

After graduating from the UO School of Law in May, Killian Doherty put on his backpack and headed to Brazil for the World Cup. He will write for EW until the final match is decided.

From June 12 to July 13, billions of people will watch the world's most popular sports event: the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup. The 2014 FIFA World Cup will be the 20th such tournament — and the second to be held in Brazil. Of the 203 national teams that competed in regional tournaments in order to qualify, only 31 teams will travel to Brazil to join the host nation for the 2014 cup. An estimated 600,000 foreigners will visit Brazil to attend a match, and many others, like myself, will journey to Brazil just to witness the spectacular (but controversial) event from outside the stadium gates.

The 32 teams competing for the world's greatest soccer trophy are divided into eight groups of four teams. Each team plays one game against every other team in its respective group, with two teams advancing to the first knockout round. The host and arguable favorite to win the final, Brazil, will play the first game of the tournament against Croatia on June 12 in Sao Paulo.

The U.S. team is in Group G — considered by many to be this cup's "group of death" — along with Germany, Portugal and Ghana. FIFA ranks Germany and Portugal as the second and third best teams in the world. The U.S. team is ranked at 14. Ghana is ranked at 38, but the team has proven especially challenging for the U.S. in recent World Cups. In 2006, Ghana beat the U.S. 2-1 in the final match of the group stage, thereby eliminating the U.S. from the tournament. Ghana eliminated the U.S. again with a 2-1 victory in the round of 16 teams and was dramatically decided by Ghana's last-minute goal in extra time.

Granted, the U.S. team will have its work cut out for it in the 2014 World Cup, though one might find some hope in the team's surprise performance in the last cup held in Brazil. In 1950, the U.S. fielded a squad of semi-professionals and amateurs — including two decorated WW II veterans, a postman, a funeral director and a mill-worker — who defied expectations by upsetting the best team in world at the time, England, with a 1-0 victory in the group stage. Anything can happen in 90 minutes. The U.S. plays its first game of the 2014 Cup against Ghana, on June 16, in Natal.

— Killian Doherty



KILLIAN DOHERTY  
JUGGLES A SOCCER BALL

## COUNCIL TO DISCUSS DOWNTOWN SMOKING BAN

Eugene City Councilor Greg Evans has introduced a downtown smoking ban for the City Council's discussion. He says the ban is aimed at making downtown more desirable for business and recreation.

"In downtown areas across the country you have cadres of folks who congregate not necessarily because they're there to do the right thing, but because they're there to hang out and do things that are illegal," Evans says.

A ban on smoking downtown would decrease aggressive behavior and illegal activities such as drug use and dealing, Evans says.

"It may push it to some other areas," Evans says, "but I think it gives our police department an additional tool to deal with that kind of activity."

A work session has not yet been scheduled for the City Council to discuss the possible ban. Evans says he expects the council to discuss it after its summer break, which ends Sept. 8. He says he does not know if he would also advocate prohibiting e-cigarettes.

The no-smoking ordinance would be enforced in public areas in the downtown activity zone, the area between 6th and 11th avenues and High and Lincoln streets, Evans says. Smoking would still be permitted at areas designated for smoking by restaurants and bars. Evans says he has heard from some local business owners that they would like tobacco smoke to be banned from downtown.

"People have a right to smoke," Evans says, "but I don't think they have a right to invade and impose on others' space with that." The ordinance would also encourage a healthy lifestyle, he says.

Lane County Health and Human Services Public Information Officer Jason Davis says that during a town hall meeting, the county found that most people are in favor of making shared spaces tobacco and smoke free. He says 18.8 percent of Lane County's adult population smokes and 75 percent of smokers want to quit.

"If you just make a smoking ban but don't give them the proper materials to quit, it's kind of putting the carriage before the horse," Davis says.

Smoking bans are growing in popularity in Oregon and nationally. Some Lane County building properties, including all of the health and human services, county administration and public works, were designated as smoke-free areas one year ago. Oregon State Parks will begin enforcing a smoking ban in January 2015, the Medford City Council unanimously passed a city park smoke ban in March and the cities of Portland and Forest Grove are both eyeing banning smoking in city parks.

Santa Cruz, Calif., began enforcing a downtown smoking ban in 2009. City of Santa Cruz Community Relations Manager Keith Sterling says it was an adjustment at first but residents and visitors have gotten used to it. "The way the public views tobacco has changed over the years and our laws are changing with it," he says. — Missy Corr

## COMMON CORE A PROFITABLE PROBLEM

The Common Core approacheth: Starting with the 2014-2015 school year, Oregon public schools will do away with the old OAKS (Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) testing and usher in the Smarter Balanced Assessment, a new standardized test that evaluates student performance by Common Core standards. But with its ties to corporations and its rushed implementation in Oregon, Smarter Balanced is not winning over everyone.

In May, Oregon's teachers union, the Oregon Education Association (OEA), called for a moratorium on the test: "When the timeline doesn't allow for giving 100 percent to preparing our students, none of us should be surprised by the prediction that 65 percent of all students will fail the first test," OEA president Hanna Vaandering says on OEA's website. "Why would we spend millions of dollars on a test that students are predicted to fail?"

Superintendent Shelley Berman of the Eugene 4J School District has a different view of the Common Core. Berman says that the Smarter Balanced Assessment may have initial drawbacks, but he says he believes that in the long run it will provide better data to show how to improve education. "I believe the Smarter Balanced testing will be a positive change for the district and the state," he tells EW.

It may be a positive change from the perspective of tech companies and curriculum providers. A new report from NPR describes the Common Core's connections to big money, pegging the market for

K-12 instructional materials in the U.S. at \$20 billion. Companies such as Apple and Amplify turn a profit from providing technology to classrooms, and according to a survey cited in the NPR's "Common Core FAQ," 68 percent of school districts plan to use Common Core as a guide to purchase new materials.

Even popular kids' show *Reading Rainbow* is jumping on the Common Core bandwagon. The show ended in 2006 but LeVar Burton's Kickstarter campaign has already raised more than \$3 million to develop its app. The show's website says it will be "modifying the platform to serve the needs of Common Core, measurable success tracking and additional learning resources geared specifically for the educational environment."

President of the Eugene Education Association Tad Shannon feels that the Common Core money could be spent elsewhere. "Our money would be better spent, instead of having private testing companies and software, to have more teachers to lower class size and provide intervention for our most at-risk students," Shannon says.

With the growing concern of dropping graduation rates, especially in the 4J School District, Shannon shares the same concerns as Vaandering. "More high-stakes testing will not result in a lower dropout rate, I can assure you of that," he says. — Kevin Sullivan and Amy Schneider

