

Salute to Melvin Walker highlights CGS races

BY BEN DEATHERAGE

The Cottage Grove Speedway hosted Extreme Sprints, Late Models, IMCA Sport Mods, Street Stocks and Hornets on Saturday. The Hornets events included a special tribute to Melvin Walker, one of the division’s most important figures.

The Extreme Sprints put on a great display of racing. Dave Hibbard from Medford took full advantage of his front-row starting position to get out in front of the field on the opening start. Hibbard set a rapid pace, but when lapped traffic came into play he had his hands full with Cottage Grove’s Patrick Dills. However, a caution on lap 11 would allow Hibbard to restart with some open track.

Hibbard had a good restart and would have no issues getting around lapped traffic. He finished the race in Victory Lane.

A fantastic battle for second was waged in the last few laps. Cottage Grove native Colby Carter finished ahead of Roseburg’s Orion Redmond. Dills was fourth, followed by Michael Kofoid in fifth.

Kevin Ropchan of Veneta was the car to beat in the Late Model main event for the majority of the race. Ropchan set a wicked pace but his large lead was cut down due to a lap-11 caution. On the restart, he kept all challengers in check until lapped traffic became a factor.

Ropchan, with just laps to go, had his hands full with Cottage Grove’s Curtis Towns. Towns finally find a way around Ropchan in traffic on lap 21. Towns led the rest of the way, despite a late race caution, to visit Victory Lane. It was the second straight win for Towns.

Ropchan was a respectable runner-up, while Blaine Taylor, of Pleasant Hill, was third. The rest of the top five consisted of Lebanon’s Josh Sim in fourth and Tom Lawson from Veneta in fifth.

In the 2015 IMCA Sport Mod debut, Gene Ashley of Jasper was the car to beat all night. However, Cottage Grove’s Jimmy Owen put up a valiant effort in the main event.

On lap eleven, Ashley seized the lead and began to pull away from Owen for the victory. Owen

finished second, while Jayson Nelson, from Springfield, was third.

The Street Stocks had a strong debut to 2015. Eugene’s Chris Sine took an early race lead on the first lap. But Steve Dubisar from Coquille took over on lap 12 and stayed in front the rest of the way. Evan Britton of Cottage Grove was second, and Sine was third.

Last but not least, the Hornets brought a total of 30 entries. The main event was a “Salute To Melvin Walker,” who was in attendance watching the races with several of his family members racing throughout the night.

In the main event Junction City’s Marcel Forte was the early leader before yielding to Dexter’s Mike Swaim. Swaim went on to have a good battle with Josh Corley from Westfir for the top spot.

Unfortunately for Swaim and Corely, they got tangled around lap four, leaving both out of contention for the win.

Chris Pierce from Cottage Grove took advantage of the open front, but it wasn’t long before he lost the lead to Veneta’s Joe Maricle. Unfortunately, those two got together and crashed on the front stretch with heavy damage to both entries on lap 12.

Eventually, Dan Jenkinson of Marcola took the lead on lap 13 and stayed out in front the rest of the distance.

Forte ended the night in second, while Marcola’s Dale Jenkinson was third. The balance of the top five consisted of Maricle in fourth, who recovered from the early incident, and Pleasant Hill’s Justin Austin in fifth.

Cottage Grove Speedway will be in action on Friday and Saturday for the Spring Showdown. Both evenings will feature the Western Sprint Tour, which is the premier touring 360 Sprint series in the Pacific Northwest region.

360 Sprints will be on tap for both nights. Late Models and Street Stocks will be the support class on Friday, while the IMCA Modifieds and Hornets will take over that role on Saturday.

Sky-Em Baseball

Team	W	L
Sisters	5	1
Cottage Grove	4	2
Elmira	4	2
Sweet Home	4	2
Junction City	1	5
Sutherlin	0	6

Wednesday's Results

Sisters 10, Junction City 3
Elmira 21, Sutherlin 10
Sweet Home 3, Cottage Grove 2

Thursday's Results

Sweet Home 17, Sutherlin 7

Friday's Results

Elmira 10, Cottage Grove 5
Sisters 19, Sutherlin 2
Sweet Home 13, Junction City 1

Friday's Games

Elmira at Sweet Home 4:30pm
Junction City at Sutherlin 4:30pm
Cottage Grove at Sisters 4:30pm

Sky-Em Softball

Team	W	L
Elmira	5	0
Sweet Home	5	1
Cottage Grove	2	3
Junction City	2	3
Sutherlin	2	4
Sisters	0	5

Wednesday's Results

Elmira 8, Sutherlin 1
Junction City 10, Sisters 3
Sweet Home 9, Cottage Grove 0

Thursday's Results

Sweet Home 19, Sutherlin 6

Friday's Results

Sweet Home 19, Junction City 3
Elmira 7, Cottage Grove 4
Sutherlin 11, Sisters 5

Friday's Games

Elmira at Sweet Home 4:30pm
Junction City at Sutherlin 4:30pm
Cottage Grove at Sisters 4:30pm

COTTAGE BOWL

League: 5 O'Clock Shadows
Date: April 12

Team	W	L
4 U Simple Book.	24	8
Mid State	23	9
Book Mine	22	10
Amigos Quatro	19	13
C.G. Vac & Sew	19	13
Ames to be True	18	14
V. Richenstein MD	17.5	14.5
Ace's High	13	19

High Game

All In the Family 13
Jim's Tire Factory 10
Jenni & the Jets 2 8.5

19
22
23.5

High Series
Men: Ernie Owen 702
Women: Mary Whetstone 546

League: Ball and Chain
Date: April 17

Team	W	L
More Beer	25	11
Bowl Dozers	24	12
Roman Numerals	22	14
Joe's Diner	18	18
Party Patrol	17	19
Senior Funsters	17	19
Thunder Boltz	17	19
Cracker Jacks	14	22
Pin Pushers	14	22
Ally Oops	8	28

High Game

Men: Chad Renfro 278
Women: Koleen Kelly 257

Men Three-high Series
1. Jim Chenoweth 656
2. Chad Renfro 645
3. Del Bosch 641

Women Three-high Series
1. Koleen Kelly 639
2. Robin Kwandt 530
3. Brenda Chenoweth 717

League: Dynamic Trios
Date: April 14

Team	W	L
Swearengin Design	32	12
H. Selective Log.	28	16
Grandma's Rule	28	16
H's Rowdy Bunch	27	17
Advanced Eyecare	27	17
Golding Enterprises	23.5	20.5
Cottage Bowlerettes	18.5	25.5
New Creations	16	28
K. Family Merc.	11	33
R's Beauty Salon	9	35

High Game: Margot Gotcher 201
Three-high Series

1. June Harvey 559
2. Debbie Saldana 527
3. Deanna Worley 491

League: Meri Rollers
Date: April 14

Team	W	L
Simand Chiro.	27	14
Blue Sunshine	26	14
Emerald Valley	26	19
Charlie's Angels	26	18
Treasure Chest	25	18
Mom's Girls	25	18
Team Reliv	23	17
Three Amigos	21.5	11
Ron's Girls	21	20
Lucky Ladies	19.5	22
Addi's Diner	19.5	24

High Game: Wendy McNeil, Shelly O'Reilly, Allie Simmons — 215
Three-high Series:

1. Shelly O'Reilly 575
2. Mary Whetstone 556
3. Allie Simons 556

League: Cottage Mixers
Date: April 8

Team	W	L
Commonwealth F.	55	8
C.G. Speedway	37	26
Covered Bridge U.	33	30
Bowling Stones	32	31
Funseekers	30	33
Kelly's Trailer R.	29	34
Jerry Brown Co.	29	34
Cottage Bowl	29	34
Swearengin Design	24	39
Taylor's Towing	17	46

High Game

Men: Ernie Owen 288
Women: Mary Whetstone 193

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photo by Matt Hollander

Cottage Grove's T.J. Bellamy hit a solo homerun in the sixth inning to tie the game 2-2. The Lions struggled offensively against the Huskies, going 6-for-31 at the plate.

Continued from 1B

innings, he struck out seven and walked one.

“Zach looked really good today,” Geiszler said. “In the past two games he’s really found his curve ball, and that’s tough to hit. It’s just unfortunate because he threw a lot of pitches to lose a game.”

In the sixth inning, Sweet Home’s Desmond Ely got on base with a single to center field. It was just their second hit of the game, but the Huskies capitalized. Ely stole second base and later scored on a Cottage Grove error to tie the game. Catcher Brett Blachly then hit

an RBI single up the middle to score Tow.

T.J. Bellamy responded for the Lions in the bottom half of the inning with a solo home run, which tied the game at two runs apiece.

Cottage Grove had its best chance to win in the eighth inning. After a single by Hunter Harris, Ashcroft walked Thomason to give the Lions two men on base with one out. But Ashcroft struck out the next batter, Bellamy, and gathered in a grounder by Elias Stock to make the third out at first base.

For Sweet Home, Hunter Jutte started the game 0-for-3 but went 2-for-2 with a double and

the game-winning RBI in the extra innings; Ely went 3-for-4, stole three bases and scored the winning run.

“He struggled early and stayed with it,” Huskies’ coach Dan Tow said of Jutte. “It was just a battle. Runs were hard to come by, and we were trying whatever we could to move guys around the bases.”

Sweet Home came into the game 5-5, but Geiszler said their record was deceiving, and that the Lions knew they were going up against a quality team. He also said that while the team hadn’t felt pressure since upsetting perennial league power Sisters the week before, they have

now become a target.

“We’ve seen everyone’s number-one [pitcher] the first time through the league. So, obviously teams know they need to beat us, and I think that’s a good thing,” he said.

Cottage Grove and Sweet Home will play two more times this year. The Lions will travel on May 12 and host the Huskies in the regular season finale on May 15.

The Lions lost their second consecutive game Friday, 10-5 to Elmira.

The Falcons scored five runs in the second inning, two in the third and one more in the fourth on their way to an 8-0 lead.

With the bases loaded in the fourth inning, Stock hit a three-run double. And in the fifth inning, after an RBI single by Tristan Mihan, Stock drove in another run to bring the Lions within three. But that was as close as they would come.

The loss knocked Cottage Grove (12-4, 4-2) down into a three-way tie for second place in the league.

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