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Middle School sports approved for Season 1

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Even though there haven't been any contests since March due to COVID-19, many high school athletes in Salem-Keizer Public Schools (SKPS) have been participating in off-season workouts since July.

Now, student-athletes at the junior high level are able to return to their school's athletic facilities on a limited basis.

SKPS middle school athletes were approved last month to start workouts and training during Oregon Schools Activities Association's (OSAA) Season 1. Tuesday, Oct. 27 was the first day middle school teams could hold a modified practice.

Scott Coburn, who is the Whiteaker Middle School 8th grade volleyball coach and middle school athletic director for the district, worked alongside Matthew Biondi, the SKPS middle school director of education, to formulate a plan to have athletes return to their school teams for the first time in nearly nine

months.

"Biondi and I sat in on a high school athletic directors meeting with the goal of wanting to adjust their plan to the middle school level," Coburn said. "It was a process we went through to make sure we were exactly where we needed to be."

Football, track & field, volleyball, wrestling and cross country are the five middle school sports the district provides, but not all sports will be holding Season 1 workouts.

"This is all about making contact with kids and having them develop their skills."

— Scott Coburn,
SKPS Middle School AD

Whiteaker Middle School will be holding workouts for football, cross country and volleyball — additional sports will be offered at a later date. Claggett Creek Middle School elected to not begin their workouts until Nov. 30 — they plan to offer football, cross country, volleyball and wrestling.

Middle school teams will be operating under phase two guidance from the OSAA — which involves limiting sharing of balls within pods, frequent

disinfecting of equipment and maintaining social distancing. All students will be required to wear a mask in order to participate.

"We aren't going to make mistakes. We're going to keep everyone safe," Coburn said. "Everything will be cleaned to the best of our ability."

Schools are permitted to have one activity on campus per day during the week, but can choose to do less. For example, last week Whiteaker Middle School held workouts for three days last week — football players practiced on Tuesday, volleyball players met on Wednesday and cross country athletes worked out on Thursday.

There is no cost for participation in Season 1 activities. Transportation, however, will not be provided.

All athletes that are interested in participating are required to complete the registration process on FamilyID — which can be found on each schools' website.

"This is all about making contact with kids and having them develop their skills. We're not doing this to gain any kind of competitive advantage. Right now, it's about care and connection," Coburn said.



File
Whiteaker running back Marquis Jackson breaks away from defenders to pick up a first down in a middle school football game from last season.

#11 Ryan Vogelsong



USA Today Sports Images

Ryan Vogelsong played in the MLB for 12 seasons and won two World Series titles with the San Francisco Giants.

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

Ryan Vogelsong is #11 on the Keizertimes list of the 20 greatest Volcanoes players of all time. He was an All-Star in 2011 and won two World Series rings with the San Francisco Giants in 2012 and 2014.

Vogelsong was a three-sport athlete at Octorara High School in Atglen, PA. He stayed in state to attend college at Kutztown University, where he set nine school records over the course of his three-year career.

Vogelsong was drafted by the Giants in the 5th round of the 1998 Major League Baseball (MLB) Draft. He made 10 appearances for the Volcanoes that season and was 6-1

with 66 strikeouts and a 1.77 ERA, helping Salem-Keizer win their first ever Northwest League Title (NWL).

After spending two years in the minors, Vogelsong made his debut with the Giants on Sept. 2, 2000. In his four relief appearances with San Francisco, Vogelsong didn't allow a run to score in six innings of work.

Vogelsong started the 2001 season with the Giants, but struggled out of the bullpen. After posting an 0-3 record with 6.75 ERA, Vogelsong was sent down to Triple-A.

On July 31, 2001, Vogelsong was traded to the Pittsburgh Pirates, but he only appeared in two games for the Pirates that year. He underwent Tom-

my John surgery, which kept him out of baseball for all 2002 and most of 2003.

Vogelsong's first full season with the Pirates came in 2004. He mostly struggled as a starter, going 6-13 with 6.50 ERA. But after being moved to the bullpen in 2005, Vogelsong experienced a little more success, posting a 4.43 ERA in 44 appearances.

After his ERA ballooned 6.39 in 2006, Vogelsong decided to switch gears and play pro baseball in Japan, signing with the Hanshin Tigers of Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) in 2007. He played for the Tigers for two years and then pitched for the Orix Buffaloes in 2009.

In 2010, Vogelsong re-



turned to the states and signed a minor league contract with the Philadelphia Phillies. He went 2-5 with a 4.69 ERA in 58.2 innings for the Triple-A Leigh Valley IronPigs before being released on July 15, 2010.

Three days after being released, Vogelsong signed a minor league deal with the Los Angeles Angels and appeared in eight games in Triple-A for the Salt Lake Bees. He recorded a 1-3 record and a 4.66 ERA in 36.2 innings and was released after the season.

During the offseason Vogelsong decided to play winter ball in Venezuela for Tiburones de La Guaira. He stated the following year that his time in Venezuela was the turning point in recovering his career.

In 2011, Vogelsong returned to the Giants and signed a minor league contract. He started the season in Triple-A, but was called up early in the season to replace injured San Francisco left-hander Barry Zito — it was the first time in five years that Vogelsong had been on a MLB roster.

After making a pair of successful relief appearances, Vogelsong got his first big league start in seven years on April 28, 2011. Ironically, it was against Pittsburgh, his former team.

In 5.2 innings of work, Vogelsong struck out eight and gave up just two runs on four hits, leading the Giants to the 5-2 victory and earning his first MLB win since 2005.

Vogelsong continued to find success in the Giants starting rotation, recording a

6-1 record with a 2.17 ERA in the first half of the season. After being cut by the Angels the previous year, Vogelsong's performance in 2011 earned him a trip to the All-Star Game.

Vogelsong finished the season with a 13-7 record and a 2.71 ERA, which was the lowest on the team. He was given the Willie Mac Award — which is given annually in honor of Giants legend Willie McCovey to the Giants player who best exemplifies spirit and leadership. Vogelsong was also named the San Francisco breakout player of the year by MLB.com in 2011.

The Giants rewarded Vogelsong in 2012 with a two-year, \$8.3 million contract.

Vogelsong proved that he was worth the money as he posted the lowest ERA in the National League for the first half of the season (2.26). Despite his numbers, Vogelsong was not selected to the 2012 All-Star Game — he was the first ERA leader to not make the All-Star Game since 2001.

Vogelsong also had a streak of 16 consecutive games where he gave up three runs or fewer.

Despite some below-average outings late in the season, Vogelsong still finished the year with a career-high of 14 wins and an ERA of 3.37. After his second straight high-quality regular season in San Francisco, Vogelsong became a hero for the Giants in the 2012 playoffs.

In game three of the National League Division Series

(NLDS), with the Cincinnati Reds holding a 2-0 lead over the Giants in the best-of-five set, Vogelsong threw five clutch innings for San Francisco, holding the Reds to just one run on three hits. The Giants went on to win the game 3-2, then won the following two matchups to advance to the National League Championship Series against the St. Louis Cardinals.

With the Cardinals up 1-0 in the best-of-seven series, Vogelsong started game two of the NLCS and shut down the potent St. Louis offense. After giving up a run in the top of the second, Vogelsong threw five straight scoreless frames as the Giants went on to win game two 7-1.

However, St. Louis won the next two contests to take a commanding 3-1 series lead. After the Giants won game five, Vogelsong took the hill in game six with the season on the line.

But in the face of elimination, Vogelsong was dominant once again, giving up just one run over seven innings and striking out nine. The Giants won game six 6-1, then won game seven the following night to advance to their second World Series in three years.

The Giants faced off against the Detroit Tigers in the 2012 World Series. After San Francisco won the first two games, Vogelsong got the start in game three and put together a masterful outing, throwing

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