

TOUREEN

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As Knutson recalled, even the state-meet officials were skeptical that a man of Toureen's stature — then, 5' 11" and 167 pounds — could possess such power:

"When Alex went to collect his second-place medal the official didn't believe that he was the right guy and made Alex show his competition number to prove he was in fact a thrower," he said.

Toureen's junior season was not as prolific, but baseball coach Dan Geiszler believes that was only because he came out to play shortstop as well.

As he had not played in several years, Geiszler said he had minimal expectations for Toureen, yet even those he surpassed.

"Baseball isn't a sport that you can just pick up and expect to be good at," Geiszler said. "Early on, Alex was frustrated because he wasn't able to hit very well. But by the end of the year he was our best all-around guy at the plate."

While trying to do both baseball and track and field proved to be too difficult, Toureen is the only athlete during Geiszler's tenure that has even attempted the double.

By the way, Toureen was also a valuable contributor off the bench during the Lions' run to the 2011 basketball state championship.

Despite his stellar career, Toureen was not widely recruited out of high school. In fact, Portland State was the only school to offer him a scholarship before signing day.

"Guys like Alex are often overlooked because of talent they play against," said receivers coach Steve Cooper. "We knew he had great stats, but we also watched his tape and saw that he was consistently making plays."

"Great stats," would be an understatement. Toureen rewrote the Lions' record book with single-season standards of 69 catches for 1580 yards and 26 touchdowns. And for his career, he caught 150 passes for 3225 yards and 45 touchdowns.

Though Toureen didn't know much about Portland State, he wanted to reward the program for its loyalty, and took the chance to pursue an education. Looking back, Toureen said that had it not been for football he probably wouldn't have ever gone to college.

While Toureen was blessed with god-given athleticism, he has had to overcome significant adversity away from the field. He is the first member of his family to graduate from high school, let alone go to college.

"Other athletes have been in better situations to be successful and haven't accomplished half as much as Alex," said Roberts.

Through his first three seasons at Portland State, Toureen had amassed 19 catches for 283 yards and four touchdowns. But he prepared for the 2014 campaign not knowing if it would be his last; he had petitioned the NCAA for a fifth year of eligibility because a torn meniscus ended his freshman season after just three games.

Though Toureen's coaches were con-

fident all along that the NCAA would grant the waiver, it wasn't until mid-October that he was officially reclassified as a junior.

"It changed my outlook quite a bit," he said. "I realized that you're not always going to get another opportunity and that football could have been over for me."

Toureen said that it was bittersweet not being honored with his classmates on Senior Day. But in the season-finale, he still played as if there was no tomorrow; he caught eight passes for 96 yards and a touchdown in the Vikings' loss to Eastern Washington.

Toureen doubled his career totals in 2014 with 37 catches for 541 yards, which led the team. And with his return, Portland State expects to field a deep and talented core of receivers next season. And in addition to his production, the coaching staff will lean heavily on his leadership.

"The thing that stands out about Alex is his intelligence both in the classroom and on the football field," Cooper said.

"Our offense isn't easy to learn, but he was able to start here as a true freshman. Since then, he has helped a lot of new players learn how to play the position in our system. It's great to have him back."

Toureen, a finance major, holds a 3.7 GPA and has been academic all-conference three straight years. After he graduates and plays his final down for the Vikings, he said he will likely stay in Portland to pursue opportunities in business. However, he said he still thinks fondly of his life in Cottage Grove.

"I don't get a lot of time off, but I try to get down as often as I can," Toureen said. "I love the small town, and I feel that I was a part of something special down there."

Yesterday, Toureen took the first step toward his final season with the start of spring practices. The Vikings' Spring Game will take place on Saturday, April 25. The time and location are to be determined.



photo by Matt Hollander

Cottage Grove's Kassidy Whisler went 3-for-4 with 4 RBIs in the win over Reedsport.

SOFTBALL

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team was preparing to face more challenging pitching.

"I think the pace of the pitch surprised us," Wiltse said. "It was a little slower than we were expecting and it took a few times of seeing her to know that we had to be patient."

The Lions dropped their first games of the season on Saturday when they played at Marshfield and North Bend, back-to-back.

In the early game, Marshfield scored three runs in the fifth inning to slip past Cottage Grove, 5-4.

The Pirates' Sara Allison scored teammates Katelyn Rossback and Jessica Kohl with a double. Khalani Hoyer then brought in Allison with a single for the winning run.

For the Lions, Sayles went 2-for-3 and struck out six in five innings on the mound. Clarke, Anderson and Katie Lyons each went 1-for-3.

Less than an hour later, Cottage Grove was back on the field to face North Bend.

The Bulldogs got a walk-off triple from Chey-

enne Datan to beat the Lions 3-2.

After allowing Galbreath and Sayles to score in the first inning, Daltan went the final six innings scoreless and finished with six strikeouts.

Sayles, Galbreath, Ortloff and Whisler all went 1-for-3.

"It was a bit frustrating to lose those games as we did, but we will try to take it as a learning tool," Frieze said. "It ended up being a really long day, and we made some mistakes that we typically don't make; it came down to mental preparation."

Cottage Grove closes out its nonconference slate with three games this week. The Lions travel to Douglas and South Umpqua and host Pleasant Hill in between.

Frieze said that she wants to spend the week focusing on fundamentals and execution in fielding scenarios. She also said the team needs to be more prepared to face a variety of different pitching styles.

"Good hitters can face great pitchers. A great hitter can face any pitcher," she said.

COTTAGE BOWL

League: 5 O'Clock Shadows
Date: March 22

Team	W	L
Mid State	19	5
4 U Simple	17	7
Amigos Quatro	16	8
Book Mine	16	8
C.G. Vac and Sew	14	10
V. Richenstain MD	10.5	13.5
Aces High	10	14
All in the Family	9	15
Jenni and the Jets 2	8.5	11.5
Ames to be True	8	8
Jim's Tire Factory	8	16

High Game
Men: Wayne Northern 254
Women: Lia McTaggart 225
Men Three-high series
1. Ron Bascue 606
1t. Mick Batchelor 606
3. Johnny Saldana 595
Women Three-high Series
1. Lia McTaggart 570
2. Jo Fitzgerald 485
3. Cherry Bascue 469

League: Dynamic Trios
Date: March 24

Team	W	L
Advanced Eyecare	23	9
Swearingin Design	22	10
Grandma's Rule	21	11
H. Selective Log.	20	12
Golding Enterprises	17.5	14.5
H's Rowdy Bunch	17	15
Cottage Bowlerettes	13	19
New Creations	10	18
R's Beauty Salon	6	26
K. Family Merc.	5	27

High Game: Dixie Lawson 206
Three-high Series
1. Patsy McNally 518
2. Alicia Esser 498
3. Fran Rothauge 491

League: Meri Rollers
Date: March 24

Team	W	L
Blue Sunshine	22	10
Team Reliv	21	11
Treasure Chest	21	11
Emerald Valley	21	11
Simand Chiro.	19	13
Moms Girls	18	14
Charlie's Angels	16	16
Three Amigos	14	18
Addi's Diner	12	20
Ron's Girls	12	16
Lucky Ladies	8	20

High Game: Dawn Cushman 240
Three-high Series:
1. Dawn Cushman 579
2. Megan McNary 575
3. Jacki Jackson 534

League: Cottage Mixers
Date: March 25

Team	W	L
Commonwealth F.	38	4
C.G. Speedway	32	10
Funseekers	21	21
Covered Bridge U.	21	21
Swearingin Design	20	22

Jerry Brown Co.	20	22
Bowling Stones	18	24
Cottage Bowl	17	25
Kelly's Trailer R.	15	27
Taylor's Towing	8	34

High Game
Men: Joe Simons 246
Women: Laura Cardoza 209
High Series
Men: Joe Simons 670
Women: Laura Cardoza 576

League: Ball and Chain
Date: March 27

Team	W	L
Bowl Dozers	18	6
More Beer	16	8
Senior Funsters	14	10
Cracker Jacks	14	10
Roman Numerals	13	13
Joe's Diner	11	13
Pin Pushers	11	13
Thunder Boltz	10	14
Party Patrol	6	14
Ally Oops	3	17

High Game
Men: Glenn Clark 289
Women: Vanessa Chenoweth 246
Men Three-high Series
1. Glenn Clark 748
2. Chad Renfro 668
3. Jim Chenoweth 666
Women Three-high Series

1. Vanessa Chenoweth	698
2. Koleen Kelly	592
3. Brenda Chenoweth	486

MIDDLEFIELD MENS GOLF

Date: March 23
Game: 3-2 Best Ball

1. Paul Waterman, Darrell Lee, Mel Gowing, Frank Gates, (-22).
2. Leroy Bodine, Larry Emery, Bill Avery, Pat Rickard (-8). 3. Leon Hayes, Bob McCarty, David Morris, Jerry Pennington (-7).
Low Gross: 1. Bodine 77. 2. Emery 78.
Low Net: 1. Gowing 55. 2t. Rickard 66. 2t. Lee 66.
Closest to the Pin: No. 5, Dick Winters. No. 7, Larry Eyman. No. 14, McCarty.

Date: March 26
Game: 1-2-3 Points

1. Jim Hoover, Mike Helms, Gary Ingram, Bob McCarty 94. 2t. Larry Emery, Larry Eyman, Rudy Nelleremoe, Gary Sparks 88. 2t. Ron Ackerman, Frank Gates, Pat Rickard, Dan Smith 88.
Low Gross: 1. Helms 66. 2. Derosh Kinkade 70. 3. Dan Smith 74.
Low Net: 1t. Don Hanly 64. 1t. Nelleremoe 64. 1t. Hoover 64.

BASEBALL

Continued from 1B

"When you play a lot of games in a short period of time, you can see how the kids react in situations that are hard to simulate in practice, like bunts and baserunning" Geiszler said. "So, even though we didn't play all that well, we know what we need to work on — and those are valuable lessons."

Prior to the season, Geiszler had pointed to the week of tournaments as a critical time for developing team chemistry, and he is pleased with how the Lions are working together off of the field.

"I feel like we are definitely where we need to be as far as leadership, and that's probably my

biggest takeaway from the week. We don't have one or two guys who are doing it; it's the entire group, and it's been nice to see that develop."

Cottage Grove wraps up its nonconference schedule this week. The Lions (6-2) played Philomath (5-1) on Tuesday, and host Siuslaw (2-4) on Saturday. And while they are off to a strong start, Geiszler wants to see a more diligent approach from his players.

"I want to see them play hard from the first pitch to the last pitch. I don't think we did that all too well at Stayton, and you just can't play that way against league opponents. This week, we have a chance to work on that against two very good teams," he said.

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