

James Ellis prepares for journey

Elkton's new athletic director/principal has a busy year ahead

By Zach Silva
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There will be moments next basketball season when Elkton's first-year principal and athletic director, James Ellis, will not be cheering for the Elks. Instead, he will be cheering for his alma mater: Days Creek.

For the past 28 years, Ellis has been the head boys basketball coach at Days Creek and with his son entering his senior year this year, that role will not be changing in the upcoming season. Ellis is determined to make working in roles at both Elkton and Days Creek work out.

"It's going to bring up scenarios that I can't even imagine. There's going to be a lot of surprises and I'm sure midway through I'm going to say things like, 'Oh, I never thought of that' or 'Whoa, I never saw that coming.'"

"So it is going to be an interesting relationship," said Ellis.

As he was getting his administrative credentials last year, Ellis, who officially started at Elkton on July 1, was approached by Elkton to see if he was interested in being principal.

"At first I downplayed it: 'The timing is wrong,' 'Not interested,' 'I'm a year out,' 'If you guys don't have anyone in a year then give me a call.' That type of thing. So they went ahead and pursued me and said, 'No, throw your name in the hat now,' and that led to a couple of interviews and a sit-down discussion on what they wanted me to do in order to get me there this year," said Ellis.

A principal was needed in Elkton to free up time for Andy Boe — the Elkton superintendent who also serves as the principal for both the high school and middle school. With Ellis now on board, he will not be free of his principal duties at the high school.

The vacancy of athletic director opened up after Elkton's Rob Parker retired from teaching and his position as athletic director. Parker will continue to be the girls' basketball coach. Ellis, who has been the athletic director at Days Creek for the past three years, decided to add that to his plate.

"It's kind of a natural fit, really, the AD high school principal piece, I think," said Boe. "Because he's so involved with kids up there and with the calendar and with all the things that are going on ... It's good to have someone who has been in our league and knows small schools, has all those connections already and that way he can slide into that AD position and that's a big benefit."

For Ellis, who lives 83.7 miles from Elkton High School, this will mean a lot of time driving which will only get more complicated during the basketball season when he will have a full slate of practices and games for Days Creek.

"The board has very graciously offered a lot of flexibility. And they are allowing me on game days and different practice days to leave the school at Elkton early. And what I will I do is contractual-

ELKTON see B2

CG Rodeo rides into 70th year



PHOTOS BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

A participant competes in the barrel racing on Friday night at the Cottage Grove Rodeo. The rodeo, in its 70th year, welcomed participants from around the area in the annual two-day event. For more pictures, see B2.

Eastburn gets to know community



Steve Eastburn demonstrates a dribbling drill during basketball camp last week.

First year CGHS basketball coach excited for upcoming season

By Zach Silva
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The Steve Eastburn coaching era has begun.

While he has not yet coached the basketball team in season, the newly appointed CGHS girls' basketball coach continued the time-honored tradition of girls' basketball camp that is led by current players and aimed at girls between fourth and eighth grade.

"In my perspective camp has been about you know, introducing a few basketball skills for the kids but also just getting to know all of them and having them get to know us as a coaching staff," said Eastburn. "So once again, like I talked about it's just building relationships with everybody."

Eastburn was hired to the position in May after Kevin Yoss stepped down as head coach in April after coaching 18 years in both the girls and boys pro-

grams. Eastburn most recently coached at Crow after being an assistant at Marist High School and head coach at South Eugene.

On Thursday morning, the final day of the camp, things started on a high note with the song "Reflection" from the Disney movie Mulan playing over the loudspeakers as campers gathered to start the day. Camp then broke into drills, games and at one point, a brief lesson in morals and being selfless on and off the court.

One drill in particular focused on praising the individual that made the pass that led to a basket. Eastburn wanted them to recognize the player doling out the assist so that during games "your grandma knows who passed it."

"It's definitely a different atmosphere but it's fun and new and exciting," said incoming-junior Ema Gardner. "And (Eastburn) has great energy and he expects a lot out of us. And it's fun."

In addition to camp, the high school team has stayed busy this summer par-

EASTWOOD see B2

Despite loss, a Croatian celebration



Family and friends at the Sušec's celebrate Croatia's first goal in the World Cup final on Sunday. Croatia lost to France 4-2.

Local family celebrates Croatia's success at the World Cup

By Zach Silva
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Over the last month I, like much of the rest of the world, was introduced to and fell in love with Kylian Mbappe. The 19-year-old French forward solidified his name in soccer history Sunday as he scored a goal and helped hoist the World Cup trophy. With no horse in the race (and the teams I liked inevitably losing once I started cheering for them) I enjoyed watching France throughout the tournament.

But on Sunday morning, I traded those positive French-feelings for a heavy dose of Croatia support as I walked into the Sušec's home in Cottage Grove. The six Sušec's include Josip, Heidi and their kids Nikola (16), Bene (15), Martina (12) and Tatjana (8). And from top to bottom, they love their Croatian soccer.

Josip, who was born and raised in

what is now Croatia, passed the love of the national team on to the rest of his family. In 1998, three years after the conclusion of the Croatian War of Independence, the national team lost in the semifinals of the World Cup to eventual champion France. In the game, France's defender Lilian Thuram marked his place in history as he scored a pair of goals: the only goals he ever scored for the national side, a fact that still haunts Josip.

"It took seven days to get over that loss," he said. Croatia went on to finish third place in that year's World Cup.

Coming into this year's World Cup, Josip had no expectations for this team ("I picked them to win it all," said Heidi from across the room). He knew they had a talented team but also, as had been shown in qualifying, a penchant of making things harder than they needed to be. After winning all their games in a loaded Group D, the road for the team was anything but smooth in the knockout stages. They trailed in each of their

CROATIA see B2

Athletes of the Week



This week's athletes of the week are the 30+ participants of last week's CGHS girls' basketball camp. For more pictures from a variety of drills and games, turn to B12.



A camper receives a pass from incoming senior Sam May during the three-man weave drill.