ability to help others. The most important thing that marching band has taught me is how to be mindful. You never know what is going on in someone else's life, and you can be the deciding factor in whether they have a good day or a bad day just from being kind from the start."

Gau is a Running Start student at Olympic College in Bremerton. She also works a part-time job, in addition to being a leader in what Drewry calls

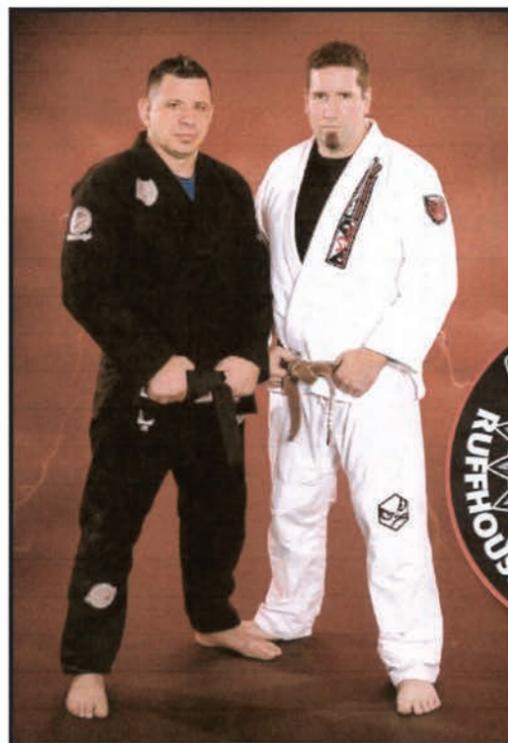
"one of the most competitive groups I have had at NMHS."

Gau was diagnosed with a double ear infection the day before a performance last year at Washington State University in Pullman, and her family drove her to the performance so she could lead the band.

"(Emily) has been a section leader for the trumpets, and a lead trumpet player in my jazz band the last few years," Drewry said. "She is one of those students who wants the best for herself and others around, and will do what it takes to make it happen."

As for the end of his eighth season directing the Bulldog marching band, Drewry felt this year's group was a true phoenix story after the graduation of many of the previous year's seniors.

"(This year) I truly enjoyed the feeling of watching the 'light bulbs' come on when students figured out their small victories," Drewry said. "Learning a new line of music, or marching in step for the first time. Small things like that made the big picture come together."



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SPORTS



Sam Smith, head golf professional at Alderbrook Golf & Yacht Club, hits a drive at the No. 1 tee June 28 in Union. *Journal photo by Justin Johnson*

Teaching *on the* Greens

Sharing golf skills a calling for Alderbrook golf professional

By Justin Johnson
justin@masoncounty.com

Though he grew up playing sports, golf didn't find its way into Sam Smith's life until his freshman year of college. It didn't take him long to find his calling, first as a student and then as a teacher and mentor of one of the world's most popular sports. A graduate of Eastern Washington University in Cheney, the 39-year-old Smith became the PGA Golf Professional at Alderbrook Golf & Yacht Club in 2017. "I knew the previous Head Professional, Justin Gravatt, and he raved about the membership and the quality of life here at Alderbrook," Smith said. "I have to say that it has lived up to and exceeded my expectations. "July 17 will be my two-year mark here at Alderbrook, and it's been a fantastic fit for me. The community is full of great people who have embraced me and made me feel like part of the family. In my profession, it is very important to have a connection with the membership you serve, and I definitely found a place I want to be

for a long time." During his college days in Cheney, Smith worked in the golf industry, including on a turf crew, at a virtual golf facility, an indoor driving range and caddying at the Couer d'Alene Resort. After graduating from EWU, Smith moved to Western Washington and began to look for work. "I had thought about giving a career in golf a try, but I didn't really know anyone on this side of the state," Smith said. "Kevin Myers, the head professional at the Golf Club at Hawks Prairie, gave me my first professional job in 2003." In 2010, Smith moved on to Indian Summer Golf and County Club in Olympia, where he worked for seven years before accepting the position at Alderbrook. "Alderbrook provides the best of both a private club and a public course," Smith said. "It is busy, and yet I get to form relationships with members of the community." As a teacher, Smith says he loves sharing the game with people and watching it enrich their lives. "Whether it's teaching someone who hasn't played the game, or helping someone who is an avid golfer but is struggling with a part of their game, it is rewarding to help them," Smith said.

see *PRO*, page B-5

THE FAR POST

USWNT is the pride of America

Sunday morning, half a world away, the United States Women's National Team won the FIFA World Cup, defeating The Netherlands, 2-0.

It was the culmination of a four-year process that began after the United States won the 2015 edition of the tournament.

Watching the U.S. players and technical staff receive their medals, and then lift the World Cup trophy in a shower of confetti filled me with pride.



By JUSTIN JOHNSON

This team full of intelligent, articulate women from all walks of life came together, worked together and won together, delivering the goods on the biggest stage their sport offers.

They did so despite being paid a fraction of what their male counterparts get.

They did so despite weathering criticism of their 13-0 win over Thailand in their first group stage match.

They did so despite the narcissist Tweeter-in-Chief injecting himself and his rabid fanbase into a chaotic and boorish exchange with Megan Rapinoe — one of the team's emotional core players.

They did so despite controversies around the Video Assistant Referee system that became all too visible instead of remaining a backstop against the most egregious errors.

They did so despite a ridiculous controversy after forward Alex Morgan celebrated a goal against England by pretending to take a sip of tea.

The American women winning the World Cup wasn't David downing Goliath.

The United States entered as the defending World Cup champion, having defeated Japan 5-2 in the 2015 final in Vancouver, B.C., and were the co-favorites — along with the host French — to win this edition of the quadrennial tournament.

The team did, however, showcase its stubborn American side as it brushed off controversy and chaos with both poise and pride — keeping its singular focus on winning the tournament.

"I feel that there is some sort of double standard for females in sports to feel like we, you know, have to be humble in our successes and have to celebrate but not too much and have to do something, but it always has to be in a limited fashion," Morgan told the media after the tea-sipping controversy. "You see men celebrating all around the world in big tournaments, grabbing their sacks or whatever it is and when I look at sipping a cup of tea, I'm a little taken aback and kind of ... You have to laugh about it, to see all the criticism."

Morgan publicly shrugged off the criticism over her celebration of a goal that ultimately punched the United States' ticket to the final.

Rapinoe, an out-and-proud lesbian who is dating Seattle Storm point guard Sue

see *FAR POST*, page B-4

Pro: Smith ‘enjoys being a mentor and teacher of game’

continued from page B-1

“I enjoy being a mentor and teacher of the game. A recent lesson I gave sums up why I love teaching.

“An older gentleman scheduled a lesson with me because he wanted to take up the game, but was becoming increasingly frustrated by his inability to hit a golf shot with any consistency. After our lesson, he was able to consistently put the ball up into the air and he had an understanding of what we did to accomplish the improvement. Seeing the joy on his face reminded me of why this is my calling.”

An 18-hole round at Alderbrook can range from 4,548 to 6,305 yards depending on which set of tees used, and the course is consistently ranked as one of the top 25 in the Northwest for playability and scenery.

Smith loves the challenge Alderbrook poses, especially that of the course’s well-known 8th hole, a double-dogleg par-5 that traverses a canyon of evergreen pine trees.

“Alderbrook is a unique challenge. It isn’t overly long, but it will test every aspect of your game,” Smith said. “The front nine is a challenge off of the tee and of course, is home to our 8th hole, a double-dogleg par-5 that will most likely be one of the most memorable holes for our guests.

“There are a lot of great golf holes out here, but our 18th hole is one of the best around. It is a beautiful, and reachable, par-5. The tee shot is down hill and long hitters can put themselves into great position with a solid shot. If you’re going for the green, you’ll contend with two ponds to the left of the green, bunkers to the right and a green that slopes away from you. If that’s not enough, it also has the Olympic Mountains framing the backdrop with a peek of the canal below.”

While Alderbrook is open year-



The No. 8 fairway at Alderbrook Golf & Yacht Club in Union is one of the most challenging holes in the state. Smith says the hole “will most likely be one of the most memorable holes for our guests.” *Journal file photo by Justin Johnson*

round, last winter’s historical snowstorm gave the grounds crew a lot of extra work.

“Our course is in the best shape I’ve ever seen it,” Smith said. “Chad Johnson, our superintendent, and his crew have done an amazing job this spring to prepare the course for this summer.”

Smith feels the future of Alderbrook, and golf in general, is looking great.

“Golf went through a time in the early 2000s when more people were

being drawn to the game than ever before,” Smith said. “Courses almost couldn’t keep up. Then, more courses were built and eventually it was the opposite, with many courses doing poorly financially.

“In recent years, we’ve seen an uptick in golf rounds and revenues are increasing again. My hope is to be the head professional at Alderbrook for a long, long time and help grow the game in Mason County.”

Smith and his assistant golf professionals taught new golfer orientation

classes during the spring and early summer, and have plans for junior camps in the coming weeks on July 30-31 and August 19-20 to present golf to the next generation of golfers.

“I’ve been very active all my life in sports and enjoy both competition and recreational golf,” Smith said. “Being a bit competitive, golf gives me an avenue to continue doing that for years to come. It is an activity that I enjoy doing with my kids, and something that we can share for the rest of our lives.”

Far Post: American players pushed aside distractions

continued from page B-1

Bird, equally brushed aside President Donald Trump’s tweet storm to score both goals in the Americans’ 2-1 win over France. Rapinoe went on to win the tournament’s Golden Ball Award — given to the tournament’s Most Outstanding Player — and the Golden Boot Award, given to the player who scores the most goals.

I gained an enormous amount of respect and admiration for Rapinoe during the last few weeks as she, an athlete at the peak of her game, used her platform to demand equal pay for women’s

players and an increased investment in women’s soccer around the globe.

“We are such a proud and strong and defiant group of women. We’ve done exactly what we’ve set out to do, what we wanted to do,” Rapinoe told the media after the tournament. “Getting to play at the highest level at the World Cup is ridiculous, but to be able to couple that with everything off the field, and to back up all of those words with performances and back up those performances with words, it’s just incredible. I feel like this team is in the midst of changing the world around us, as we live. It’s an incredible feeling.”

Rapinoe makes me proud to be an American and I’m thrilled to have her, and people like those on the USWNT represent me on the world stage.

Before a final walk around confetti-strewn Stade de Lyon, in a celebratory jersey with a freshly-earned fourth gold star on the front, Rapinoe said, “I don’t think we have anything more to say.”

And that’s the tea.

■ *Justin Johnson is the sports reporter for the Shelton-Mason County Journal. He can be reached by email at justin@masoncounty.com*

SPORTS BRIEFS

Measures to keep shellfishing healthy, fun

Washington State Department of Health officials are reminding recreational shellfish harvesters to take extra precautions to prevent illness from shellfish.

Follow the Three Cs — check, chill and cook.

■ **Check:** the DOH Shellfish Safety Map on the day you’re headed to the beach to ensure areas are open and approved. Shellfish should be harvested

as the tide goes out. If the temperature is high, pass them by.

■ **Chill:** Bring a cooler with ice with you. Oysters should be put on ice or refrigerated as soon as possible after being collected.

■ **Cook:** at 145° for 15 seconds to destroy Vibrio bacteria. Wash hands frequently and do not return cooked shellfish to the plate where raw shellfish was prepared.

Each year, DOH receives reports of vibriosis illnesses from people who ate raw or undercooked oysters they collected themselves. Found naturally in the environment, Vibrio parahaemolyticus bacteria grows quickly in

warm temperatures.

Vibriosis symptoms include diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, headache, fever and chills. The illness is usually mild or moderate and runs its course in two to three days.

State parks commission meets in Bremerton

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission holds its next regular meeting at 9 a.m. July 18 at Kitsap Conference

Center, 100 Washington Ave., in Bremerton.

Regular commission meetings are held six times a year in pre-determined locations throughout the state. Time for public comment is provided at all regular meetings.

Kesterson named to WIAA post

The Washington Interscholastic Activities Association hired Justin Kesterson as its newest assistant director, the association announced

recently.

Kesterson joins the staff from Tyee High School, where he has served as the athletic Director since 2016 and was named the 2018-19 2A South Puget Sound League Athletic Director of the Year. In this position, as well as in his previous stint as the Athletics Events Manager at Highline Public Schools, Kesterson gained familiarity with WIAA rules.

“Justin brings a very diverse and innovative background to our team and he will be a great asset for member schools and administrators,” incoming WIAA Executive Director Mick Hoffman said in a news release.