

ANNOUNCER

continued from B1



Evan McClendon calls his final Cottage Grove baseball game last Friday.

the following basketball season, the position of play-by-play announcer opened up.

"I was like oh crap, now what do I do because we were right in the middle of the season at that time," said KNND station manager Cameron Reiten. "Oh boy this is a problem because we had a game coming up in just a day or two. I got to find somebody to do this game."

Aaron, who was classmates with Reiten at CGHS, was working at the station said that he would help but that his brother would be interested in the job.

"So Cameron calls me up... and he says, 'Hey, do you want to do a basketball game Friday?'" Evan recalls.

At halftime, Evan then made a

call to the station where Reiten then told him he was hired.

"I owed it to somebody to give the same opportunity that I was given. I was just pleased to do that and work with an excellent young man and bring him along and see him develop into a very good quality broadcaster," said Reiten.

"And give him the opportunity to work at something that he is very enthusiastic about and enjoyed. It was very beneficial for all of us and the fans have really enjoyed Evan over the years."

Since that fateful game, McClendon has called over 100 games as he has seen the Lions through highs and lows. At a moment's notice, McClendon

serves as a walking Sportscenter as he relives his favorite play-by-play for moments.

"They had a fourth down and eight on the Astoria like 31 and they complete this 11 yard pass to Jacob Woods. (Blake) Sentman rolled out to his left, found him on the sideline and the very next play they scored," he said about Cottage Grove football's improbably comeback victory against Astoria in the state semifinals two seasons ago with the same excitement as if the game was unfolding live.

"And that would have been the season if that pass is incomplete. That was the craziest one."

From basketball buzzer beaters, to seeing the baseball team

win its first league title in over a decade, to the football team that won its first title this past season, McClendon feels lucky to have been calling the games at such a historic moment in Cottage Grove history. While he remembers the Lions victories, with the same verve he can recall the teams, and specifically players, that doomed Cottage Grove.

"A buzzer-beater three by Matt D'Amore. I'll never forget his name. He played for La Salle Prep before they moved up. They had just over three seconds left and the kid shot a runner from the left-wing. Cottage Grove was up three and his momentum carried him to the backboard and he tied it up and La Salle Prep won in overtime," he says of a 2014 boys' basketball loss.

Or there are the individual players and performances that stand out like the one from Sisters' Joey Morgan from four seasons ago.

"Joey Morgan now he was the Pac-12 player of the year for the University of Washington and I watched him hit two homeruns and a double out of here, he went four for four in a game."

A breathing encyclopedia of Cottage Grove sports history, McClendon thinks that there may be a time he calls another game, but for now, work comes first. Until the day he is back behind the microphone he will be carried for his appreciation of all things high school sports.

"If I could make a living out of doing nothing but calling high school sports for the rest of my life, I would do it in a heartbeat. I mean, absolute heartbeat," he said.

High school sports recap

A look back at the busy week of high school sports in the area

Cottage Grove Track and Field

Last Thursday, the Lions travelled to Sutherlin for a meet against the Bulldogs and Junction City. The team rested most of their top competitors but the boys still came in first while the girls finished second.

On the boys side, the team had first place finishes from Fernando Soto-Cruz (400), Jake Hopkins (shot put), Tako-da Brooks (pole vault) and Logan Husk (long jump). On the girls side, Hayle Maitia won pole vault for Cottage Grove.

The Lions showed off their dominance Saturday at the Elmira Relays winning both the boys and girls team competitions. The boys had dominance in the relay teams (see athlete of the week, B1) in addition to seeing Brooks (pole vault), Jacob Woods (long jump), Hunter Hall (shot put), Jace Bartram (javelin) and Erick Giffen (high jump) snag first place finishes.

On the girls side, the Lions saw Maitia (pole vault), Faryn Dahlen (100 hurdles, long jump), Matty Ladd (high jump) take first place in addition to victories in the 4 x 800 and 4 x 120 shuttle hurdles.

Cottage Grove Softball

Last Friday, the Lions lost a pair of games to Sutherlin 21-1 and 15-2.

North Douglas Baseball

The Warriors went 2-2 last week. The week started with a loss to the Douglas JV team (8-7) and at Bandon (5-3). Last Friday the team picked up a pair of wins against Douglas JV in a double header (6-0, 8-0).

Elkton/Yoncalla Baseball

The Elks rolled through Mohawk last week winning their games 18-6, 29-1 and 34-0.

Yoncalla/Elkton Softball

The Eagles went 0-3 last week as they lost to Lowell 14-1 and 22-4 last Wednesday. Against Mohawk on Thursday the team lost 34-14.

Yoncalla/North Douglas Track and Field

At the Central Coast Invitational at Siuslaw, both teams took eighth place. On the boys side, Laaron Lopez was the top finisher with a second place finish in high jump.

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