

Sweet headed to Shrine Game, then college; credits family for success

Jeff Sweet and Corey Loving will play in the all-star game in August

By Natasha Kavanaugh

The 60th annual Oregon East-West Shrine Game will take place in Baker City, Ore., on Aug. 4. Football players from 4A, 3A, 2A and 1A schools from throughout Oregon were chosen, including two of our very own Siletz Tribal members from Siletz Valley Schools.

Seniors Jeff Sweet, receiver, and Corey Loving, center, both will play at the 2012 Shrine Game. The game will be played at Bulldog Stadium at 2 p.m. and will be televised on Root Sports Northwest.

Loving was the first to receive his invitation. Sweet said, "I was like, man, I wish I got one of them and like three days later I got one. We were so happy."

Sweet is the son of Aleatha (Levi) Simmons and grandson of Arliss Chatterson. Chatterson has attended every single game and is one of his biggest fans.

"My mom goes to every game and helps me out a lot," he said. Sweet has lived with his grandma for most of his life and says this has really helped keep him on track.

Sweet started playing football five years ago as a receiver, his favorite position. The 2011 season, however, brought something totally different.

Sweet says Coach Reggie Butler asked the team, "Who would like to play quarterback this year?" Sweet smiled and said, "I just volunteered, being a senior."

It was a big step for him to move from receiver to quarterback, but Sweet says he was told by many that he did a good job.

Sweet shared that his school credits initially fell short of the requirement to play, but he quickly took care of that and got into the next game.

"I remember the first game I played was against Alsea and the first play we were at the 20 yard line and third down. I promised Reggie I would get the touchdown if he let me run it. There was a guy at the one yard line and I wasn't gonna let him stop me, so I jumped clear over him and got a touchdown. It was pretty cool," Sweet recalled.

Also coaching this year were Lee Butler, Mark Pullam, Willie Worman, Dave Morgan and Vance Lindstrom.

During the offseason, Sweet spends time working with Pullam, who also brings in help from Western Oregon University. Pullam has known Sweet for many years and a couple of years ago he "had the rare privilege of being able to train him for football. Jeff endured countless hours of training under my direction over the summer two years ago," said Pullam.

"We go up to the Tribal center, run down the hill, throw a log down, chase it, pick it up and carry it. It's called cradle the baby," laughs Sweet. "He (Pullam) calls them the old-school native drills."

"Mark does good, really works with the kids' self-esteem, he really does," added Chatterson.

Pullam also says Sweet is one of the most skilled and tenacious athletes he has had the privilege of training.

"He was always willing to not just try, but succeed. Jeff did everything I asked of him and more. He is a true athlete, trusting to his mentor to know what to do and doing it," said Pullam.

"I'm really glad that I came from here, really glad I stayed at Siletz," said Sweet. "A lot of people think 'Oh, we should go to a bigger school' mainly to get into college. I was going to do that my sophomore year, wanted to go to Taft, and then thought to myself, 'You know, I'm just gonna stay here and show people that they could go to college from a smaller school,' and then it happened."

While he was looking into college, little did Sweet know three of them were looking into him. He has been offered scholarships to Western Oregon University in Monmouth, Ore.; Pacific University in Forest Grove, Ore.; and George Fox University in Newberg, Ore.

When Sweet makes his decision, football will not be the only factor. Video tech classes and business also are in the mix. He would like to stay close to home and says his grandma has been very influential in helping him choose a college.

"I just want you to know I'm really, really proud of him," said Chatterson.

When Sweet received his minor's trust fund money last year, the first thing he did was surprise his grandma with a yurt.

"Everyone wants my yurt, but they have to have my grandson first, but they can't have him," said Chatterson proudly. "He has his grandma's respect, Jeff himself and who he is. I love him very much."

More influence and strong ties have formed between Sweet and the DeAnda family, especially Isaac and Sheila. They have attended all of his games and have been supportive in his choice for college.

"Isaac's really pushing me to go to college," said Sweet. "I think just coming up from good family, that's what made me who I am, living with a good family. Isaac and Sheila is so key for me in keeping on track."

Sweet's positive attitude comes not only from family, but also from kids in the community. He helps referee the younger youth and enjoys helping Angel DeAnda with his football as well.

"I'm really into helping out the younger kids," Sweet said



Photo by Natasha Kavanaugh

Jeff Sweet

He also participates in the Siletz Youth Film Project, plays basketball and this year will play baseball.

Sweet's brother, Jeremy, also was a good athlete in high school.

"He was my biggest idol. Awhile back, he told me that I was his biggest idol," said Sweet, who would like to thank "my grandma, my mom, Isaac and Sheila, Mark Pullam, and coaches Reggie, Lee, Vance and Morgan" for all they've done for him.

"I cannot be more proud of Jeff, both on and off the field," added Pullam.

As for his future, Sweet said, "I'm just gonna play my game and whatever happens, happens."

"You'll be ready, you'll just shine," said Chatterson.

An interview with Corey Loving will appear in a future issue of Siletz News.

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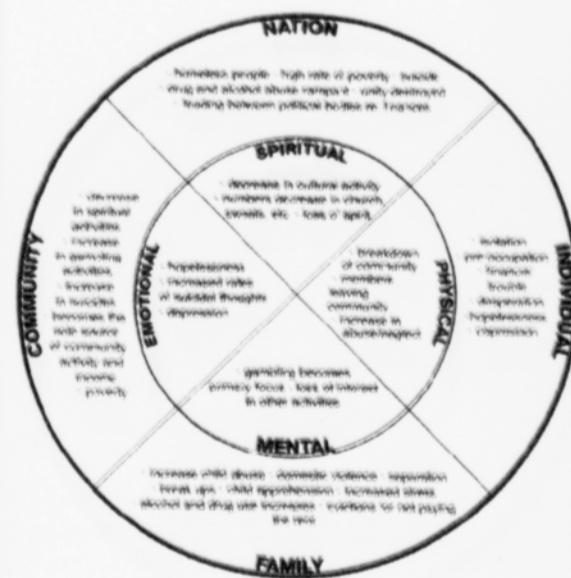
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