LEARNING THE FUNDAMENTALS
Watsonville’s Cocroft host 7-on-7 football camp at Cabrillo

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APTO — With a light coastal breeze flowing into Cabrillo College’s Carl Conelly Stadium, former National Football League player and Watsonville native Sherman Cocroft enthusiastically gives orders for his next drill.

This is just one of the many emotional states he tends to show during the 7-on-7 Training Academy football camp hosted by Cocroft, his seventh in the last 18 months and fourth in Santa Cruz County.

In an age where parents now have to pay in order for their kids to play sports, the

former San Jose State football standout cut them some slack and invited future football players to participate for free.

“It’s important for football awareness and safety,” he said. “Just the fundamentals of football, I think it’s to give back to five-year-olds and let the fifteen-year-olds show them how to do it. That’s a key component.”

Cocroft and several volunteers, including former NFL and Arena Football League player Elon Paige, helped out kids as young as five years old to 17 with basic football instructions and friendly competitive events such as tug of war.

“It was awesome,” Paige said. “What coach Sherm does, the energy and excitement that he brings ... every one’s where his dad, Stephon, went to for the Kansas City Chiefs. There, Cocroft was teammates with him for three seasons from 1985 to 87.

The parents in attendance were not only happy their kids got to sprint, jump, catch and take an earful from a handful of the camp’s coaches for free, but keeping it local was also a huge factor for Idris Mohssin who drove his boys Adam and Ismael from Castroville.

“It gives them a sense of appreciation for the area, number one,” he said. “They also get another point of view instead of just from their regular coaches. It’s a great opportunity and people should take more advantage on that.”

Mohssin said that he likes the fact the kids get to interact with coaches on a one-on-one level, especially before the football season gets underway in September.

“It builds their morale, it builds their sense of community coming together,” Mohssin said. “Activities in the area takes them away from sitting at home and they get to meet new people.”

One of the kids is Andrew Ducisin from North Monterey County High who said he plans to utilize his time with Cocroft and the rest of the coaching staff in the upcoming season.

“It was a great camp, I learned a lot and got a couple of pointers,” Ducisin said. “I liked that the coaches that came down here were dedicated. I think it was really important because for me I like to take in a lot of information as the quarterback. I like to have a sponge as a mind to take in everything.”

Ducisin along with the other 51 kids were also given several words of advice from Watsonville High football head coach Ron Myers.

“It’s a real privilege for us in our community to be able to have a guy like Sherman who lives a long ways away still put into our kids and our county,” he said.