

Youthful Outlaws softball team takes the field

By Tom Mauldin
Correspondent

Sisters High School's youthful varsity softball team has been battling numbers since practice began in early March. And the recent numbers weighed heavily against the Outlaws as they prepared for the opening of Sky-Em League play.

The numbers battle has included:

- Low number of players that forced a late start to the season;
- A two-week spring break with several players on vacation or church missions;
- Limited number of players able to practice during the spring break;
- Seven freshmen on a 12-player roster;
- A pre-game injury before the Madras game left the Outlaws with 10 players at game-time;
- And, of course, the 34 runs two opponents scored against the Outlaws last week, while scoring just three.

The Outlaws, playing for the first time in three weeks, dropped a pair of non-conference games April 1 and 2, losing 21-0 to Madras and 13-3 to La Pine.

The Sky-Em League season opens this week for the Outlaws with a pair of road games to Cottage Grove and Sweet Home.

"It got bad before the (Madras) game started," said first-year Coach Dave Smith. "During warmup, our starting first baseman Beth Ann Yount got injured, having to leave the game early. This hurt us as Yount is a good player, energetic, and a key to the infield. And another player could not get a piece of jewelry out and had to sit out for a couple of innings (as required by the Oregon Schools Activities

Association) forcing me to put another person in her starting position."

Despite the lopsided losses, Smith is optimistic and found some silver linings in the two games.

"Given we had only had one full practice on the field and have girls who have never played before hit the ball and get on base, I am seeing improvement with the younger girls every practice," said Smith.

Smith noted the players have been working on fundamentals of hitting the ball, and focusing on running bases and infielding.

"During spring break, we did not have a full practice, but we have been working with four to five girls each day," added Smith. "This gives us the chance to work with the girls individually on the skills they need to improve on."

In the loss to La Pine, the Outlaws out-hit their foes 11-7, but four errors and 11 walks helped the Hawks.

Kennedy Smith, Nason, and Sophia Affatati led the Outlaws at the plate.

Despite the walks, pitchers Nason and Amanda Smith combined for six strikeouts in the five-inning contest.

The rust and lack of numbers showed a bit more against Madras, a team playing its ninth of the season — whereas the Outlaws were playing for the first time in three weeks. The White

Buffaloes jumped out to a 9-0 first-inning lead, and cruised from there.

Nason and Smith again showed potential, combining for 10 strikeouts, but walking a dozen.

"I was impressed with how Nason was able to step up and take the mound," said Smith. She also singled and walked.

Nancy Montecinos, a freshman and first-time softball player, singled her first official at-bat against Madras.

"This girl has come a long way," said the Outlaws coach. "On the first day of practice, we had to teach her the fundamentals of a swing from the very beginning. I see a lot of potential in her. She is very coachable, and has been coming before practice for extra work on her skills."

Smith also praised the work ethic of Kylie Steiner, who started behind the plate for her first time ever at catching.

"This kid is willing to play anywhere you want her to, and she is willing to learn," he said.

Affatati also singled



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Amanda Smith pitched against Madras in the Outlaws first game in three weeks.

against Madras.

"We are seeing the underclassman improving on their hitting and fielding. We are seeing their confidence grow each practice," said Smith.

After opening Sky-Em play on the road Monday and Wednesday, the Outlaws will host Elmira on Friday (April 8) and Junction City on Monday (April 11).

CONCEAL CARRY PERMIT CLASS

OREGON - UTAH VALID 35 STATES

Wednesday, April 13
1 p.m. & 6 p.m.

Best Western Ponderosa Lodge
500 Hwy. 20 W., Sisters

OR/UT (valid in WA) \$80 or OR-only \$45

360-921-2071 | Call or Text
FirearmTrainingNW@gmail.com
www.FirearmTrainingNW.com

ESTATE SALE

Antiques, Ceramics,
Clocks, Glassware,
Furniture & more!

FRI. & SAT. 4/8 & 4/9

68440 George Cyrus Rd • Sisters
(off Hwy. 126)

SISTERS HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Thrft Store

ALOHA!
Hawaiian Days
are here!
Come on down.

541-549-1740
141 W. Main Ave., Sisters
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday, 12-4 p.m.
Donations accepted
Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

ReStore

50% OFF
ANYTHING WITH
A BLUE TAG

Save your green when you see blue!

541-549-1621
254 W. Adams Ave., Sisters
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Closed Sundays
Donations accepted
Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.