

## Concussion concerns calmed

By Zach Silva  
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The start of fall sports means high hopes for the upcoming season, great expectations for what is to come and an increased awareness of concussions.

A concussion is defined by the Center of Disease Control as “a type of traumatic brain injury” that is caused by a direct hit to the head or by an impact sustained by the body that results in a whiplash affect. As more and more research from the National Football League begins to circulate about concussions and what the long term damage might mean, high schools across the country are finding ways to prevent injuries of this nature in the present.

At Cottage Grove High School, athletic trainer Jared Hutchins works with student athletes to help them understand the dangers of concussions and how to move forward if they have experienced brain trauma.

In 2013, Hutchins implemented the use of the national test called ImPACT. ImPACT is an assessment that measures cognitive functions in an individual. All athletes at Cottage Grove High School are required to take it before the season starts to provide a baseline in case they suffer a head injury. If they do suffer a head injury, they will take the test again to see where they scored and based off of the results Hutchins can work to see if they are ready to come back and play or if they need more rest.

“With the new tests we can put them through they can know, ‘Oh yeah, okay I’m not ready.’ Because we have enough tests now that show enough results and they get some feedback that I’m not ready to go yet,” said Hutchins. “It isn’t just me saying no you can’t go back in, or kind of guessing, now we have more tests which helps.”

While the type of concussion that has been glorified and is most commonly thought of when this topic comes up is the head-to-head collision in football, Hutchins notes that this is by no means the most common type.

“It’s you’re going down and someone knees you in the head or you get hit and your head whiplashes off the ground. Just awkward things like that,” said Hutchins. “Girls soccer, basketball you catch an elbow on a rebound. You think of concussion and you think of this big collision and two people got really hurt but a lot of time they just got hit, a bump.”

It is after these bumps and hits occur that athletes have to proceed with caution and not just power through the pain. Ehsan Hazrat MD, who works at the Cottage Grove PeaceHealth clinic, also sees the danger of concussions and that patience is the key to getting better.

“With sports we always have this mentality to be tough. And yeah, the tougher you are the more you do. This is that one time that you don’t want to be tough,” says Dr. Hazrat. “Even if you suspect you have a concussion it’s a good idea to kind of take it easy for a week, or two weeks. In the long run you will benefit from it.”

## High school fall sports start practice



The Cottage Grove High School football team working on 11-on-11 drills on their first day of practice. Fall sports started across all of Oregon on Monday.

PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA

## Football camp wraps up

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Last week, the Cottage Grove High School (CGHS) football team hosted their annual football camp. The camp that lasted from Monday to Thursday featured morning sessions of middle school students and high school underclassmen and the evenings had students from kindergarten to fifth grade. Despite two of the evening sessions having to be cut from two hours to one hour because of poor air quality due to the fires in the area, the camp continued and was seen as a success by the coaches and players.

This year there were 45 kindergarten through fifth grade campers, 34 middle schoolers and 30 high schoolers. The camp is a way for the players to work on position-specific skills before the start of the fall season.

With the younger students in the evenings, the campers would rotate to different drills that focused on a specific skill. At each station they were led by a current CGHS football coach and a host of current football players who were wearing their jerseys.

One of those players was junior DeJean Alonzo. Alonzo, who is currently the backup quarterback and a defensive back, was leading drills in each of his respective positions. With excitement that matched the energy levels of the kids he was working with and a constant stream of positive language, Alonzo was enjoying his time leading the drills.

“I was in their shoes at one point and it’s fun to look up to the people in the jersey,” said junior DeJean Alonzo. While noting his role as a role model to the students, he also acknowledged that working with the younger kids can be a lot to handle. “It’s funny when the little kindergartners come in, it’s a handful. They don’t know what they’re doing but they like to be here doing the drills.”

Head football coach Gary Roberts noted that seeing his players work with kids is a good lesson for them in a number of ways.

“It’s a good week for our kids because they learn that it’s not that easy to be a coach,” said Roberts.



A pair of campers take a water break on the last day of camp.

PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA

## Athletes of the Week



*This week's athletes of the week are the 45 kindergarten through fifth graders who were at football camp. The group was clearly excited to be at camp but were even more excited to have their pictures taken.*



PHOTOS BY ZACH SILVA

# Cottage Grove Speedway

**No races this weekend.  
See you next weekend  
enjoy the fair!**