

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

TOFINO-UCLUELET

Westerly News

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BATTER UP

West Coast youth baseball season rounds into form

13

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SPORTS

B-Ball tourney excites

Hitaçu Hoops Championships fill West Coast with electric energy

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Excitement bounced across the West Coast over the weekend as the Hitaçu Hoops Championships had the basketball community and its fans buzzing.

“The support has been unreal. It’s really cool to see everybody come together, especially after COVID-19. It feels uplifting,” Hitacu resident and event volunteer Savannah Rose told the Westerly News. “It’s been a while since we’ve had something like this happen in Ucluelet and Yuulu?ii?ath territory, so it’s brought a lot of excitement to the community and it really woke everybody up.”

The action was split into four divisions with the Under-17, Adult, Under-13 and Women’s teams filling both Hitaçu’s Cixwatin Centre and Ucluelet Secondary School’s gym.

The women’s division was dominated by Ahousaht’s Maaqtusiis squad and phenom Kanani Coon, 17, who cleaned up the division’s personal awards winning Most Valuable Player, Best Offensive Player and Best Defensive Player.

Continued on Page 3



BOX PARADE: ‘Butchart Gardens Jerry’ joined Sam Villeneuve, Kendra Dawn and Lee Fraser to bask in the stoke of the 18th annual Tofino Box Parade on Friday. See more photos on Page 7 and watch a live video of the event on our Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/WesterlyNews. (Andrew Bailey photo)



UKEE MULLS RV PARKING

Town reconsiders strategy

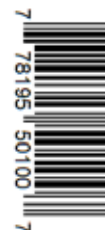
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TOFINO SEEKS NEW FIRE CHIEF

Brent Baker no longer with district

6




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FROM THE FRONT

Tourney connects communities

From Page 1

While presenting Coon with her awards, event MC Tyson Touchie congratulated her and told the cheering crowd that she is heading to the NCAA after being accepted to the University of California Santa Barbara's Division 1 basketball program.

"In Nuu-chah-nulth we say ʔisaak-camis, 'spreading respect.' When you watch her play, that's what I think of. She's really respectful and, in a basketball community like the West Coast, our fans are that way too. So that's something we want to encourage and we just want to let her know that the West Coast basketball community really supports her and we wish her the best of luck," Touchie said.

Coon, who attends high school in the Okanagan and was recently named Kelowna's Female Athlete of the Year, told the Westerly News she was thrilled to visit the West Coast and experience the event.

"It was really fun. The last time I've seen this many Nations together was JAN (Junior All-Native Tournament) and I feel like it's always such a good experience to see all your people come together and support each other no matter what," she said. "I was excited to come here. It's a beautiful place and I love the people."

She added that the tournament's organizers "did amazing" and that she was touched by Touchie's words.

"That was one of the nicest things anyone's ever done for me... It was just nice to see them bring the people together and say those nice words," she said.

She added she's excited to be heading to the NCAA.

"It's definitely one of the best things that's ever happened to me for sure," she said, adding she is grateful for the support she's received throughout her young basketball career.

"My parents are my biggest supporters, they always have been. I feel like friends aren't talked about enough and I have a couple close friends who definitely mean the world to me and obviously the organizers of these events are the reason that we're able to come here and play."

The Men's division was eight teams deep and Tofino's team, the Tofino Wednesdays, made it all the way to the finals, but lost out to the Nanaimo Misfits.

Tofino player Bobby Lax told the Westerly the event was amazingly well-organized.

"We're just so grateful to the community of Hitaçu and the Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ people for hosting us and getting us all together," he said, noting the number of divisions and teams required "so much work" in-



John Platenius of the Tofino Wednesdays looks for a scoring opportunity against the Nanaimo Misfits during the Hitaçu Hoops Championships' Men's final on Sunday night. (Andrew Bailey photo)

"The intensity was really crazy."

– Brooklyn Doiron

volving a colossal amount of details and volunteer hours.

"They really opened it up so that anyone who wanted to come play could and to get the basketball community out here. They made it possible for us all to get engaged... Just 'hats off' to them and a huge thank you for the work that went in."

The U-17 crown went to The Port Alberni Armada, despite them being the only team in their division without a coach.

"We all play on the school team together, but we didn't find a coach so we just came down by ourselves," explained team-member Brooklyn Doiron, 17, after a thrilling finals win. "It was a great tournament. It was organized really well."

He added the finals was intense with his squad coming from behind in dramatic fashion to defeat Quuʔušinmit 83-80.

"It was a great game. The intensity was really crazy. We all played good and came out with a W," he said. "Our first three games were nothing like this intensity, so this was our first game like that, but we adjusted well and it worked out."

Armada player Jaidin Knighton, 15, told the Westerly she loved playing in the Cixwatin Centre, especially in front of such a passionate crowd.

"It was crazy. It was wild and a great experience," she said. "When

the fans are going crazy it gets a little chaotic, but it was really nice. I like this."

Scott Cisaroski won the final's Player of the Game award and was named the division's Most Valuable Player, but told the Westerly the only trophy that mattered to him was the one his Armada won together.

"It feels great, but I'm not really worried about that. I just wanted to win the game," he said.

"Our shots weren't falling really in the first-half... We kept playing. We didn't get discouraged and we slowly came back in the fourth and they couldn't handle it anymore once our team got going."

He added he was grateful for the opportunity to travel to the West Coast and play against athletes his own age outside of school.

Quuʔušinmit had made it through to the U17 finals by besting Ahousaht's squad in a semi-final matchup.

Ahousaht's coach Bonita Frank told the Westerly she was happy with her team's performance and delighted to see such a well-run tournament on the West Coast.

"They played hard, with good heart and sportsmanship," she said. "It was awesome to bring our youth from Ahousaht, boys and girls. We pulled them out for a good weekend and a sport that they love and they enjoyed it... It was definitely organized well. Props to the hosts."

The tournament included a U-13 round-robin and Ucluelet Elementary School's assistant coach Dr. Ron Norman was stoked for the opportunity to get kids on the court together.

"We're very grateful to be able to have this tournament in Hitaçu and

appreciate it. It's been a great camaraderie with everybody and we just love being here," he said. "It's vital to have all these kids playing together, sharing the time and encouraging one another on the West Coast. It's great to have it."

In a statement emailed to the Westerly News, Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Manager of Communications and Public Relations Melissa Boucha said basketball has a long and respected history in Hitaçu and the community has a strong parental generation of basketball players ready to share their skills with local youth.

"There is a lot of talent amongst Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ. Since the setback of sport due to (COVID-19), there was a stall of athletic participation, weekly basketball drop ins have since returned and (Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government) provides programming for youth activities, especially coming into the spring/summer months. This allows the youth to learn team sport participation, nourish and encourage their skills, and incites health and wellness for everyone," she wrote.

She added she was shocked by the tournament's rapid interest with 22 teams signing up to compete.

"However, excitement prevailed to have so many teams come together, for the nation to share the community and gymnasium in an impactful way," she wrote. "Players in the Women's and Men's divisions have been playing Basketball together for many years, regardless of their current region, was overall a special reunion for many. Another encouraging factor for youth participation in team sport, building lifelong relationships."



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THURSDAY MAY 4, 2023

TIDE	Metres	Feet	
0:05	3.54	11.6	 13°/7° Cloudy
6:34	0.85	2.8	
12:55	3.21	10.54	
6:30	1.54	5.04	


FRIDAY MAY 5, 2023

TIDE	Metres	Feet	
0:35	3.65	11.99	 11°/7° Mostly Cloudy
7:10	0.65	2.14	
1:37	3.26	10.71	
7:04	1.62	5.32	

SATURDAY MAY 6, 2023

TIDE	Metres	Feet	
1:08	3.74	12.27	 11°/7° Showers
7:48	0.51	1.67	
2:20	3.28	10.75	
7:40	1.71	5.62	


SUNDAY MAY 7, 2023

TIDE	Metres	Feet	
1:43	3.78	12.4	 11°/6° Showers
8:29	0.44	1.43	
3:05	3.24	10.64	
8:19	1.81	5.93	


MONDAY MAY 8, 2023

TIDE	Metres	Feet	
2:21	3.77	12.36	 10°/6° Showers
9:13	0.44	1.43	
3:54	3.17	10.4	
9:02	1.9	6.24	

TUESDAY MAY 9, 2023

TIDE	Metres	Feet	
3:03	3.69	12.11	 11°/6° Showers
10:03	0.5	1.65	
4:48	3.09	10.13	
9:53	1.99	6.52	

WEDNESDAY MAY 10, 2023

TIDE	Metres	Feet	
3:52	3.55	11.66	 12°/7° Showers
10:59	0.62	2.03	
5:48	3.02	9.92	
10:58	2.05	6.72	

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