



photo by James Cloutier  
Steve Prefontaine at the 1972 U.S. Olympic Trials

## CLOUTIER ON PRE

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a biography all tell his story.

Local artist James Cloutier is not a sports photographer, but thanks to a friend in the University of Oregon Athletic Department, he got the chance of a lifetime to shoot the 1972 U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials.

Some of the sport's greatest talents came to Eugene for that meet, including Jim Ryan, Frank Shorter, and, of course, Pre.

But Cloutier, an unseasoned track fan, was none the wiser.

"There was a certain naiveté on my part, which maybe was helpful. I wasn't focusing on the superstars," he said.

However, even at the time Pre transcended the sport, and Cloutier knew to train his camera on the hometown favorite.

"He was so independent. He wasn't going to be anyone's lapdog, and he flaunted that on the track," Cloutier recalled.

Cloutier later turned one of those photographs into a draw-

ing and gave it to Pre. He remembered that Pre was very approachable and humble but couldn't recall their conversation.

"If you only knew what he was going to become, you wouldn't have wasted that time," he said.

Cloutier shot sports just a few more times after the 1972 Trials, but never again from the infield. And never again of Pre.

"I don't know why I never went back to shooting track. My life probably just took another turn," he said.

As did Pre's, fatefully. Many years later, Cloutier continues to be inspired by Pre, not only for his athletic gifts but as a fellow artist.

"Some people create with words, or with music, or with a brush and paints. I like to make something beautiful when I run," Pre was famously quoted.

"It's an incredible quote, and he truly was an artist," said Cloutier.



photo by Matt Hollander

Bill Thompson, co-President of the South Lane Youth Football Association, welcomes 90 kids to Saturday's clinic.

## Youth Football clinic draws large numbers

Seven UO players on hand to lead drills

BY MATT HOLLANDER  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Marcus Mariota had prior commitments in Tennessee, but his absence from this year's South Lane Youth Football Association (SLYFA) clinic and registration day did not deter players and families from showing up in droves.

About 90 kids participated in the skill-building activities held Saturday afternoon at Cottage Grove High School, and 75 of those young athletes registered to play tackle or flag football next fall.

Mariota, the star quarterback and future Heisman winner for the University of Oregon, was naturally a top draw to last year's clinic, but seven current and former Oregon Ducks were on hand to lead the participants through offensive and defensive positional drills, including Isaac Ava, Kenny Bassett, Austin Daich, Mike Garrity, Blake and Grant Thompson and Joe Walker.

"It gets families to start thinking about the fall," said co-president Bill Thompson of the free clinic. "We've already done a bit of outreach between advertisements and postcards, but we try to get the word out however we can."

Thompson said that there will be a second registration day at the high school on July 26, which will be held in conjunction with a coaches clinic. Families may also register online at southlaneyouthfootball.com. SLYFA teams begin practicing on Aug. 17.

Saturday's clinic and registration day was also the organization's first event since changing its name from "Cottage Grove Pop Warner." In addition to Cottage Grove, the new SLYFA now encompasses neighboring communities Creswell, Drain, Lowell, Oakridge, Pleasant Hill and Yoncalla.

"It's been all positive," Thompson said of the feedback to the change. "The most difficult thing is communicating what we represent. We support football in all communities, not just Cottage Grove. It's going to be new for all of these communities to think of themselves as a part of something bigger."

Thompson said that the goal of the reorganization is less about building more competitive football teams and more about getting more kids and families interested in football.

"People are catching on to what we're trying to do," he said. "All the coaches from the SLYFA communities met on Saturday, and we're on the same page as far as building momentum for the sport by encouraging more participation."



photo by Matt Hollander

Keenan Dvorak catches a pass.

## FOOTBALL



photo by Matt Hollander

Garren Taylor (right) practices his breakdown in front of Oscar Rauda at Wednesday's practice. Rauda ('13) is planning to coach on Cottage Grove's JV team this fall.

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"We're coming back knowing more about the game. We know the plays better and we're ready to lead," said rising senior Payton Presley. "It'll also be nice having more of a rotation so we can learn and go up against a better scout team."

Whether or not Cottage Grove's improved depth and experience will translate to more success, however, will depend on how well they can navigate what appears to be another daunting schedule. In addition to their Sky-Em slate, the Lions will play at Marshfield, Henley at home and Del Norte (California) in Autzen Stadium on Sept. 12.

"I always tell the kids, 'The scoreboard will take care of itself. We just have to focus on getting better and improving,'" Roberts said.

Two recent alumni, quarterback Scotty Hitner and receiver Oscar Rauda, were also on hand to help with last week's practices. Hitner is hoping to walk-on at Oregon State University this fall, and Rauda will coach on the Lions JV team.

"It's nice when you get guys who had such a good experience in your program that they want to come back and be a part of it," said Roberts. "Those guys know that they're always welcome to come back, and they will always be a part of what we do because they helped build the foundation

of something that goes beyond wins and losses."

Up Next: Cottage Grove will host McNary, Pleasant Hill, Siuslaw and Willamette for a 7-on-7 event on Saturday, June 13.

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