

# Senior send-offs continue

By: Madison Layton - Updated: 3 years ago  
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## Saying goodbye to Hannah Albrecht

It's 6:45 a.m., and the sun is attempting to rise over Cottage Grove. While the rest of the town is sound asleep, Hannah Albrecht is already in the weightroom.

Four days per week for the past four years, the Cottage Grove High School senior has spent her zero period before the regular school day lifting weights in preparation for the season's sport. Soccer, basketball, volleyball, track — Albrecht's done it all.

For those of you interested in the numbers, she's totaled about 148 school mornings spent in the weight room per year, or around 592 days of her high school career, not including weekend or summer workouts.

These statistics also don't include the time Albrecht has spent maintaining her 4.1 weighted GPA, her status as ASB president for two consecutive years, involvement in FBLA, Interact, Key Club or AP classes, just to name a few.

"It's pretty phenomenal what she's able to accomplish in 24 hours each day," laughed Cottage Grove High School Head Track Coach and teacher Ricky Knutson. "That's for sure."

The four year three-sport athlete said she has dedicated so much of her time to weight lifting not only because of the competitive edge it gives but also for the benefit of minimizing injuries.

Through the first three years of high school and even before, Albrecht struggled with knee injuries, which prevented her from competing in full track seasons. This year is the first that Albrecht has been injury free coming into the track season.

"Junior year, I got a little more serious about [lifting], and as I did, I noticed that I was hurt less and less often because I was getting so much stronger," Albrecht said. "Since then, it's been a big thing for me."

But don't let the injuries fool you. Albrecht has used a combination of talent and resiliency to propel herself to becoming "the foundation of our girls' [track] team," Knutson said, even before this season.

Last year, she made the state track and field qualifiers in all four of her events: the 100 meter- dash, 200 meters, 400 meters and 4x400 relay. This included a finals appearance in the 400 meters, where Albrecht placed seventh.

Her stellar finish and dedication to the sport earned Albrecht the opportunity to continue her path as a student-athlete. In the fall, she will be attending the University of Redlands, just east of Los Angeles, where she will compete on the university's track team. Albrecht plans to enroll in the school's five year program, where she can complete a Master's degree in biology while simultaneously earning a teaching certification. Her career goal is to become a high school biology teacher as well as track and basketball coach.

Albrecht credits Knutson, her four year track coach and former Health teacher, with the decision to pursue this career path.

"Our track coach has probably been the most impactful person in my life," Albrecht said. "He's been a huge inspiration for me."

Looking at colleges, Albrecht had an idea of what she wanted from a school academically; it was athletics that she was unsure of pursuing. But a spring break trip to the University of Redlands' campus and talks with the head track coach beginning in winter solidified Albrecht's decision to attend the school.

Albrecht said. "But then it kind of set in that I need something like sports to ground me and keep me a little more motivated, and I'm so passionate about running that I couldn't imagine not being part of a team."

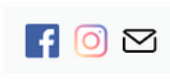
On the visit to campus, Albrecht was able to meet the track team, watch practice, talk with science teachers and even catch her first glimpse of a palm tree. And though she will not make the trip south to move in until the end of August, she said she is looking forward to getting started.

For now however, Albrecht is keeping her sights set on her final track season with the Lions. Her ultimate goal this season is to break a minute in the 400 meters. She also hopes to make it back to Hayward Field one more time for the state championships.

"What an awesome kid. It's going to be bittersweet seeing her go," Knutson said. "She's been such a great role model for all the other kids, and a pleasure to work with."



## Goodbye to our seniors



By: Madison Layton  
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After school years full of football games, basketball practices and off-season lifting, Cottage Grove high school senior Kory Parent is taking this Spring to prepare for his future.

Though his post-high school options abound, among the most prestigious of Parent's offers is one from the United States Naval Academy. The academy boasted just a nine percent acceptance rate in 2015, and this year, Parent made the cut.

"I knew I wanted to get a bachelor's and then try to become a Navy SEAL, but I didn't think I was going to get accepted into the Naval Academy," Parent said. "The competition was really high this year."

But a 4.0 weighted GPA, stellar athletic record, including Sky-Em 2016 Boys Basketball Player of the Year and first team All-State selections in both basketball and football, among other accolades, landed Parent among the few who earn a spot at the academy each year.

Parent has not yet accepted the offer and said he is keeping his options open, however, juggling the decision to stay in state or make the trip to Annapolis, Maryland where the academy is located.

As a lifelong athlete, the 5 foot 8 inch senior has also landed offers from a series of smaller schools around the state with offers to continue his athletic career. Schools including George Fox University and Willamette University have sought Parent out with offers to play football at their schools.

Though the U.S. Naval Academy acceptance came as somewhat of a shock to Parent himself, those who have known him as an athlete or student during his time in Cottage Grove weren't nearly as surprised.

One such figure who has seen Parent progress as an athlete and leader is Assistant Superintendent for the South Lane School District and Cottage Grove High School Football assistant coach Kyle Tucker. Tucker coached Parent on the defensive side of the ball for the past three years and was witness to his work ethic on and off the field, citing Parent's extra time in the weight room, watching film and his first-in-last-out practice schedule as markers for his offer from the academy.

"Just the ability for a kid that age to put in the amount of time that he puts in is amazing," Tucker said of Parent. "You don't see that very often."

That "extra practice makes perfect" mentality is one that Parent brought not only to football, as Tucker described, but also to the basketball court. Parent said it is one that he developed at an early age, especially when it came to basketball.

"I just was never one of the kids that would be laying on the couch, watching TV all day," Parent said. "I would be the one that would be thinking, 'If I'm watching TV, then why couldn't I just go out and shoot shots?'"

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That work especially paid off his junior and senior years, after the early morning shooting sessions in addition to regular practices gave him an extra competitive edge. His work reflected in the Lion's basketball record, bouncing from 5-20 overall Parent's sophomore year to 20-5 his junior season.

But Parent said it was more than just his own work that led the Lions to a stellar two year streak; a core of strong senior starters was also integral to his basketball and football team's success.

"They were key players, and I think our leadership was the best it's been in football," Parent said.

During the 2016 and 2017 seasons, Lions' football went 8-0 in league play, while basketball took a 9-2 league record.

Now, with his high school athletics career behind him, Parent is sorting his options, preparing for the next step. But his legacy as a trendsetter and captain both on the court and on the field is one he leaves behind for the Lions' next round of student-athletes.

"The culture of those young kids... having good leaders like Kory, helps our younger guys become good leaders," Tucker said. "Then you get those young leaders who step up and keep that tradition moving forward."

