



Sitton's Sports Notes

CLUB TEAM TAKEOVER

A strange, unsettling phenomenon has infiltrated high school sports. Club teams have put high school teams in the backseat.

Athletes are spending more and more time away from their high school teams as individuals focus on their own development as opposed to team development. It is difficult for many to accept that this is what our society has come to.

Sports are no longer about representing the community and coming together as a high school. They are about individuals and, for the most part, their

efforts to earn a college scholarship. It's true that some athletes are involved in club sports to improve their game in preparation for the high school season. But, the overwhelming majority pay club coaches to showcase their talents in front of college coaches in order to secure that Division I athletic scholarship that so many little boys, girls, mommies and daddies have had their eyes on since little Johnny or little Jane learned to walk.

A few years ago, an incoming freshman blatantly told me that the high school soccer season doesn't matter.

I was also told that many soccer players are quitting high school soccer to focus on what really matters—club competition.

Does this seem as wrong to you as it does to me? However, I can't be hypocritical here because I, too, play on a club basketball team, but in no way does my club team take priority over my high school team. If any conflicts arise, my school team comes first. The whole point of playing club is to improve my skills so that I can help my team during the high school season.

Athletes who openly admit that their club teams

take precedence over their high school teams need a serious reality check. They need to sit down and readjust their priorities because the truth of the matter is, the chance that Johnny's ridiculously accurate fastball will earn him a free ride to college is about as narrow as his strike zone.

It also must be understood that club teams aren't evil. There are a lot of positives that come from playing on one, besides the obvious fact that they give you an opportunity to play in front of college coaches. Club teams offer athletes the opportunity to work with athletes from other schools, forming friendships and making games a bit more personal. It can also be helpful for athletes to

receive instruction from multiple sources, because everyone learns in different ways.

The pros and cons of playing with a club team must be weighed by each individual and each athlete's decision to play with one will be based on his or her own situation. I would never urge athletes not to play with a club team that they felt was a good fit, but I would ask them to set their priorities straight before committing to play for both teams. My experiences with club teams have been very positive, but I have also watched them destroy high school teams, in basketball as well as other sports. My advice: do whatever is best for you, personally, but do what is best for your high school team first.

Despite painful losses, football team clinches spot in playoffs

ETA SANTORO

With a 4-5 overall record and a 3-2 record in the Three Rivers League, the Lions football team remained optimistic as it finished its season in third place, thus moving forward in the State playoffs. The Lions proceeded to the second round of the playoffs after a win over Thurston 21-14.

During the season, the Lions suffered three heartbreaking losses against Canby, Grant and Lake Oswego each by one point and lost their running back Keaton Hedman, senior, for three games. According to Ron Chappell, head coach, these losses were difficult to overcome.

"Honestly, I thought we'd have a better record," Chappell said, referring to the team's 2-4 record in early October. "We played a tough schedule." Chappell was confident the team would make the playoffs, the main goal being to advance as far as possible.

According to Chappell, the Lions have a solid team, with strong offense and defense.

"Our quarterback Connor Kelley (senior) is having a great year," Chappell said. "We have two of our linemen, Kalan Hoedl (junior) and Eric Pitassi (senior), who are doing especially well."

"I try to give my best whenever I'm on the field. I do what I can," Pitassi said.

The team bounced back and beat Lakeridge 14-7 during an away game on Oct. 15. The teams were tied 7-7 in the second quarter, but the Lions broke the tie in the fourth quarter with a catch from Ben Trussell, junior, which set up a two-yard run by Hedman for a touchdown.

"We didn't execute as we should have in the beginning. We overcame their defense," Pitassi said.

A week after the game against the Pacers, the team

final game of the season on Oct. 29. The Lions won 21-7, rolling over Clackamas and securing their spot as third seed in the Three Rivers League. Late in the second

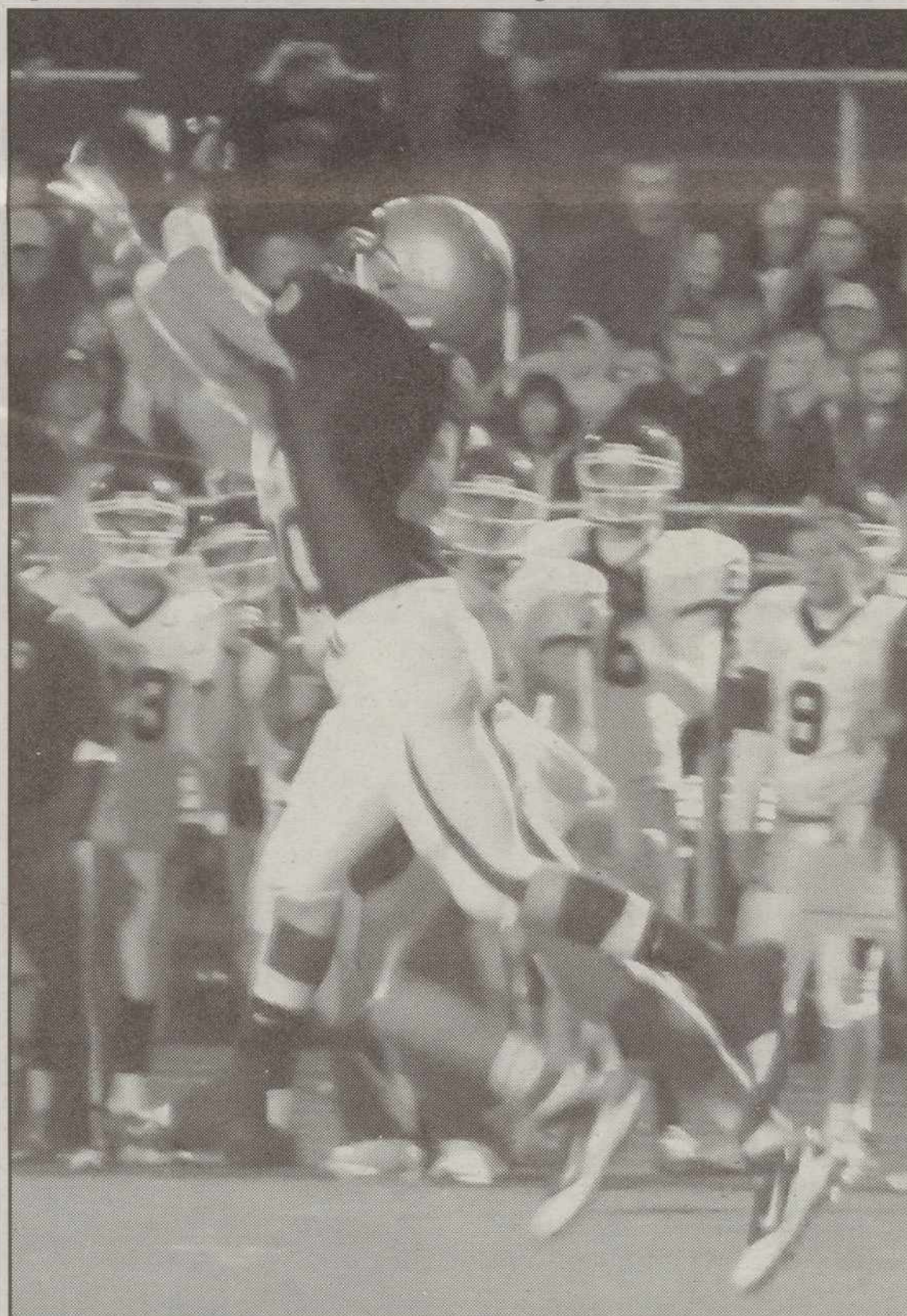


Photo by Alex Houston

Dean Clark, senior, leaps for a catch against Lake Oswego on Oct. 22. The Lions ended up falling to the Lakers in a heartbreaker, 6-7, but went on to capture third place in the Three Rivers League a week later.

took on the Lake Oswego Lakers at home, but had a painful loss of 6-7.

"It was a game we could've won. Our players outplayed Lake Oswego, but you have to give Lake Oswego credit. They're a very great team. It was a great high school football game," Chappell said.

The Lions hosted the Clackamas Cavaliers for

quarter, Kelley went out due to a knee injury. Elijah Eaton, junior, replaced Kelley and helped extend the Lions' lead.

The Lions will travel to Rosenberg on Nov. 19. Results were unavailable as of press time.

"We lost five games. But it's still recognized around the state that we're a good team," Chappell said.

Rainbows instill cloud of fear

Rainbows

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As Emily Axelrod, junior forward, put it, "It's not just a team, it's a family." This connection makes the play on the field spectacular. Nathan Crandall, junior defender, said the team has "touched him on many levels."

After a tough loss in the second game of the season against a Lake Oswego team that was very "friendly" with the referees, the team rebounded by reeling off eleven straight wins, including the four wins from the Willamette Cup.

"Straight as a Rainbow has given me purpose in my life. I now have something to live for," Dylan Musalo, junior defender, said.

The Rainbows are spearheaded by coaching extraordinaire James Gotchall, or as admirers call him, Jimbo. He is a legend on the co-ed circuit and his wisdom on and off the field sets the tone for 90 minutes of pure soccer beauty each and every game.

"Coach Jim has been an emotional leader from the start," Dawson said. "He has promoted teamwork, communication and friendship. He has taught us a lot."

As the season came to an end, fans and players were left with the magic of mesmerizing memories of the year that was coined "2010: The Year Straight as a Rainbow Ruled."

Miles King, junior fifth string goalie, shared one final thought about everyone touched by the team: "Love is supposed to start with bells ringing and go downhill from there. But

it was the opposite for me. There's an intense connection between us, and as we stayed together, the bells rang louder."

Lazercats struggle while hosting largest fan base

Lazercats

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"The world will know that free men stood against a tyrant, that few stood against many, and before this battle was over, even a god-king can bleed," Cathcart said.

The Lazercats are led by their coach Douglas Thompson, a wizard in the soccer world with an unbelievable amount of experience and immense talent. Much wisdom can be learned from the teachings of Coach Doug, including his signature quote "if you are having trouble passing, focus on your passing."

Today, the Lazercats have a cult following that is dedicated to cheering for and celebrating the success of the team.

"The Lazercats inspired me to find a cure for cancer and run a mile every morning," Madeleine Pellico, junior fan, said.

The support can be overwhelming at times, with so many of the fans giving it their all (including body paint) during the games.

"Lazercats taught me to do my best. I love them," Sophie Bangs, sophomore, said.

With two games left in the regular season, the Cats still have an opportunity to claw back and regain their pride.