

TRACK AND FIELD

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“I knew that I couldn’t come out and throw another 97 (feet) like last week,” he said. “That really motivated me to improve, so I spent a lot of time this week watching film and working on form.”

Geisler, who also threw 40-09 in the shot put, came in second to Elmira’s Zane Wardwell in both events.

Chris Clure and Michael Tharpe picked up wins for Cottage Grove in the 200 meters and 300 meter hurdles, respectively. And the Lions capped the evening with a victory in the 4x400 meter relay. The team of Tucker Porter, Kendrick Murphy, Jayden Tucker and Connor Howard ran 3:37.51, which ranked as the ninth-fastest time in the state.

The girls got an early boost from Breanna Wright, who won the 1500 meters in her first meet of the year.

“It was pretty steady, but breathing was still hard on the lungs,” she said.

Wright would later team with Halle Petersen, Hudson Weybright and Chelsey Bottorff to win the 4x400 meter in 4:22.25, the eighth-fastest time in the state.

Petersen and Weybright also earned individual victories in the 400 meters and 800 meters, respectively.

The Lions showed their dominance in the field by

sweeping the throwing events. Courtney Hammel eclipsed 100 feet in the discus for the second consecutive meet (103-08). Melissa Powers threw 100-10 in the javelin, and Conner Borigo set a personal best by 1.5 feet in the shot put. Her mark of 36-leads the Sky-Em and is ranked fifth in the state.

Adding the Lions haul, Melissa Thielman won the high jump in league leading 4-10, and Celeste Pelham cruised to victory in the 100 meter hurdles (17.78).

With 89 points, the girls easily outdistanced Sutherlin (52) and Elmira (36). The boys scored 59 points, coming in ahead of Sutherlin (21) but a ways back from Elmira (100), who is considered the favorite for the district championship.

Tomorrow, Cottage Grove will travel to Sweet Home for another Sky-Em League triangular meet. Knutson said the team will use this as another opportunity to try different events.

“We’re going to keep moving kids around, because we’re not sure yet where they’ll have the best opportunity to qualify for state at the district meet,” he said.

photo by Matt Hollander

Cottage Grove's Tyler Ledford set the tone for the day with his come-from-behind victory in the 1500 meters.



SOFTBALL



Continued from 1B

heroics to even be in a position to win the game.

Down 4-1 heading into the bottom of the seventh inning, Lyons started Cottage Grove’s rally with a single to right field.

“I felt pretty confident going up to the plate,” she said. “I know a few of the girls were struggling, but I know they picked up as soon as I made contact with the ball and got on base. It definitely felt good.”

After Sayles got on base with a single, Whisler scored Lyons on an RBI single to right field, leaving Cottage Grove behind 4-2.

The Lions drew within one when Liz Wiltse scored Sayles on an RBI single to center field. And Whisler tied it up when a pitch got away from Elmira’s catcher.

“The girls recovered well and played hard in the later innings,” said Frieze. “I’m really proud of the comeback they made in the seventh inning. They

photo by Matt Hollander

Cottage Grove's Kamryn Ortloff.

finally found the momentum that they needed.”

Frieze was also proud of the energy that her team brought to the game — something that was lacking during their recent six-game losing streak.

“We definitely fought really hard,” said Lyons, “more than we have in any other game this season.”

At times, however, that emotion led to miscues. In the top of the fourth inning, Wiltse stopped during a live play to argue a call, and Elmira’s No. 1 took advantage of the lapse to score from third base.

However, Wiltse recovered to make a double play on the very next at bat to end the inning.

“It was a key moment for her, to do something positive for the team,” said Frieze. “And that helped the entire team gain momentum and to keep rallying.”

Cottage Grove was scheduled to play Elmira for the third and final time this season on Tuesday. It will be a quick recovery for the Lions, who hosted Junction City on Monday.

“We’ve always wanted to beat Elmira,” said Lyons. “It’s one of our big goals for the season, and I think we can do that on Tuesday.”

CLAWSON

Continued from 1B

1994, where she led the Bruins to a 259-109 record, 10 league championships and 11 trips to the state playoffs.

“Kerry had a great tenure at Cottage Grove,” said Athletic Director Dave Presley. “I’ve enjoyed working with her, and she had such a positive influence on the young ladies who went through the program. I’ll never forget the years when the Lions were chasing state titles at Gill Coliseum. Those were some great weeks, and a lot of A.D.s never have the chance to share in those experiences.”

Clawson said that she has evaluated her commitment to the program every April since after her first season.

“It’s a point in the year where I’m removed from the season and still a ways away from the start of spring ball, and I can really think about whether this is the best way to spend my time, and what’s best for the kids. I think that’s a very healthy way to look at it,” she said.

Clawson said she has thought more seriously about stepping away from the program in recent years.

“Being a head coach, especially during the season, is all-

consuming; you’re thinking about the team all the time,” she said. “If all it required was showing up for the two hours of practice, then I would probably still be the head coach. But I want to start spending more of my time with my own kids.”

Cottage Grove plays well over 40 games per year, and the volunteer work required to support the program is over 100 hours per year, she said.

In addition to all the time commitments, Clawson, who is nearing 60, said that job had become more physically taxing — especially since having her ankle replaced two years ago.

“The program needs someone who is willing and able to make the commitment. The kids on the team make a lot of sacrifices, and I think the coach needs to be able to partner in that commitment,” Clawson said.

Presley said that the school has already begun its search for a new girls basketball coach. The position has been posted in various places throughout the state, and he expects the process to be completed as soon as possible. As of now there are no candidates to replace Clawson; however, Presley said he expects that to change, as spring is a time of transition for coaches

and educators.

Clawson said she does not expect to be involved with the hiring of her replacement, but said that she would be happy to remain involved with the program from a distance. She also intends to keep teaching at the high school.

Presley said that while the athletic department will be looking for coaches with experience at large schools, a good reputation and a strong resume, it will pursue candidates who complement the school’s open teaching positions.

This past season, Cottage Grove went 14-11 and finished

second in the Sky-Em League. The Lions graduated a large group of seniors that included second team All-Sky-Em selection Taylor Sayles and Conner Borigo, who was the Sky-Em co-Player of the Year, and a second team All-State selection. Clawson was named league Coach of the Year.

“It’s a great time for a transition in the program,” Clawson said. “The hard part for me is that there’s always great kids coming up who I would have wanted to work with.”

The Lions are expected to return all-league players Melissa Thielman and Hannah Arnold.



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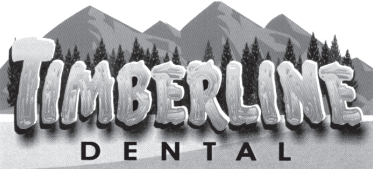
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