

Cottage Grove staves off a Sisters rally

Athlete of the Week



photo by Matt Hollander

Cottage Grove's Taylor Sayles goes under two Outlaws for a reverse layup late in the third quarter of the Lions' 57-50 victory on Friday night.

BY MATT HOLLANDER
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Lions survived a furious rally from the visiting Outlaws to win 57-50 on Friday night.

Senior Conner Borigo scored a game-high 20 points, including the first 12 of the game. Ashlee Neely and Taylor Sayles added 14 and 12, respectively, as Cottage Grove won its second straight league-opener and moved back above .500 for the season.

However, while the Lions (8-7, 1-0 Sky-Em) are grateful to be among the early leaders for the conference crown, they may still be wondering how their game with Sisters (5-9, 0-1 Sky-Em) ever became close.

"Our postgame talk was: It wasn't pretty, but it was pretty enough," said coach Kerry Clawson. "We need to play better. We need to clean it up and

we need to look sharper. But I'll take it, and so will everybody on the team."

Cottage Grove held multiple 12-point leads in the fourth quarter before the Outlaws went on a 14-3 run to cut the deficit to two.

But with 1:45 left in the game, and her team clinging to a precarious 52-50 lead, Borigo made perhaps the most important play of the game:

Cottage Grove was in bounding at its offensive end when a Lion player deflected the entry pass back in the direction of the sideline. Borigo saved the loose ball and found Taylor Sayles near the base of the basket.

Sayles was fouled on the shot and made both of her free-throw attempts. And after the defense turned away the Outlaws on the ensuing possession, senior Sara



photo by Gary Ordway Sports Action Photography

Cottage Grove's Ashlee Neely scored 14 points (six in the fourth quarter) in the Lions' 57-50 win over Sisters. "We don't win that game with out her," said coach Kerry Clawson. "She was our finisher when we needed one."

Please see **Girls Basketball**, Page 3B

Lions are growing through the seasons

BY MATT HOLLANDER
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

"Well, you saw the football team, didn't you?" said a source familiar with Cottage Grove boys basketball, when I asked how he thought the team would do this year.

The suggestion, of course, was that Lions would struggle at hoops in a lot of the same ways they did on the gridiron — because they're young.

And if you noticed some of the nonconference results, you'd probably think that was a prophetic forecast. Cottage Grove was run off the court by North Bend and defeated (twice) by a more physical, more experienced Marshfield team. Good thing Henley wasn't on the schedule, right?

Now, before moving on to the most recent point of comparison — a 42-32 defeat at the hands of Sisters — it's worth noting that the two sports obviously have very little in common. The roster sizes simply don't compare, and the required skill-sets certainly make it possible for a school to have different levels of success from the football field to the hard court. But at the 4A level, where multi-sport athletes are the norm, it's the players and their athleticism that carry over from one season to the next.

Several names off of the non-conference-opponent's rosters probably cued up nightmares for Cottage Grove fans who saw the football team in action. As they would find out, Cameron Lucero-to-Drew Matthews is a lethal combination for the Bulldogs on the field and on the court; Rylee Trendell is an intimidating force whether he's playing post or defensive end for the Pirates.

(A brief note about how this all really came full-circle: I was interviewing Marshfield coach Doug Miles during the Holiday Tournament in December, and he said it was one of the first games back for his son — Jake, the point guard — since fracturing his vertebrae playing football against (wait for it) Cottage Grove back on Sept. 5. And as soon as he said that, I remembered the exact play that the injury must have occurred on and wondering whether or not he was going to be able to get up on his own power.)

The Lions feature but two starters who also played football: Kory Parent and Blake Sentman.

Since I take my own play-by-play, I have to follow the ball at all times. And because I follow the ball at all times, I've watched more of Kory and Blake than any other Cottage Grove athlete. I'd really like to let my eyes wander to see how Kendrick Murphy sets

Please see **Hollander**, Page 2B



photo by Matt Hollander

Kory Parent's 3-pointer with 4:35 left in the game gave the Lions a 30-29 lead over Sisters, but the Outlaws escaped with a 42-32 victory.

Lions drop league opener to Outlaws

Sisters pulled away from Cottage Grove in the final minutes for a 42-32 win

BY MATT HOLLANDER
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Another lesson. Another loss. Who said growing up was easy?

Cottage Grove held a one-point lead over Sisters midway through the fourth

quarter of Friday night's Sky-Em League-opening game, but the Outlaws put on a clinic in late-game execution as they pulled away down the stretch for a 42-32 victory.

The Lions (4-11, 0-1 Sky-Em) have now lost four games in a row and eight of their last 10, but they aren't panick-

ing yet.

"They're fine," said assistant coach Kevin Yoss of the young team. "You kind of have to throw the last game out (a 69-44 loss to North Marion, in which the Lions fell behind 20-0 to start the game) because we didn't really show up to play. We were a different team tonight. I thought we competed and gave ourselves a chance to win."

Cottage Grove led by five points at halftime. And despite being outscored 15-5 in the third quarter, the Lions took

a 31-30 lead on a 3-pointer by Kory Parent with 4:35 left in the game.

Given the low-scoring, defensive battle, a lead of any size was significant at that point in the game. But Parent — who scored a game-high 17 points — knew that one point was nothing to rest on.

"I always have confidence that we're going to pull it out, but I knew that we

Please see **Boys Basketball**, Page 2B

Lions stack up against the best in Oregon Classic

Cottage Grove also victorious in Sky-Em duel against Junction City

BY MATT HOLLANDER
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove wrestling team wrapped up a solid week of competition in which the Lions soundly defeated Sky-Em League-foe Junction City 75-5 on Wednesday, Jan. 16, and then placed 10th in the 4A division of the two-day Oregon Wrestling Classic held this past weekend in Redmond, Ore.

The Lions brought a significant advantage in numbers to its dual meet against the Tigers. Junction City could only enter four wrestlers in the 14 varsity weight

classes; Cottage Grove won three of these matches: Junior Rodney Chamberlain delivered a fall at 138 pounds; junior Alan Bordeaux — who moved up in weight — won a 5-4 decision over Tim Volner at 170 pounds in his first match since returning from injury; and freshman Adam Lamb delivered a fall at heavyweight.

At the Oregon Classic, Cottage Grove was seeded 16th out of 16 teams in the 4A division. In the first round, the Lions were soundly defeated by two-time defending state champion Crook County, a team that Cottage Grove coach Kyle Temple believes is the best high-school

team he has ever seen.

Junior Andrew Bordeaux lost by an 8-3 decision to Colbran Meeker — the two-time defending state champion at 160 pounds.

In round two, the Lions won 10 out of 14 weight classes against a combined team of LaGrande and North Bend.

No. 8 North Marion narrowly edged Cottage Grove in the next round, 37-36. Temple said the Huskies presented a great "stylistic match-up" for the Lions and that the loss provided a good lesson in fighting for bonus points.

"We let a lot of opportunities get away from us, and between evenly matched teams it's going to boil down to those little things," he said. "But it was still valuable to see how we stack up against a state-caliber team."

Entering Saturday, Cottage Grove was grouped in a bracket that would determine places nine through 12 in the final standings.

The Lions built upon some early momentum to roll Estacada, 54-28.

Cottage Grove then lost in the finals to Marshfield, 58-24.

Temple said that a key factor in the duel was the Pirates' significant edge in the lower-weight classes.

In the girls' division, Katie Dennis and Mae Locke took second and third in their respective classes.

Cottage Grove will host its final home-duel meet of the season against Sisters this Thursday starting at 6 p.m. Tanner Herbert and Locke will be honored as seniors.