

KeizerCommunity

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Former Celt filling old coach's shoes



File
Grant Kessel as a member of the McNary High School varsity basketball team in 2009.

Grant Kessel takes over for Whiteaker's Scott Coburn

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

When Grant Kessel was a freshman at McNary High School, he wrote down that one of his future goals was to be a physical education teacher in Keizer.

Fifteen years later, that goal has become a reality.

Kessel, who has been a P.E. teacher at Houck Middle School since 2014, will be returning to the place where he once attended junior high as he will be taking over as the P.E. teacher at Whiteaker Middle School this fall.

"I'm so excited to be teaching in Keizer and at Whiteaker. I know I have some big shoes to fill," Kessel said.

The shoes Kessel is referring to are those of Scott Coburn, who was the P.E. instructor at Whiteaker for 27 years before retiring in the spring.

Kessel says Coburn had a big impact on his life and motivated him to become a middle school P.E. teacher.

"He was so great at building relationships with his students and that is what I strive to do as a teacher," Kessel said. "He left such a legacy here. My goal is to build off his legacy and eventually build one of my own."

All his life, Kessel has been an incredibly sports-minded person. He was a three-sport athlete at McNary, playing football, basketball and golf in all four years of his career. Kessel also played American Legion baseball, and was even on the club lacrosse squad when he was a student at Western Oregon University.

"I have always had a passion for sports and fitness and I love that I am able to share that passion with kids," Kessel said.

A lot of Kessel's classes revolve around individual and team sports. While he is required to teach sessions of commonly known sports, such as volleyball or basketball, Kessel says he really enjoys introducing his students to pickle-



Grant Kessel

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ball, ultimate frisbee, handball and badminton.

While he was at Houck, Kessel also applied for and received a grant from the school district to get nine disc golf cages, allowing him to set up different courses around the school.

"I really enjoy teaching kids fun sports that they may have never played before. These aren't sports they are going to play in high school, but they are sports that they can play for the rest of their life," Kessel said.

As a former athlete, Kessel has a high energy, hands-on style of teaching, but creating relationships is the most crucial

part of his teaching style.

"I feel like I'm a very relationship-oriented. You have to get the kids to buy into you before they can buy into your class," Kessel said.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Kessel, along with the rest of the instructors in the district will be teaching all-online for at least the first nine weeks of the year.

While he, and other P.E. instructors are still attempting to figure out how they will facilitate classes virtually, Kessel is confident that he can be creative enough to make it work.

"We're thinking about having the kids fill out activity logs and pre-record their workouts. After being in a chair all day, we just want to figure out what is the best way to keep them active," Kessel said.

Even though the start of the school year will be completely abnormal, Kessel is still elated to back in his old stomping grounds.

"It's still surreal. The reality hasn't quite hit me yet, and I don't think it will until we're back in the building. But I'm so thrilled to be here," Kessel said.

What and where to donate for Oregon fire evacuees

United Way is collecting all donations for fire evacuees at 1330 Front Street N.E. in Salem.

These were the most urgent needs at press time:

Masks, durable work gloves, denture brush and cleaning tablets, reading glasses, pumps for mattresses, camp chairs, flashlights, batteries, bleach wipes, cleaning supplies, disinfect-

ing spray, dishwashing sponges, tents-all sizes, sleeping bags, strollers, lip balm, eye drops, antacid tablet, storage bags and reusable shipping bags.

Meal donations are being scheduled through the Salvation Army by contacting Lt. Laura Fyn at 503-602-6454. All meals be served in individual packaging to comply with CDC guidelines.

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