

## *Sports Toursim*

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Southern Oregon Sports Commission's "[Top 10 Sports Stories of 2018 Awards Banquet](#)" was a big success! We thank our many sponsors and those who support the event by purchasing tickets. Nearly 250 people attended and celebrated sports in Southern Oregon. The Mail Tribune's Top 10 Sports Stories of 2018 were showcased. Wendy Werthaiser was named the Dan Bulkley Spirit of Competition winner and Jerry Eklund was named Official of the Year. The top five male and female athletes were also honored. Crater wrestler Logan Meek was named Top Male Athlete, and Maddie Wheelock and Meghan Michels were co-winners of the Top Female Athlete. Medford native and tennis champion Jonathan Stark delivered an excellent keynote speech. Rounding out the evening was a tribute to Sherm and Wanda Olsrud for their many contributions to youth sports in Southern Oregon, as they received the Sports Advocate of the Year Award. The awards banquet is SOSC's only revenue source.

Local pickleball enthusiast Norman Eisenburg and Angela submitted a proposal for Medford to host the USA Pickleball Association 2019 Northwest Regional Championships. Ultimately, the event was awarded to Beaverton. Beaverton has a tennis center with both indoor and outdoor courts and a stadium. Norman is determined to try again in 2020.

The paperwork has been submitted to trademark "Know Your Role."

KOBI secured sponsors of the "Know Your Role" campaign that ran on channel 5 last year. All of last year's sponsors renewed for 2019. New spots are being developed and will continue to air throughout the year.

KOBI and SOSC are partnering to present a "Know Your Role" scholarship to a high school senior this spring. An email outlining the scholarship criteria, nomination and selection process went out to high school athletic directors and coaches as nominations can only be made by them. Nominations are open March 1 through April 30. Members of SOSC will select the recipient and the \$2,500 scholarship will be awarded on May 22, 2019. The scholarship criteria focus on sportsmanship.

Ashland High School junior EJ Holland was named Gatorade "Athlete of the Year" for Cross Country in Oregon. EJ was one of the SOSC Top 5 Male Athletes of 2018 honored at the awards banquet. As part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform, "Play it Forward," Holland had the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth organization of his

choice. He is also eligible to submit a 200-word essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants to the organization of his choice, which will be announced throughout the year. EJ and his family considered 7 non-profit agencies, and ultimately EJ selected SOSC. EJ was impressed with SOSC's mission and commitment to improve the sports culture in Southern Oregon. The \$1,000 check arrived in the mail March 5<sup>th</sup>!

The SOSC Executive Committee met in February. The Commission is moving forward partnering with Huddle Up Group out of Phoenix, Arizona to spread the "Know Your Role" message beyond our market.

The Travel Medford team attended the City Council Study Session where Council discussed the feasibility study, needs and wants for a mixed-use athletic facility. Ultimately, Medford is in dire need of a pool, but there is also a huge deficit of indoor basketball/volleyball courts in Medford. Rich Rosenthal, Medford Parks & Recreation Department Director, presented at the session and will come back to Council with revised proposals after the discussion. Travel Medford and SOSC both strongly support venue development and recognize the need and potential to increase sports tourism.

Angela met with USA Softball Regional Director Mike Wells to discuss the Valley South Showcase Softball Tournament. Triple Crown Sports has run the October tournament the past two years, but has turned it back over to Wells. The desire is to grow the tournament and a large component is to have several college coaches come to recruit. Travel Medford is committed to helping Wells and his team as this has been a great sports event for the past several years.

The Singler Open Basketball Tournament returns to Medford May 11-12 with 200 teams expected to participate; 75% of those travel here. Angela met with Tom Cole and Whitney Black at Kids Unlimited to discuss ways to partner with the hotels. We are working on ways to have the "Know Your Role" message visible throughout the tournament.