



On the pages of the Grant County Journal dated June 23, 2016 appeared the story of Matt Moore who, as an online analyst, took first place for his story about how Las Vegas treats the WSU Cougars. Shown in the picture are Jim Klasen, Matt Moore and Greg Harvill at a Cougar Club Banquet.

EPHRATA – Ephrata native Matt Moore, who writes about the Washington State University football team for Cougfan.com, took home first place in the sports writing category of the Society of Professional Journalists’ 2015 Excellence in Journalism competition. The winners were announced Saturday at a dinner in Seattle.

Competing in the small daily newspaper category, this marks the second straight year Cougfan.com has earned multiple awards from the SPJ.

Moore a football analyst who is best known for his Opponent 101 column, earned top honors for “Why oddsmakers miss on WSU so badly each week,” an article that looked at the metrics used in Las Vegas to set point spreads and the blind spot created by the brand of football the Cougars play.

Moore began writing for Cougfan.com in 2003 as a hobby. He now pens about 15 articles a year – most during football season.

“The website has a community message board, and I would post things from time to time,” he said. “I guess they like the stuff I wrote, because they asked me to do it more formally as a football analyst. It’s still a hobby, but there is more structure.

“It’s a treat for me knowing that in this modern day of the Internet, people outside my tiny sphere are reading my stuff,” Moore added. “As long as I’m passionate about it, I’m going to continue to pursue it.”

Matt says he usually writes about “football Xs and Os,” so the article about Vegas oddsmakers was a departure for him.

“I think it garnered some attention because it was unique,” he said.

*“Even the most optimistic Cougar fans would have been hard pressed to see WSU winning four of six conference games following the opening pratfall against Portland State,”* Moore wrote in his winning story. *“You can’t blame Las Vegas for missing the boat on WSU’s renaissance. But what’s hard to accept is Las Vegas’ reluctance to change its thinking about the Cougars.”*

“Typically, money has no bias in Las Vegas,” Moore noted, “but oddsmakers were missing the spread by an average of 13 points per game.”

After analyzing the Cougars strengths and weaknesses, Moore concludes that *“WSU is simply too unorthodox to evaluate with traditional metrics. But that is exactly what’s happening. Football has changed – but the computers, ironically, have not changed with it.”*

Moore, who graduated from WSU in 2001 with a degree in Finance attends as many Cougar football games as he can, considering he is involved in the family furniture business in Ephrata and is raising four children with wife Stephanie.