



## Cottage Grove's rally comes up short at Junction City



Lions scored eight runs in final three innings

BY MATT HOLLANDER  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove scored eight runs in the final three innings of Thursday's Sky-Em League game against Junction City, but it was not enough to overcome the Tigers, who prevailed 10-9.

Brett Ollivant hit an RBI double, T.J. Bellamy scored one on a triple and Ryan East belted a three-run home run for the Lions, who have lost seven of their previous nine games.

For Junction City (8-14, 5-8 Sky-Em), Bryon Brown went 3-for-4 and scored three runs, and Trent Keeler went 2-for-3 with three RBIs.

With just two games left in the regular season,

photo by Greg East

Ryan East's three-run homer in the fifth helped Cottage Grove cut into a major deficit, but Junction City prevailed 10-9.

Cottage Grove (14-9, 6-7 Sky-Em) is likely to finish fourth in the league. And while the Lions could still be a candidate for one of three at-large bids to the postseason, the team was devastated by Thursday's loss.

"I think it's still mathematically a possibility to reach the playoffs but so remote that I don't think it's even worth talking about," said Cottage Grove coach Dan Geiszler. "We've just got to play the last two games against a good team, and hopefully play well."

The Lions got off to an inauspicious start against the Tigers. They went 4-and-out in each of their first three trips to the plate and allowed Junction City to build a 7-0 lead through three innings. During this stretch, the Lions committed many of the same miscues that have plagued them throughout their mid-season slide.

"The consistency of being inconsistent has been our problem," Geiszler said. "You never know what you're going to get from each individual, each game; it could be great, ok or terrible, and

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## Changes for youth football

Plan calls for K-1 flag league in new 'South Lane Youth Football Association'

BY MATT HOLLANDER  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Youth football in Cottage Grove will have a bit of a different feel when it picks up this summer and fall, according to Pop Warner officials. The organization has renamed itself as the South Lane Youth Football Association, and for the first time ever, it will offer a flag football program to kindergarten and first-graders.

In addition to Cottage Grove, South Lane Youth Football Association will encompass neighboring communities Crewell, Drain, Lowell, Oakridge, Pleasant Hill and Yoncalla.

"The youth football coaches in this area have always been collaborative and supportive of each other, and we need to acknowledge that this organization is more than just Cottage Grove," said board member Gary Roberts. "We hope that by recognizing the breadth of our organization in a more formal way we will be able to better tailor our programs to meet the needs of each individual community."

Roberts, who is also the Head Football Coach at Cottage Grove High School, said that flag football has become a frequent topic in conversations among area coaches.

"Kids are able to play tackle football through our program starting in kindergarten, but many families choose to wait until their child is in fourth grade or older. We want to provide an alternative activity that will allow them to start learning the game and building skills at a young

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photos by Matt Hollander

Above: Celeste Pelham won her heat of the 100 hurdles and placed fourth overall. Left: Courtney Hammel took second in the discus.

## Athlete of the Week Courtney Hammel



## Ciochetti Time!

Lions shine at 11th annual home invite

BY MATT HOLLANDER  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove's Courtney Hammel has made a habit of breaking barriers in the discus this season. Since opening the year with a personal best, she has progressed through various other benchmarks — 95', 100', etc. — with the type of consistency that makes a coach proud.

After the prelims of Friday's competition at the 11th annual Wally Ciochetti Invitational, Hammel ranked third with a mark of 102-02. But she

found a familiar zone heading into the finals.

"I wasn't feeling fully there in my first set, but when I came around [for finals] I found my Zen," she said. "I took a deep breath, closed my eyes, placed myself in the right position and told myself that I was going to PR."

On her final attempt of the evening, Hammel launched a throw of 112-02. It was an improvement of over four feet from her previous best, and moved her into second place — where she finished.

"It's exciting and it feels good to be in a good place now. I hope to be in that same place for the next couple

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## Cottage Grove's playoff dreams dashed by Junction City

Tigers score six runs in sixth inning to rally past Lions

BY MATT HOLLANDER  
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With a trip to the postseason likely in the balance, Junction City scored six runs in the bottom of the sixth inning to cap a 9-4, come-from-behind victory over visiting Cottage Grove last Wednesday.

Taylor Sayles and Liz Wiltse each had two hits, and Cassidy Whisler, Maria Pardee and Lexie Flaherty each scored a run for the Lions (8-13, 5-8 Sky-Em). Becca Bumcrot hit a double and a triple

to lead the Tigers (7-14, 7-6 Sky-Em). Angel Pitchford and Nicole Snyder also had two hits for Junction City.

Coming into the week, the teams were tied for third place in the league. But as Junction City had won the first meeting on April 20, Wednesday's game was a must-win for the Lions and their playoff hopes.

"Those are hard games because you're both fighting for the same thing," said Junction City coach Mike Campbell. "I feel for them because we've both shared the same struggles this year. We've seen games slip away and it was nice to be on the other end for a change."

The Lions came out firing on all cylinders against the Tigers, as they built

a 4-1 lead through 3 1/2 innings. But a 15-minute rain delay before the bottom of the third inning gave Junction City a chance to regroup. The Lions would manage just three more hits after the break.

While Cottage Grove's offense cooled off, its defense remained stout. Twice the Lions got out of innings with the bases loaded, and they didn't allow

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photo by Matt Hollander

Cottage Grove's Taylor Sayles beats the tag to steal second base in the fourth inning of Wednesday's 9-4 loss to Junction City.



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