

BASEBALL



photo by Matt Hollander

Cottage Grove's Zach Thomason didn't have his best day against the Warriors, but he delivered several critical outs along the way.

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wasn't his best start, Thomason and the Lions were able to manufacture outs at opportune moments.

The Warriors got solo home runs from Austin Gerbing and Croy in the fifth and seventh innings, respectively. Croy's shot gave Philomath its 4-2 lead.

Thomason, however, wasn't rattled.

"I've given up home runs before. I've learned to just let it go, keep pitching my game and have confidence that we can get it done at the plate," he said.

Geiszler said he considered taking Thomason out in the fifth inning but trusted that his senior could get the job done.

"When you give up home runs, you hope they're solo home runs because that's still just two runs, which can only hurt you so much. It was the walks that could have really hurt us — par-

ticularly those in the bottom of the order. He struggled but he found ways to get outs on a day in which he didn't have his best stuff," he said.

Wednesday's game against Philomath was rescheduled from Tuesday due to rain. And although afternoon showers threatened to delay the game once again, the skies cleared by game time and mostly stayed that way until the sixth inning. Besides pregame field preparations, neither coaches nor players thought that the weather played a significant factor in the game.

"The rain wasn't really an issue," said Thomason. "I just got into my own head and really had to focus and move around on the mound in order to bring my pitching back together."

Geiszler admitted that the rain might have impacted McGary's ability to field Bellamy's hit in the seventh inning. But in the

end — no matter the weather, or how many runners were left on base — their resiliency struck a chord of déjà vu for Geiszler.

"The determination at the end to get it done says a lot about our guys. It was very reminiscent of last year's Pleasant Hill game, only this was a better team," he said.

The Lions wrapped up their nonconference slate with a 7-5 win over Siuslaw at home on Saturday. Stock went 2-for-2 and drove in two runs and Lucas Ward also had two RBIs to lead Cottage Grove (8-2) to the victory over the Vikings.

The No. 5 Lions were scheduled to open Sky-Em play at Elmira on Monday and host defending league champion Sisters today at 4:30.

"We're out to a faster start than last year. We just have to keep doing what we're doing," said Stock.

Speedway's season gets off to a hot start, continues Friday

Kofoid, Williamson, Towns and Maricle pick up wins on opening night

BY BEN DEATHERAGE
For the Sentinel

The Cottage Grove Speedway's 2015 season officially began on Saturday, April 4. With a full crowd on hand, the historic 1/4-mile clay oval hosted 360 Sprints, IMCA Modifieds, Late Models and the Hornets.

In the 360 Sprint main event, California's Micheal Kofoid took the lead from the start and maintained his lead through several restarts to win in his first ever trip to CGS.

Garen Linder from Central Point was second place, and Vern Wheeler finished in third.

Seth Nunes of Medford and Springfield's Allison Journey finished fourth and fifth, respectively.

Twenty-four entrants lined up for the start of the IMCA Modifieds. Coburg's Jesse Williamson overtook Cottage Grove's Curtis Towns on lap eight en route to victory.

Jesse Bailey from Central Point, Williamson and Towns each won heat races, and Springfield's Jake Mayden managed to pick up the victory in the consolation feature.

Rob Mayea of Bend led the Late Model race early before spinning out on lap 10 due to contact.

Towns later overcame LaPine's Trent Elliott for first place.

Veneta driver Kevin Ropchan managed to finish in second followed by Rob Campos of Scio.

Mayea finished fourth, ahead of Bend's Darren Coffell in fifth.

In the last event of the evening, 21 drivers started in the Hornets race.

Joe Maricle of Veneta took care of business after starting on the front row of the main event.

A competitive battle for second place saw Dexter's Taunton Swain beat out Cottage Grove's Chris Pierce.

The balance of the top five consisted of James Donaldson from Dexter and Kasey Johnson, in fourth and fifth place, respectively.

In addition to racing a special Easter Egg activity took place where drivers handed out eggs to kids in the crowd.

The Speedway has its first Kage Kart race scheduled for Friday, April 10, with its next race for the 1/4-mile clay oval scheduled for Saturday — also Retro T-Shirt Night.

Classes on the card include the Extreme Sprints, IMCA Modifieds, Street Stocks and Pro-4s. Those seeking more information can visit www.cottagegrovespeedway.com.

South Valley Athletics 4/5/16 Grade Basketball Tourney, March 14

Boys Champions

Front row left to right: Logan Marek, Justin White, Drew Thomas and Tristan Kane.

Back row left to right: Assistant coach Brian Kane, James Smith, Drew Chapman, Malakai Crane, Trevor Reeder, Joey Carpenter and coach Willie Reeder.

Girls Champions

Left to right: Coach Craig DeGarlais, Gracie Anold, Abigail Akin, Emma Hitt, Kennedy Sturman-Royse, Peyton Baird, Avree Block, Halle DeGarlais, Haylee Sowa, and Coach Mike Arnold.



SOFTBALL



photo by Matt Hollander

Cottage Grove coach Cheryl Frieze (second from right) had more than one meeting with her infielders during last Thursday's 16-2 loss to Pleasant Hill — the team's fourth in a row. Frieze said that the team has struggled to regain its focus post spring break. The Lions were scheduled to open Sky-Em League play at defending champion Elmira on Monday.

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to find a good rhythm to the season, but in this particular game it was challenging for her to rest and refocus without much of a break between innings.

The Lions only had 19 at-bats for the entire game. Many of the balls that they put in play ended up in the glove of Skelton, who made or assisted on six put-outs. The Billies went the entire game without an error.

"You never know how these things are going to go," said Pleasant Hill coach Steve Smith. "But once we got going, we really got going, and that made it hard for them. We also played really well in the field, and that was the key."

Smith added that it's always fun for the Billies, who now play in the 3A Mountain Valley

League, to play their old Sky-Em rival.

The loss to Pleasant Hill was Cottage Grove's second-straight by 10 or more runs, and the team spent some time afterward in a soul-searching meeting.

"We're struggling mentally right now," said Frieze. "We sensed it before spring break and the vacation only made it worse. We're really trying to recover by going back to the drawing board."

In looking ahead to their final nonconference game Saturday against South Umpqua, Frieze said that regardless of the outcome, she wanted to see the team execute in the field, be confident at the plate and be aggressive on the bases.

Cottage Grove (3-5) lost to the Lancers, 6-4, but showed marked improvement.

K'alea Galbreath went 2-for-4; Katie Lyons went 2-for-3 and Kamryn Ortloff and Clarke each went 1-for-4 with an RBI. Sayles had three strikeouts with one walk and allowed eight hits.

The road back to winning, however, did not get any easier for the Lions, as they were scheduled to open league play against defending champion Elmira on Monday.

Frieze said that the Falcons would pose a particularly strong challenge because the Lions won't have had any time to practice following their game at South Umpqua.

"It's definitely a tough lead-off for the league season, but I know the girls are capable if, mentally, we can wrap our heads around it," she said.

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