

Poyer: 'The kids are fired up to be out here'

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For the kids, they learned a great deal in just four hours of instruction time.

For Poyer, it was one last "fun" break before the grind of another NFL season, his third year with the new-look Browns.

"It's been pretty crazy, but I've had a good off-season," Poyer said. "I got engaged, went to (Washington) D.C. for a little bit, played in the summer softball game ... it's been fun, but it's coming to an end quickly. Got to enjoy these last couple weeks."

"The kids are fired up to be out here, and it's always good to come back," Poyer said.

It was also the camp's first time at Columbia Memorial Field, which drew some positive reviews from Poyer.

"This is my first time stepping on it — it's pretty awesome," he said. "I'll miss being at ol' John Warren, but I could get used to this."

The Browns in 2015

Meanwhile, the players Poyer will be facing on the field one month from now will be a little older and a lot bigger. He's ready for the challenge.

"This next year is going to be a big year for me," said Poyer, who has already impressed many with his performance in Cleveland's recent off-season training camp. "I have a lot of expectations for myself. Year 2 was a plain and simple year — I came out healthy and I was satisfied with it."

In 2014, "I didn't accomplish a lot of things that I wanted to," Poyer said during a visit to Astoria earlier this year. "I came



Jordan Poyer, left, tries to strip the ball from Clay Keyser, 11, right, during returning drills at the Jordan Poyer football camp at CMH Field Sunday.

'This next year is going to be a big year for me.'

— Jordan Poyer
NFL player from Astoria

out healthy, and played well enough to stay on the team. I played on special teams mostly, and played about 30 snaps on defense towards the end of the season. It was not the season I wanted to have, but at the same time it helped me get ready for this next year."

Listed ahead of Poyer on the depth chart last year was Jim Leonhard, a free safety who retired at the end of the 2014 season, after 10 years in the league.

"Jimmy Leonhard had basically the position that I would have played this (last) year," Poyer said. "It was his last season, and I kind of studied under his wing. The

coaches wanted me to play one year in that system, and come in next year and have the role that Jimmy Leonhard played — to come in on second-and-long plays and third down situations."

Poyer would also like to get in on some special teams action, fielding kickoffs and punts.

"I want to return again, really bad," Poyer said. "All four phases of special teams, I don't mind playing, going out there running down field and trying to make plays."

Even before the draft and some off-season moves, Poyer said, "I definitely feel like this team will be a lot stronger that it was last year.

There's just a couple pieces here, that if we can put it together we'll be a really strong team, all around."

Specifically, the Cleveland secondary has been called one of the best in the NFL.

"I felt our defense played great, our offense played really well at times," Poyer said. "If we just put everything together throughout a whole season, I think we can be really dangerous."

Individually, Poyer was honored as one of the NFL's 11 best players on kickoff coverage, as selected by Pro Football Focus.

"Anytime you get recognition for anything — especially in the NFL — I feel like it's a pretty good accomplishment."

Poyer will return to the Pacific Northwest Dec. 20, when the Browns play at Seattle.



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian
Cooper Miller, 13, goes airborne during a tackling drill at the Jordan Poyer football camp at CMH Field Sunday.



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian
Corbin Kremz, 10, dives while trying to tackle Jordan Poyer during a running drill.



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian
Coaches and players cheer before heading off to the next drill station. More photos online at www.dailyastorian.com

Center: There are about 1,000 homeless people in the county

'We just want a chance'

Struggling couple fear they might lose children

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

John Donoghue is not looking for a hand-out.

The handyman, his wife, and their five young children have been living for the past few years in weather-beaten camper trailers in a scrap yard on Wireless Road outside Astoria.

Donoghue has been scraping together money by hauling away other people's junk. His wife and home-schooled children appear happy and well-fed, but their lifestyle has raised alarm.

Sheriffs have been out to the trailers multiple times to check on the family's welfare. On Thursday, Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin finally told Donoghue that if the family is still living there by winter, the children might be taken away by the state.

Proud and independent, Donoghue, 51, refuses to accept government assistance. But he does not have the resources or steady employment record to qualify for a market-rate rental for a family of seven.

Ideally, he would like the owner of a fixer-upper to allow his family to stay in return for renovating the property.

"We just want a chance," Donoghue said.

On the margins

Like many who find themselves on the margins financially, there is no one reason to explain the Donoghue's predicament. Decisions they have made over the years, both small and large, have trapped them into a corner.

People in Astoria who know the family describe Donoghue as intelligent and hard-work-

ing, if a bit eccentric. His wife, Chelsea, 30, is devoted to him. The children — John, 10; Patrick, 8; Jennifer, 6; Tommy, 4; and Jessica, 1 — appear well-adjusted and educated.

Some say, however, many have tried to help the family but that Donoghue has either refused or become suspicious of potential allies.

"He's an interesting person to say the least," Sheriff Bergin said. While Donoghue means well, Bergin said, "he thinks everybody is against him. He thinks the whole world has put him down, that they're holding him back."

Bergin said the family's living conditions do not yet meet the criteria for removing the children.

But the sheriff said he told Donoghue the children could potentially be removed by the state Department of Human Services if the family remains in the trailers by winter.

"We're trying to be as gentle and kind as possible," Bergin said.

Donoghue, who said he served in the Marine Corps, insists he is not anti-government. He said he believes in personal responsibility, however, and does not think others should have to pay for his choice to have a large family.

"Why should she have to collect welfare," he said of his wife, "when she's got a healthy, intelligent, able-bodied man who's willing to work and can't get a job?"

While the exact circumstances that brought Donoghue to Oregon from the East Coast are difficult to pinpoint — he claims to have invented a carburetor that led to some type of business dispute, and refers to a conflict with his wife's parents in Connecticut — he wants a future for his family beyond the trailers.

Dan Hess, a former Port of Astoria commissioner, has allowed the family to stay on the Wireless Road property for now.

"We need to find a place to live," Donoghue said. "ASAP."

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Herzig said volunteers decided to raise the threshold to open the shelter to 40 degrees or severe weather conditions — it was initially 35 degrees last winter, then adjusted to 38 degrees — because the cutoff appeared arbitrary.

"When we've got these terrible rainstorms, it's still hell to be out on the streets," he said. "If we can possibly open more, we want to."

Clatsop Community Action, which helps low-income residents with food and housing, has estimated there are about 1,000 homeless people in Clatsop County.

The homeless can seek shelter from the Astoria Rescue Mission and Helping Hands in Seaside, which have programs to help people get off the streets and address health or substance-abuse issues.

Without much fanfare, First Baptist Church had also been opening for the homeless on freezing nights for the past seven years. The church ended the outreach last winter when the Astoria Warming Center opened a few blocks away.

The warming center functions more like a shelter of last resort than a homeless assistance program. Some in the social-service community have been concerned about whether volunteers at the warming center are equipped to handle homeless people with severe mental illness or drug and alcohol problems.

Herzig said the volunteers



Daily Astorian File
Men wait outside the downtown Astoria Senior Center, which served as a warming center, as volunteers set up inside in January.

hope to be better partners with

Clatsop Community Action and other social-service providers. "We're not presenting ourselves as a full-service clinic," he said. "It's just a place to get in, get out of the weather, get warm, and be able to sleep safely as opposed to sleeping under a bush not knowing what's going to happen to you."

"We're not kidding ourselves. We are not trained pro-

fessionals dealing with this, but somebody had to step up."

Carol Prichard, the pastor at First United Methodist, said the church exists to extend compassion and hospitality to people in need. "It's really a faith and a biblical mandate for us in following Christ," she said.

"It makes perfect sense to us. We want to make sure that we're good stewards. We have a building."

Fastabend: 'He is a lifelong Astorian'

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His new position as the Astoria boys' coach "will take up most of my time now, for sure," he said.

Changing roles

When Patterson stepped aside to become the head women's soccer coach at Portland Community College, Fastabend threw his hat in the ring for the Astoria job.

Fastabend had served as an assistant to Patterson in the past, knows all the players, and definitely knows soccer. The choice to make Fastabend the coach was a no-brainer for Astoria Athletic Director Howard Rub.

"Coach Fastabend is a

great fit to assume the role of our head boys coach," Rub said at the time. "He understands the philosophies of the AHS Athletic Department and what we hope to provide for our student-athletes. Coach Fastabend is widely respected in Clatsop County for his work with LCYSA and his work as a local businessman."

"He is a lifelong Astorian and has great pride in AHS athletics."

Fastabend has been a local youth soccer coach since summer 2000 and has served as a volunteer high school coach for both the Astoria boys and girls since fall 2011.

Big shoes

He will have big shoes to

fill as the Astoria coach.

Astoria boys soccer was first added as a varsity sport in 1991, when Max Bigby led the Fishermen to the Cowapa League championship. That set the standard, and the expectations have been high ever since.

From 1991 to 1998, the Fishermen were in the district playoffs seven of the eight years, made the state playoffs four times, advanced to the quarterfinals twice and played in the semifinals in 1995.

Bigby's overall record was 77 wins, 47 losses, 12 ties.

From 1999 to 2006, Boisvert had a career record of 80-35-15. Patterson took over in 2007, ran the program for

eight years, and stepped down with a mark of 77-36-9.

The Fishermen missed the playoffs last season, after a loss to Gladstone in the Regional Play-in round.

"Quite a few seniors departed last year, and we have a handful coming back, but we'll be relying a lot on some sophomores and juniors," Fastabend said. "It will be somewhat of a rebuilding year from the players' side, and then it will be an adjustment period for the players getting used to a new coach."

If Fastabend can build and repair a soccer team like he builds and repairs boats, the Fishermen will be in good hands.

— Gary Henley



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