

Remembering the Cottage Grove BMX track

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The tearing down of the BMX track has brought about a lot of nostalgia for many who grew up there. For a while, the track was not only home for enthusiastic kids, but for serious athletes who aspired to take their BMX career to a professional level. To many people in the area, the Todd Kephart Memorial BMX Track was more than just a playground.

Bruce DeLong and his family were the founders and designers of the track, which opened in July of 1984.

"My family started working on getting a track in Cottage Grove in 1983 as a memorial park for a friend of mine who raced BMX and died in a car accident," DeLong said. That friend was Todd Kephart. Upon its completion, the track was a huge hit and served a variety of skill levels.

"At the time it was the most aggressive track in the area," DeLong said, "I designed it truly to get people ready for national competition."

At the time, DeLong was well on his way to launching his own professional BMX career, which happened about six months after the track opened.

"We didn't have a local pro class so, I had to do a lot of traveling to be able to compete," he said. But the architect still managed to use the track over



Sentinel file photo

In the 1985 Governor's Cup, nearly 250 riders entered to compete in races.

the course of several years for training.

DeLong says that the track produced a lot of skilled riders and berthed "some very serious careers."

One of those careers was that of Ryan Wentland, who moved to Cottage Grove from Wyo-

ning in the 90s. Wentland's first experience at the Cottage Grove BMX track was in May of 1995. He noted that his babysitter's kids were into it.

"They gave me the bug," he said. "Once I went there for myself, I was hooked." And off went Wentland's career.

His first race was in 1998, where he solely focused on the Cottage Grove and Eugene tracks. But by the time 2000 rolled around, Wentland was traveling all across the state and the Northwest to compete. That then turned into more national competition, and Wentland has

been as far as Florida to compete. Wentland also served on the board for several years, as the track was very close to his heart.

The recent demolition of the track has brought about a lot of nostalgia from the BMX family in Cottage Grove.

"It's massively sentimental to me. Who I am today was molded around the track," Wentland added. Much like skate parks or the beach for surfing, a BMX track creates a family of a variety of riders.

DeLong had walked away from BMX in 1988 until returning in 2013. His first race back was at the Cottage Grove track during the Governor's Cup. DeLong has since continued his BMX career and even recently entered in a national competition in Washington this past weekend.

In the most recent couple of years, however, the popularity of BMX waned and use of the track diminished. With less use came less sustainability and maintenance, making the track hazardous.

"I'm disappointed in the condition that the people let it get to, but it is what it is," DeLong said.

Currently, the City is working with the Cottage Grove High School Mountain Bike Club for a possible pump track to be constructed, because although the use of the track deteriorated, there is still a strong cycling community in Cottage Grove.

For people like Wentland, the track was a second home.

"Because of what started here, I have a lifetime of memories and an extended family."

Golf tournaments happening this summer

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A host of tournaments are set for the summer at Middlefield Golf Course, and all of them are hosted by local organizations for fundraisers and charities. Three tournaments (two in July and one in August) highlight the series of competitions that will be featured on the green.

July 9: Lions' Football Tournament

First, there is the Cottage Grove Lions Football tournament, held on July 9 at 8 a.m. The tournament is held to help raise money for the football program, which raises money every year for supplies.

"Usually this type of thing is for filling holes in the team's fundraising," Head Coach and Athletic Director Gary Roberts said. The football team hosts a variety of fundraisers throughout the year, and this tournament helps relieve pressure off of the team. The tournament raises anywhere between \$3,800 to \$5,000 each year.

"We kind of go into it saying 'we have to

get at least \$3,500,'" Roberts said. The tournament has never raised less than the \$3,500 goal. Seventy-five people have already registered, some of which are already in a team of four, and all others will be put into a team on the day of the tournament.

July 16: Couch Potato Triathlon

The week after the Lion's tournament is the Junior Stars Couch Potato Triathlon by the Cottage Bowl. This tournament spans out of the golf course and back into the bowling alley. The tournament is a fundraiser for the Junior Stars bowling program to help subsidize costs. Manager and owner of the Cottage Bowl Natalie Clark says that it is the seventh annual tournament; however, it is only the second year that the Cottage Bowl has taken over to host the event.

The tournament consists of a nine-hole game of golf, followed by two games of bowling and a cricket-style game of darts.

"A lot of adults want to help the kids' bowling program," Clark said. This year, 10 teams of four adults have registered to play.

August 6: Charlie Stovall Tournament

The last big tournament at Middlefield is on Aug. 6. The Charlie Stovall tournament that commemorates Stovall, a business educator in the South Lane School District for over 30 years, as well as raises money for scholarships. The tournament is hosted by the Kiwanis Club and spearheaded by Kurt Walker.

This year marks the 22nd annual tournament, and Walker says around 30 to 34 teams have registered. Each year, the tournament averages about \$5,000 to \$6,000 in scholarship money. Although the scholarships strictly go to kids from CGHS and Kennedy, people from all over Lane County and North Douglas come to participate in the tournament.

"I think even if they're not from Cottage Grove, people still believe it's a good cause and enjoy helping out," Walker said.

The scholarships that are created out of this money tend to go to students who focus in vocational arts, Walker says.

Athlete of the Week
Paradee leads girls' basketball in scoring

The Lions girls' basketball squad recently ended its summer league with a trip to Brookings Harbor, where the Lions played a total of seven games over three days. During those seven games, a newly rostered player by the name of Maria Paradee led the team in scoring with 67 total points, even outscoring a seasoned Keara Murphy.

Speedway sees familiar winners during July 2 races

BY BEN DEATHERAGE
For the Sentinel

Cottage Grove Speedway was in action on Saturday, July 2 for T-Shirt Night. The track hosted the Clark Printing Extreme Sprints, IMCA Modifieds, Street Stocks, and the Quality RV Repair Hornets.

After a couple of incidents that prevented the first lap from being complete, it was Cooper Desbiens opening up the race as the leader. The Sutherland teenager retained the top spot until he was passed on lap three by Orion Redmond. Redmond, from Roseburg, blazed the trail the rest of the way despite briefly getting held up in traffic on the final couple of laps. It was

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SVA's SCORES remains casual yet competition is still thick

While South Valley Athletics stresses the friendliness in the competition, participants don't hold back, making the games exciting to play and watch

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

South Valley Athletics has recently restarted its annual SCORES adult soccer league, bringing soccer lovers back to Currin Field to compete in the recreational games held every Wednesday.

This year, the league has six teams with roughly 12 to 16 people on each team, including coaches. The games are nine-on-nine on a 100-yard field. Each team plays four women and four men at all times along with a goalie.

While the league is purely recreational and holds a limited contact rule, competition doesn't elude the players. The first week, on June 22, held a series of extremely close games. The House team defeated Rally 4-3, Dragon Force beat Brad's Big Time 3-2 and Beercalona took down Mizfits 5-4. All the games were extremely close

and forced strong second-half efforts. The standings for the league are based off of total points, therefore Beercalona finished the week ranked first, followed by House and Dragon Force in the top three. Mizfits, Rally and Brad's Big Time rounded up the last three in the rankings. With three close games, it is hard to determine a clear front runner out of the six teams. But if there's anything this past week has revealed, it's that it is inevitable that the top teams will become clear as play goes on.

The games of June 29 were not nearly as close as the previous week. House came out strong against the Mizfits, taking a strong 3-0 lead by half time. In the second half, as competition let up, the House team still managed to score two more goals to rout the Mizfits in a 5-0 win. Brad's Big Time came back after a loss with a dominant 6-1 win over Rally, which now

dropped to 0-2. The previously No. 1 ranked Beercalona team found itself in trouble against Dragon Force, which beat them in a solid 5-2 win.

The scores and the ranking system have made the league interesting, in that a team like Beercalona dropped from first place to fourth after Wednesday's games with seven total points. House leads the league with nine points (2-0), followed by Dragon Force with eight points (2-0). Brad's Big Time also has eight points but is given third place due to its 1-1 record. Mizfits and Rally sit at the bottom of the league with four total points and 0-2 records.

This week (July 6), second ranked Dragon Force will take on Rally, followed by Beercalona getting a chance at climbing back up the ladder against the House team, and Mizfits will look for their first win against Brad's Big Time.



Photo by Sam Wright

The Mizfits (green) struggled against the House team (red) last Wednesday.

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Cottage Grove Speedway

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