



Above: Portland State receiver Alex Toureen retained a year of eligibility when the NCAA granted him a medical-hardship waiver last October. The Vikings began spring practices yesterday. (photo courtesy of PSU Athletic Department)  
Right: Toureen ('11) starred in several sports while at Cottage Grove, including track and field. (file photo)

CGHS alum represents more than his records

BY MATT HOLLANDER  
*The Cottage Grove Sentinel*

In the history of Cottage Grove High School athletics, 2011 graduate Alex Toureen represents one of the highest standards of excellence. His statistics were unfathomable and his abilities were breathtaking.

By grace, he has one more chapter to write in his book as a receiver at Portland State University. But his status as a NCAA Division I athlete, along with his high-school records and highlights, only tell part of the story.

In many ways, his legacy was written when the scoreboards were turned off, and those are the stories that continue to reverberate.

“Every year we have a conversation with the kids about Alex, and it has nothing to do with

what he did on the field,” said football coach Gary Roberts.

When Roberts took over the program in 2008, Toureen was a talented but strong-headed freshman, and it was a long time before they saw eye-to-eye.

“I’ll never forget my first meeting with Alex,” said Roberts,” because he told me, ‘I don’t want to be coached. Just leave me alone and let me play.’ And obviously, that attitude flew in the face of everything I believed.”

Roberts said their relationship eventually became so strained he was sure that one of them would have to leave the program. But over their final two years, Roberts said Toureen took steps off of the field that allowed him to become everything Roberts “thought and hoped” he could.

Had he never stepped on the gridiron, Toureen could still have gone down as one of the best, if not the most, versatile athletes in recent school history.

For track and field coach Ricky Knutson, Toureen presented the type of problem that every coach dreams of: trying to figure out which event to put him in.

“Alex had a tremendous amount of lower-body strength, and that converted to speed and explosiveness,” Knutson said. “He was a natural fit in sprints and jumps, but he wasn’t a huge fan of the running events. So, he tried more field events.”

At the district track and field championships his senior year, Toureen led the Lions to a team title by winning individual titles in the shot put, high jump and long jump; he missed winning the triple jump by one inch.

The following weekend at the state meet, he placed second in the high jump and shot put — despite just starting to throw that season — and third in the long jump.

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## Cottage Grove slips at Stayton Tourney

*Lions struggle to maintain momentum through second spring-break tournament*

BY MATT HOLLANDER  
*The Cottage Grove Sentinel*

Just days after completing a three-game sweep of the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes Tournament, in which their run differential was 59-5, the Lions came back to Earth with a 1-2 record at last week’s Stayton Tournament.

On Wednesday, host Stayton defeated Cottage Grove 4-1. Vance Lindemann struck out six in a complete-game three-hitter to lead the Eagles to the victory. Matt Watson also went 2-for-3 for Stayton. Payton Presley went 2-for-3 for Cottage Grove, and Lucas Ward drove in Brett Ollivant with a fielder’s choice for the Lions’ run. Cottage Grove’s pitchers walked eight in the loss.

Cottage Grove coach Dan Geiszler said that Lindemann was the best pitcher they had seen all season, but he still thought it was a winnable game.

The Lions rebounded from their first loss of the season with a stronger outing against Blanchet Catholic on Thursday but still came up short, 5-4.

Cottage Grove held a 4-2 lead late in the game when the Cavaliers scored three runs in the bottom of the sixth to beat the Lions.

Cottage Grove finished the week with a 7-5 win over Junction City on Friday. Hunter Harris’ two-run home run in the third inning was the difference for the Lions against the Tigers. Ward was also 2-for-4 with a double and a run for Cottage Grove. Bryon Brown doubled and scored a run for Junction City.

Coming off a dominant showing at the Volcanoes Tournament, Geiszler said he was a bit surprised that the team didn’t play better at Stayton. But he also said that the lack of competition at the former tournament, along with a very limited practice schedule in between games, might have contributed to their drop off.

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## Lions turn slow start into rout

BY MATT HOLLANDER  
*The Cottage Grove Sentinel*

It took a while for the Lions to find a groove against the visiting Reedsport Braves last Wednesday. But six runs in the fifth inning allowed them to pull away for an 8-2 victory — their third straight to start the season.

“I thought the girls rallied well and came back for a good win,” said coach Cheryl Frieze. “It took them a while to get into the game mentally, but they recovered and showed some resilience.”

Cottage Grove led 2-0 through three innings, but Reedsport scored two runs in the top of the fourth to pull even. So, when Liz Wiltse stepped to the plate to start the bottom of the fifth, she knew she had to get her team going. Facing a full count, Wiltse got on base with a deep shot to center field; she later scored off of a single by Kamryn Ortloff.

Wiltse’s hit sparked an avalanche of offense for the Lions. In fact, their bats were so hot that Wiltse came up again before the Braves could close out the inning.

“It’s always a concern that you’ll be in for a tough battle, especially when you’ve strug-



## Athlete of the Week: Taylor Sayles



photo by Matt Hollander

Cottage Grove’s Taylor Sayles threw three strikeouts in the final two innings of the Lions’ 8-2 win over Reedsport. For the week, Sayles threw nine strikeouts in eight innings and went 5-for-9 at the plate.

gled through the first few innings,” Wiltse said. “It was a pivotal point for the team, and it’s a good feeling when you can get some momentum going. It reminds you that we all feed off of each other.”

Once they got going, several Lions turned in outstanding days at the plate. Cassidy Whisler went 3-for-4 with four RBIs to pace the team. Amanda Anderson also had two hits and two RBIs, and Taylor Sales, K-

lea Galbreath and Ortloff all had two hits each.

In her first appearance of the year, Lindsey Clarke struck out two in five innings. One of those strikeouts came with two outs and the bases loaded in the second inning.

“It was very crucial to end that inning when we did,” Frieze said. “A base hit could have scored two runs, and that would have changed the entire game.”

Sayles threw three strikeouts in the sixth and seventh innings to close the game.

The Lions were originally scheduled to play at the North Marion Tournament; however, when that was canceled they had to scramble to schedule Reedsport. Frieze said that adjustment, along with the typical struggles with focus during Spring Break, contributed to the slow start. She also said that the

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