



NORTH KITSAP HERALD



INSIDE
20 years of
crepes in
Kingston

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As COVID eases, NKSD hopes students return

BY NANCY TREDER
North Kitsap Herald

Enrollment numbers are hard to predict, especially since COVID-19.

The North Kitsap School District saw a huge loss of kindergarten students this year.

Superintendent Laurynn Evans blames the lack of vaccines for children age 5 and younger.

She said the district needs to closely follow kindergarten enrollment and be ready for their return in September.

Another thing that will affect school enrollment is housing projects.

School board director Rick Eckert said that new

housing projects and apartment complexes will bring more students to town, but the projects have not broken ground yet so the impact may not be felt for a while.

"I typically don't try to guess that too much. I leave that to the demographers," said Jason Rhoads, executive director of Finance. He is keeping an eye on the analytics from a housing study done last year that attempts to forecast the number of students who will come into the district.

Rhoads said he looks at the trends grade-by-grade and identified a big drop in 11th grade when students begin the Running Start college program. "Next year, I will update with full analytics, again, to see how the housing trends are

going," he said.

"It's a big puzzle we continue to solve all the way up to the first week of school," Evans said. "Enrollment forecasting is an inexact science at best, and what we try really hard to do is use the data that we have in front of us and make a wise projection."

The district will adopt the new budget process at the end of August to be as accurate as possible. State funding for schools is tied to enrollment.

COVID numbers

COVID-19 continues to impact a significant number of bus drivers leading to route cancellations for Kingston Middle School,

Kingston High School and Wolfle Elementary.

Evans said the transportation challenges will be in effect through Feb. 4.

But she has been seeing an optimistic trend.

"We have not had to close a school once." The district continues to do "the substitute shuffle" with teachers on special assignment who have been pitching in to cover staff shortages and to keep schools open, she said.

Finance award

It was announced that Rhoads has achieved the Certified Finance Operations Certified Administrator of School Finance

and Operations.

Evans said: "He is probably one of the most tireless workers on our team. I couldn't do this job if he wasn't here. He does the numbers, and I do the words."

The SFO certification demonstrates a commitment to high standards and ethical practice in school business management. Brianne King, executive director of the Washington Association of School Business Professionals, said the SFO certification is very distinguished with only nine statewide.

Rhoads has been working for the district since 2017.

The next school board meeting is Feb. 10 at 5 p.m. and will be accessible by Zoom.

NK's La Tour sets sight on 2nd state title

BY TYLER SHUEY
North Kitsap Herald

Jonas La Tour was on the North Kitsap High School basketball team that won the 2A state title in 2020.

The standout senior guard won't be able to get a three-peat because there weren't any state playoffs when basketball finally took place last spring due to COVID-19 restrictions.

So, he'll have to settle for two. At least that's the goal. The Vikings are one of the top-ranked 2A teams in Washington.

"That's been the goal since the first practice," he said. "We all got it on our minds. I look at my ring every day. I look at that gold ball every day, and I look at our state championship banner every day. We got to manifest that until it's real. It's going to take everything we've got. There's no other way we can go out."

The Vikings lead the Olympic League with a record of 9-0 and an overall record of 14-2 as of press time. The two losses are against larger schools and by a total of three points.

La Tour is a big reason for their success. The 6-foot-5, 200-pound guard will be playing for Seattle-Pacific University next year after receiving athletic and academic scholarships.

He's a machine on offense. He recently broke the school record for points in a game with 57 against rival Bainbridge. In that game, La Tour went 23 of 27 from the floor, including

7 of 10 from beyond the arc. He also chipped in four free throws.

La Tour mentioned they also easily beat Sehome - ranked No. 6 in state at the time - the day before 81-54.

"It was probably our best game of the season," he recalled. "I was actually a little tired because that was a big physical team. Then we had Bainbridge, a good league opponent, the next night. I was going in locked in like any other game. My teammates just found me every time. I wasn't calling for it extra or anything."

La Tour had already scored 36 points by halftime, and he said Coach Scott Orness wrote the school record of 50 points on the whiteboard and told the team, "We're going to get him that record."

"It was a great feeling, a great opportunity, and I'm glad I got it done," he said. "I couldn't have done it without everyone else."

Finding a passion

La Tour was born in Madison, WI, where he lived a few years before moving to Southern California. His father got a job in North Kitsap, which led his family to move to Poulsbo, where they have been since 2009.

His love for basketball coincided with his move to Poulsbo as his dad coached his recreation league team starting in second grade. He said they were able to keep the same team through fifth grade. In sixth grade, La Tour began to have a passion for



At left: Jonas La Tour has been a deadly shooter from the outside during his NK career. At right: What makes La Tour so efficient on offense is he can score inside, too.



FILE PHOTOS

the game and started playing select ball with Bainbridge Roots for one season. Then he transitioned to Drive Basketball, the North Kitsap AAU program, which he now helps coach. Most recently, La Tour spent last summer playing with Seattle Rotary, where he got the chance to play around the U.S. and get some widespread exposure. "It was a great experience,"

he said. "I had to play in front of a lot of big schools, played with a lot of great people and made a lot of good connections for the future."

His improvement

Looking back at his freshman year, La Tour said he has improved "tremendously," trying to find new skills to focus on each

season. "All the puzzle pieces just fell together year by year," he said.

La Tour describes himself as a "high-motor" guard who gives 100% in all aspects of the game. Perhaps most known for his consistent shooting stroke, La Tour mentioned he and teammate Johnny Olmsted, who will be playing at the University of Dallas next year, put

up countless numbers of shots together on the team's shooting machine. He said the last time they both used it, they made a combined 792 three-pointers out of 1,000 attempts.

La Tour is also a bit of a high-flyer as he's thrown down numerous dunks throughout high school.

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No bail; Poulsbo man has vehicular homicide conviction

STAFF REPORT

Patrick Van Knotts of Poulsbo has been charged with vehicular assault in Kitsap County Superior Court.

He is being held without bail due to a previous vehicular homicide conviction. That case involved speeding, but this more-recent case alleges substance abuse. If convicted the maximum penalty is 10 years in prison and/or a \$20,000 fine.

Probable cause papers show Knotts was driving southbound in a minivan on Highway 305 at Morgan Road on Bainbridge Island around 12:13 a.m. Jan. 30.

He reportedly struck a vehicle in front of him driven by Suzanne Brassel, which pushed her vehicle into oncoming traffic. Brassel's vehicle was then struck head-on. She had to be extracted by the fire department using a hydraulic prying tool. She

was airlifted to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle with serious injuries, police reports say.

Police say there were no skid marks on the highway; they believe Knotts did not brake prior to the collision.

Witnesses say Knotts was seen throwing items over a guardrail down an embankment. Knotts denied throwing items off the road, but officers allegedly found aluminum foil, a spoon and soldering iron, all with brown residue on them, consistent with heroin or fentanyl tablets, a police report says.

Knotts denied any drug or alcohol use, but officers said his eyes were constricted, and he reportedly admitted to previous opioide use.

After obtaining a warrant, Knotts had to give a blood sample at the Bainbridge Island Police Department.

Officers also reportedly found a gun in the car, although Knotts said

it's his girlfriend's. Police also arrested him on suspicion of DUI and driving with a suspended license, but he wasn't charged with those crimes.

Previous case

In March of 2017, Knotts was convicted to up to 15 months in prison after pleading guilty to killing coworker Christopher Tevault, 28, in November of 2015.

Knotts served his sentence at the Washington Corrections Center in Shelton. Prosecutors say Knotts was driving twice the speed limit when his car crashed into a Waste Management garbage truck on NE Sawdust Hill Road.

Public defender Curt W. Schulz said of Knotts' plea change: "He admitted he could have been driving better and took responsibility."

Deputy Prosecuting Attorney John

C. Purves said at the time 15 months was the standard sentencing range.

The collision was captured on video by a camera installed in the Waste Management truck, probable cause papers say. The garbage truck driver, and another coworker of Knotts who was following in another vehicle, estimated Knotts' speed at 50 mph. The posted speed limit is 25 mph.

Prosecutors say Knotts was heading to the other coworker's house for lunch when the crash occurred.

Knotts was airlifted to Harborview for treatment of serious injuries.

The victim's father, John Tevault, wrote to the court: "I will never hear my son call me on the phone, will never feel his hug, or see him grow older. ... The number of family members and friends affected by this young man's actions are too numerous to count."

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La Tour

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He said he had about 10 his sophomore season, 25 his junior season and he's not sure how many this season. "I got some pretty decent dunks on my resume," he said, adding he likes practicing them, too.

As to why NK has become such a powerhouse, La Tour said their "mindset" is different from other local teams.

"Our program, in all honesty, is kind of run like a college program," he said. "All of us are so invested, we're so passionate. We're all in. We do everything that we need to in order to win, whether it be scouting, practices dedicated to running other teams' plays. Now it's just accustomed to me, I've been doing it for four years. I don't know any other way. It's a great lead-in to college."

Much of the program's recent success coincided with the arrival of Scott Orness, who previously coached at Bainbridge, including a run to the state title game in 2007, led by Gonzaga standout Steven Gray. Since coming to NK, the Vikings have qualified for state in all five years.

"He's meant so much to the program," La Tour said. "He's the reason, honestly, why we win games. You just got to trust everything he says. He knows what he's doing. Freshman and sophomore year I wasn't the best practice player, and coach got on me a lot for not knowing plays, which he should. I'm very glad he did. He's meant a lot in my personal development. It's a marvel to watch him coach and a joy to play for him."

He feels similarly about his teammates, on and off the court. "We are as tight as it can get," he said. "We all went to the same three elementary schools other than a couple transfers. We're all...brothers for life."

Injury

Everything was going along smoothly for La Tour until he suffered a back injury last high school season.

"It was pretty bad," he said, adding it got worse while playing in Georgia last summer with his select team to the point that he couldn't really walk. After flying home for an MRI, the doctor told him he had a wedged vertebrae fracture, which he is still dealing with.

"It's not hindering me. It's just kind of nagging on," he said. "That is still what's causing me pain. I do what I can - a lot of stretching, did physical therapy for a few months. After the season, I really just got to get it close to 100 percent as I can before I head off to college."

"It was a real bummer because my injury was a real prohibitor in getting some offers," La Tour continued. "But I'm extremely blessed and happy where I'm at, and I'm ready to bring 110 percent to the Seattle-Pacific team."

Future plans

When not playing ball, La Tour said he's pretty simple and down to earth. He spends much of his time at home watching film and highlights of past and present NBA players. Some of his favorites include Ja Morant, Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson, Devin Booker, Kobe Bryant and Dennis Rodman.

As for his future, he has his sights set on playing pro ball somewhere. At SPU, La Tour said he's going to major in communications with a minor in fashion merchandising, adding he might consider a marketing job down the road.

"Going pro is my A plan right now," he said. "That's what I need to make happen for myself. Until that happens, there's not going to be a whole lot of rest going on."



PHOTOS BY NANCY TREDER/BAINBRIDGE ISLAND REVIEW

Kingston's Jace Brady beat Tyler Dodge of BHS.

Kingston falls to Bainbridge

STAFF REPORT

Due to COVID-19 mainly, there have been few Olympic League wrestling matches this winter.

But Kingston was able to match up at Bainbridge last Wednesday night.

The Spartans got by Bucs 30-10.

At 138 pounds, Jace Brady of Kingston beat freshman Tyler Dodge in one of only two matches that lasted all three rounds 10-0, with two take-downs and two near-falls.

Against Kingston, freshman Jameson Cain of Bainbridge won by forfeit at 106 pounds.

In an exhibition match at 126 pounds, Spartan Alex Morrison pinned Kiele Duncan in 1 minute, 52 seconds.

At 132 pounds, senior Harrison Cate of Bainbridge pinned Daeven Swan in 38 seconds.

In a girls match, Aubrie Auckland of Bainbridge pinned Christa Sinol at 145 pounds in 2:26.

At 152 pounds, junior Quentin Ikuse pinned Kingston's Joseph Jafte in 47 seconds.

Liam Nickerson of Kingston at 160 pounds lost by pin to Spartan freshman Garrett Goade.

At 195, freshman Michael Norte and Jackson Blammrier went into the third round when Norte won by pin in 4:36.

BHS junior Wyatt Goade won by forfeit at 220 pounds.



Spartan Quentin Ikuse pinned Kingston's Joseph Jafte in 1:47.



Kiele Duncan of Kingston pinned by Alex Morrison in 1:52.

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