

# THE BUSINESS OF SPORTS

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and students on this track sell signage packages, update the video board in the commons and, starting this past year, manage the athletics website, cglions.org. The new website has significantly more functionality than the previous one, and the students have spent this year getting a hang of the basics. Florez said that going forward the class will look to further utilize the website's capabilities and thus add more value to sponsorship packages.

"We already generate sig-

nificant gross impressions for our sponsors through the ads and signs that people see when they come to our games, tournaments and graduations. But there is such a demand to have an online presence, and we want to give people more reasons to visit our website," he said.

The class is unlike any other at Cottage Grove. It's completely project based; students are required to interact professionally with local business owners, and they regularly encounter real-world problems, such as a non-functioning soda machine or a misplaced sponsorship check.

"There's never a dull moment," Florez said. "We're constantly dealing with the unexpected. Recently a sign fell down, completely unbeknownst to us, but when the business owner called, we still had to massage that situation. Sometimes in business you have to take a fall to make people happy."

There are quite a few obstacles to maintaining a high-performing class that delivers on the promises made to sponsors. Some students who have the skills to contribute can't find room in their schedules for Advanced Business Concepts, and

others may only be able to take it for a year. With so many moving parts, things can slip through the cracks.

"Sponsors expect results, but we try to communicate that this is a learning setting," said Florez. "Thankfully, we have a core group of kids who have developed those problem-solving skills, and who come back for multiple years."

Graduated senior Taylor Sayles was involved with the program since her freshman year. She started out in computer technology before moving into Sports Marketing as a sopho-

more. When she first took on the new role, Sayles recalls dreading making phone calls to local business owners.

"I was really shy when I first started school, and this class helped me become comfortable with phone calls and face-to-face meetings," she said.

As a junior, Sayles moved into a leadership role and was given off-campus privileges. The experience taught her a lot about how to build a network.

"You can't run a business from your headquarters; you have to go out and make connections. You sell more by go-

ing in and shaking people's hand than trying to sell them over the phone," she said.

While Sayles has no future plans to run a business — she intends to study education at Southern Oregon University — she said that the lessons she's learned aren't exclusive to the business world.

"It's not our goal to make these students into business owners," said Florez, who once thought he'd like to open a sporting goods store. "It's about giving them an opportunity to test their ideas and have some experiences together."

## PRESLEY

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was selected to play in the third annual Futures Games, a showcase event for college and professional scouts which will be held in Keizer on July 3. Legion Baseball is also underway, and later this month he will try out for Baseball Northwest, a regional all-star team that travels to compete at scouted tournaments throughout the West. All the while he'll be training with his teammates for the upcoming football season.

Should he make the Baseball Northwest team, Presley's fall figures to be even busier, as he would need to go directly from the Friday night lights of Herald White Stadium to tournaments in neighboring states. But the sac-

rifices could end up being well worth it. It's his dream to play collegiately.

"It takes a lot mentally to shift from throwing and fielding a baseball to catching a football and being aggressive with people," he said. "It also makes for some long days."

Presley is by now accustomed to managing the logistics and mental gymnastics of double-duty summers, and he enters this offseason more physically capable than ever before. Over the winter he added 15 pounds of muscle and now stands 5'7," 170 pounds. He said that he's never felt faster rounding the bases, and at shortstop he regularly reaches for long plays to his left that he never would have tried a year ago.

But while Presley is bigger, faster and more accomplished than last year, he hopes to lead the Lions back to the level of success he experienced as a sophomore when they played for a state title in football and advanced to the state playoffs in baseball.

"It showed me what it takes to succeed and what kind of person you have to be," he said. "To be apart of that again would be amazing."

photo by Gary Ordway Sports Action Photography

**Payton Presley is this year's Cottage Grove Sentinel athlete of the year. Just a junior, Presley will be back for the Lions football and baseball teams in 2015-2016.**



## BORIGO

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played loose. I was able to just go out and do my thing," she said.

For Borigo, the challenge of selecting a school paled in comparison to that of her earlier decision to pursue basketball over softball.

As a nine-year-old, Borigo joined the Northwest Bullets, a regional all-star softball team that played at college-scouted tournaments throughout the West. The day before her 10th birthday, she hit her first home run, and soon afterward she became one of the top recruits of her class.

But while Borigo said she was stressed by the constant attention of college coaches, she kept playing because of the investment that her family had made in her budding career.

As a freshman for the Lions, Borigo batted .577 with three home runs. But the pressure had reached a boiling point.

"It had gotten to the point where I didn't want to play anymore," she recalled.

Following her sophomore basketball season (she was a starter in each of her first two seasons), Borigo told her family and friends that she would not be returning to softball. Their responses were mixed.

"A lot of people were worried that I had given up on this chance to get my school paid for, but deep down, I knew that I could still make that happen through basketball," Borigo said.



photo by Matt Hollander

**Conner Borigo is this year's Cottage Grove female athlete of the year. She will attend Northwest Christian University next year and play basketball for the Beacons.**

After the dust settled, Borigo went to work. She would shoot baskets twice a day with her mom, Angie, who played at Oregon State University. Borigo also joined the Willamette Valley Basketball Academy, a traveling squad akin with similar

commitments as the Northwest Bullets.

"I'm a really dedicated player. If I have a goal, I'm going to achieve it," she said. "It was the roughest transition of my life, but I'm so glad that I did it."



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