

# The End of an Era

*Senior Clay Sullivan's amazing athletic career at VHS has come to an end*

By Scott Laird

If you've been watching Vernonia High School basketball during the last decade you may remember watching a young elementary aged redhead come out onto the court during halftime for the Pop Shot fundraiser to sink shot after shot and win bottles of soda pop as prizes. If you were like me, you might have said to yourself, "That kid's going to be really good one day!"

Well, that kid was named Clay Sullivan and he did turn out to be really good. In fact he turned out to be, not just one of Vernonia High School's best basketball players of all time, but a great track and field athlete as well, qualifying for the State Championship meet all four years.

On June 2, Sullivan graduated from VHS and ended an outstanding athletic career with multiple State Championships and a host of other awards and accolades.

Sullivan was a key member of a very talented 2016 State Championship Logger basketball team, and led the 11<sup>th</sup> ranked Loggers to an unexpected 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish in 2018. A four year starter, he finished his career with 2,117 points, good for 11<sup>th</sup> place on the all-time scoring list of Oregon high school players. In track he won the 110 meter high hurdles

three years in a row, won the 300 meter intermediate hurdles his senior year, and was part of the State Champion 4x100 relay in 2016.

High School Principal Nate Underwood notes that, in addition to being a great athlete, Sullivan also is an Honor Student with a 3.5 GPA, who was part of the Project Based Learning Class and was personally responsible for the new finish and logo on the gymnasium floor.

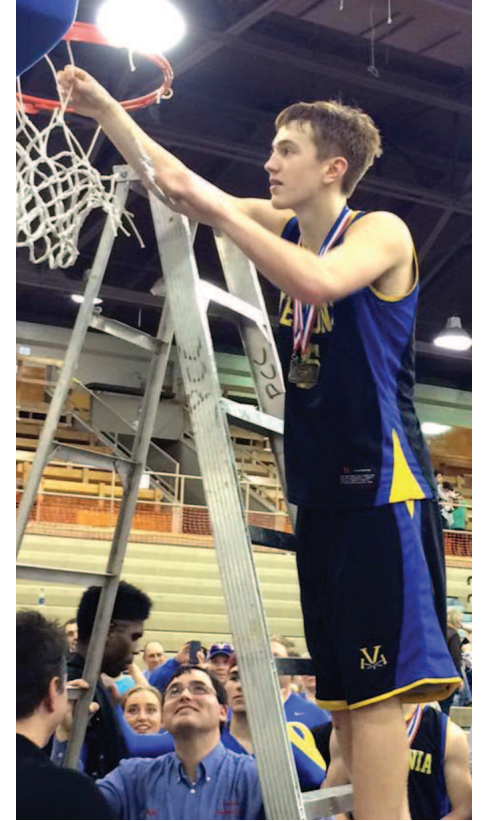
Sullivan will be heading to Clackamas Community College next fall on a full scholarship. He'll play basketball for the next two years and work to continue to improve his game, get lots of playing time, and hopefully earn a spot on a Division I college team.

"Coach Wegner (Clackamas Community College coach Cliff Wegner) is really good at helping his players get into bigger schools," said Sullivan

League and led the underdog Loggers to a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish at the State Tournament, including a first round upset of league rival, and 3<sup>rd</sup> seeded, Knappa. His 82 total points led the three game tournament and his 13 three-point baskets set a new 2A record. He was once again named First Team All State and was named the 2A Player of the Year. His 769 total points and 25.6 average per game for the season ranks 6<sup>th</sup> all-time for Oregon



Above: Clay Sullivan celebrates signing to attend Clackamas Community College with coaches, family, and friends. Right: Sullivan cuts down the net following the Loggers' State Championship in 2016.



"It's not all that often that you have a student that's the best basketball player in the state at his level, but also a multiple state champion in track and field," said Underwood. "As a fan of high school athletics I've just really enjoyed the last four years and watching him compete. I really appreciate what an elite athlete Clay is. One of my most memorable experiences as an educator was watching the boys team win the state title in 2016 and the way the whole community came together."

during an interview the day before his graduation.

Among Sullivan's basketball career highlights:

- In 2016, as a sophomore, he helped the Loggers win their first State Championship since the late 1970s and was named First Team All State.
- In 2017 the Loggers finished 6<sup>th</sup> at the State Tournament and Sullivan was named Second Team All State.
- In his senior year Sullivan was named Player of the Year for the Northwest

small schools.

"In addition to being an incredible athlete, Clay is a virtuous young man," said Logger head basketball coach David Weller, who coached Sullivan all four of his varsity seasons. "He has strong leadership skills, is smart, honest, kind, and fun to be around."

Among his Track and Field accomplishments:

- In 2015, as a freshman, he took 4<sup>th</sup> place in the 110 hurdles and finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the long jump at the State Championship.
- In 2016 Sullivan won the 110 hurdles, won a second gold medal as part of the 4x100 relay team that set a state meet record, took 4<sup>th</sup> in the 300 hurdles, and 8<sup>th</sup> in the long jump at the State Championship.
- In 2017 he defended his title in the 110 hurdles, while finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 300 intermediate hurdles and the long jump.
- In 2018 he won the 110 hurdles for the third time and also won the 300 hurdles. He added a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish in the long jump and a 4<sup>th</sup> place finish in the triple

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