

The one-year-in column

BY MATT HOLLANDER
The Cottage Grove Sentinel



Fifty two weeks ago, I had never been published. I'm not sure that Jon Stinnett realized that little fact when he hired me, but he certainly figured it out on the afternoon of our first deadline, when only half of my section was complete.

Lesson number one: 12' x 22' pages are gigantic if you've never filled one before.

We finished sometime just before midnight, and I'm sure that we both left the office thinking we had made a mistake: him offering the job, and me accepting it. But I kept coming back. He remained patient. And that's more or less how it went for the next 51 issues.

I've learned a lot over this past year, but it all goes back to filling the page — with headlines, copy and art. I used to believe that the stories were the most important part of telling the news, but if the other elements don't work, then no one will bother to read them.

Here are a few other things that I've concluded after my first year on the job:

1. Covering sports is hard

Watching sports on TV in this day and age, there's never a point when I don't know exactly what's going on in a given game: the camera puts you right on the action; the infographics keep you up to date all the time; and even the announcers can occasionally be helpful. This production quality has left a lot of us thinking — myself included — 'Hey, I could cover sports too!'

I can tell you that without anyone feeding you the information, it can be really hard to know what's going on in a game, let alone report on it with accuracy.

2. Covering a winning team is just better

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photo by Matt Hollander

MJ Raade set five personal bests at the Mike Morris Invitational.

Aqua Lions take on the long course

BY MATT HOLLANDER
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The Cottage Grove Aqua Lions sent a host of swimmers to the annual Mike Morris Invitational, held this past weekend at Amazon Pool in Eugene. It was the first long-course competition of the season, and coach Tyson Pilling said that the results were predictably mixed.

"This meet gives us a good baseline of where the kids are at," he said. "We've only held a few workouts in this pool so far, but we'll start coming up here once or twice a week now that we're into summer."

Despite the challenge stepping up from the 33-yard length of their home pool to the 50-meter distance at Amazon, several swimmers made significant improvements on their entry times.

Competing in the girls 11-12 division, MJ Raade cut 15 seconds in the 200 freestyle down to 3:00.71. She improved by nearly four seconds in the 50 freestyle (38.15), eight seconds in the 50 backstroke (48.32), 13 seconds in the 100 freestyle (1:25.16), and a whopping three minutes, 20 seconds in the 800 freestyle (12:56.85).

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Athlete of the Week: Blake Sentman



photo by Matt Hollander

Blake Sentman led the Lions to the end zone in each of his turns at quarterback against Springfield, Creswell and Junction City during Cottage Grove's 7-on-7 tournament Saturday at Herald White Stadium.

Cottage Grove measures progress against Springfield

Lions show improvement in 7-on-7 scrimmages

BY MATT HOLLANDER
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Coaches will tell you that 7-on-7 scrimmages are more about teaching than competition. The 2015 Lions will tell you they are tired of learning and ready to compete.

With just a handful of returning players with varsity experience, the 2014 Lions were expected to be young and inexperienced. But the signs of trouble began in

earnest at a 7-on-7 scrimmage against Springfield in July. There, Miller quarterback Trevor Watson picked apart the Cottage Grove defense, needing but a few throws — and sometimes only one — to lead his team to the end zone.

On Saturday, Cottage Grove hosted six schools for a 7-on-7 competition, including Springfield. The Lions blew past the defending 5A Midwestern League champions, four scores to two.

"Last year Springfield ate us alive, and today we did better than hold our own," said Cottage Grove co-defensive coordinator Mike Ingman. "We may not have done to them what they did to us, but we definitely had the advantage today."

Cottage Grove's defense flummoxed Watson, hold-

ing the two-time reigning Midwestern offensive player of the year to 95 yards, one touchdown and three interceptions on 5-of-14 passing.

"I feel like our defense was making a lot of good plays," said senior Evan Britton, who intercepted Watson twice. "It was really good for us to get some momentum heading into the offseason."

Cottage Grove's offense, which also struggled against Springfield a year ago, showed similar signs of growth on Saturday. Junior Blake Sentman went 10-of-17 for 120 yards, three touchdowns and no interceptions against the Millers.

"I hoped that we would be competitive today," he

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Over the weekend at the Cottage Grove Speedway...

CGS completes second Kart race of 2015

BY BEN DEATHERAGE

Cottage Grove Speedway hosted some exciting action on Friday, June 12 for the second Kage Kart race of the season.

Coos Bay's Tallon Dubisar led the Pee Wee feature wire to wire for his first victory of the season.

Despite lots of cautions and heavy traffic, Isaac Stere of Cottage Grove kept all challengers at bay during the Intermediate feature to visit victory lane for the first time of the season.

photo courtesy of Dirt Monkey Productions
Scott Fox (3) sped to victory in the Open Kage event Friday at the Cottage Grove Speedway.

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Barraza, Owen, and Maricle earn wins at Cottage Grove Speedway on Ladies Night

BY BEN DEATHERAGE

Cottage Grove Speedway had one of its best crowds of the season for Ladies Night on Saturday, June 13. All three main events were action packed, and there was good racing all night long. Classes in competition included the 360 Sprints, IMCA Sport Mods and Hornets.

In the 360 Sprint main event, Patrick Dills was the early race leader. The Cottage Grove young gun lost the lead around lap 17 to Roseburg's Kyler Barraza, who stayed in front the rest of the way to win his first race of 2015.

In the IMCA Sport Mod main event, Gene Ashley seemed to have the car to beat until mechanical problems took him out of the race. Cottage Grove chauffeur Jimmy Owen inherited the lead and won his first career CGS race.

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June 20th
FATHER'S DAY
Clark Printing Extreme Sprints,
Street Stocks, Dwarf Cars