

SPORTS

Youth Football Team Gives Back

In an effort to give back to the community, parents and players of a local youth football team recently held a litter patrol to pick up trash in area neighborhoods.

Organized by the Parent Involvement Committee, the Aug. 14 event was held to show the young leaders of tomorrow the importance of being an active participant in our community and making a difference.

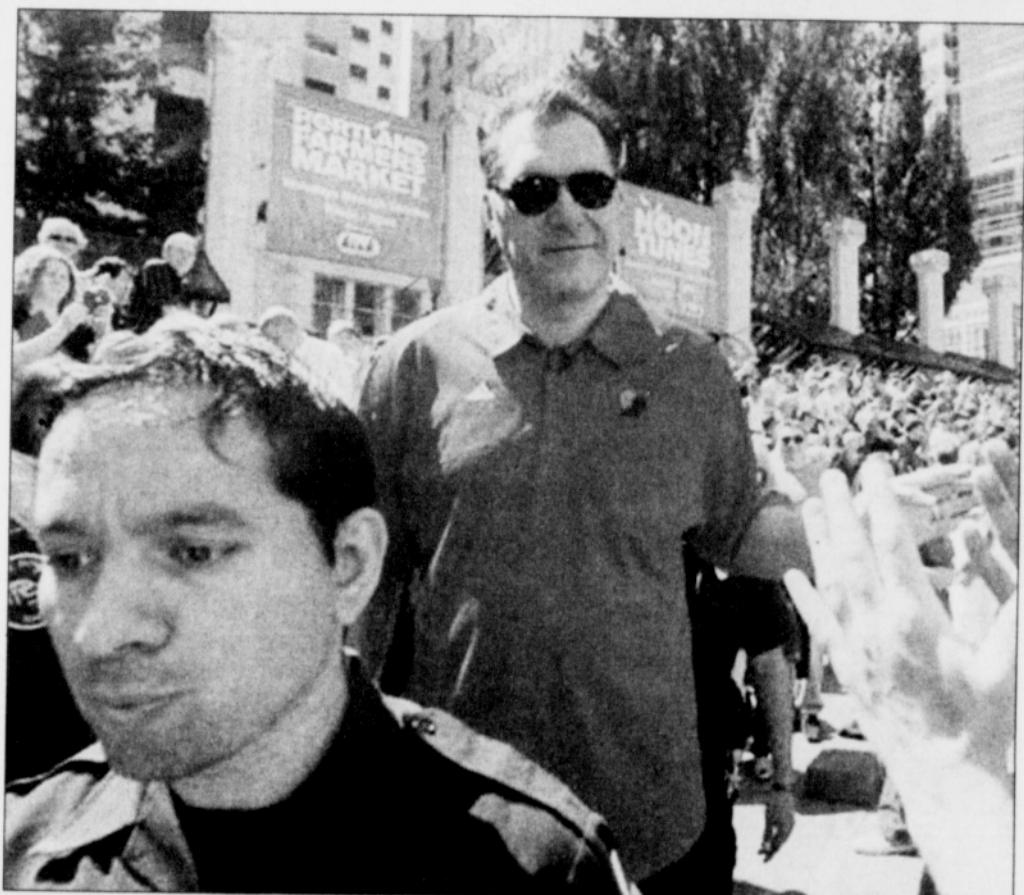
The Alberta Park Youth Football program has over 100 players from grades 3rd to 8th.

Steve Littleton, program director and head coach, said he has coached the youth for of 12 years because of his love of football and the joy of teaching and being a positive role model and influence for kids in early development.



Young football players gather at Alberta Park in northeast Portland as part of the Police Activities League program. The youth have held a number of public service events to give back to the community.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER



Fans look on during a Thursday rally at Pioneer Courthouse Square for newly enshrined Hall of Famer Arvydas Sabonis. (AP photo)

Hall of Fame Cheers for Sabonis

(AP) -- Newly enshrined Hall of Famer Arvydas Sabonis was taken aback by the cheers he garnered at a downtown rally Thursday in his honor.

"I'm very surprised," he told nearly 3,000 fans gathered in Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square. "I don't know what to say. I appreciate you remember me."

Sabonis was visiting Portland after being inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame last Friday. The 7-foot-3, 300-pound Lithuanian center was a star in Europe before coming to the NBA at age 31 to play for the Trail Blazers. He spent seven seasons in Portland.

Sabonis had not returned to the

city in the eight years since his retirement. But it was evident Thursday he was still beloved, with fans chanting his nickname, Sabas.

Former teammates Brian Grant and Chris Dudley took part in the celebration. One boy who appeared to be too young to have seen Sabonis play held a sign that read "Sabas Rocks!"

Sabonis, a native of Kaunas, Lithuania, helped the Soviet Union win the 1988 Olympic gold medal, which included a semifinal win over the United States. He led Lithuania to bronze medals in the 1992 and 1996 Olympics. The Lithuanian teams became underdog favorites because of sponsorship by the Grateful Dead.

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