Watsonville’s Cocroft hosting football camp

By TONY NUNEZ
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

When Sherman Cocroft was growing up on Elm Street in Watsonville he was never taught what it takes to be a pro. He had to find his own way, and after playing football at Watsonville High School, Cabrillo College and San Jose State University he was able to play in the NFL.

Now Cocroft and his nephew Nick Johnson are teaching young athletes from around the Santa Cruz area that “being a pro is a mindset,” with their 7-on-7 Pro Speed and Agility football camps.

“There’s so much talent in Santa Cruz County that just falls through the cracks,” said Cocroft. “We’re just trying to show these kids what it takes and that it’s possible to get to that next level with hard work and dedication.”

That camp, which is hosted at the Cabrillo College athletic field, was started up just earlier this year on March 30. Cocroft and Johnson were able to bring out 44 kids, and 18 kids who could not afford the camp or needed some help were given sponsorships.

The Watsonville raised Cocroft said that the camp started for two reasons. First being his love for kids and second was his relationship with his nephew Nick Johnson.

Johnson followed in his uncle’s footsteps growing up in the Santa Cruz County, but he went to San Lorenzo Valley High School. After playing there he continued football at Cabrillo and then went to Henderson State for his final years of college football. He was signed as a rookie free agent last season by the St. Louis Rams and spent the season with the team.

But before he signed with the Rams Nick wanted to know what it took to be a professional, and so he went to live with his uncle in Southern California for five months. During this time Sherman's wife, Lisa, was undergoing treatment for breast cancer, and all three of them became very close.

“He was like a son to us,” said Cocroft. “He’s really the reason we did this. He wanted to come out here and help these kids. He’s just the best kind of kid.”

And help they have.

Cocroft and Johnson will be hosting the 7-on-7 Training academy on June 29th at Cabrillo College and 20 percent of the proceeds will go to the Cabrillo College new athletic training facility.

Alonzo Carrera, the executive V.P. of the

CAMP

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The camp, has been able to gather sponsors from all over the area to help kids from high schools come out and experience the camps. So far they have sponsored 12 kids, but their goal is to sponsor 25.

“All these sponsorships are really great,” said Cocroft, “but mine and Nick’s goal is to start a non-profit one day so that everyone can come out to learn and enjoy the basics of the game.”

Helping out Cocroft and Johnson will be Cabrillo alum and starting safety of the Jacksonville Jaguars Dwight Lowery, and the starting quarterback of the San Jose State Spartans David Fales.

For more information on sponsorships and prices visit their website at www.7on7trainingacademy.com