

BASEBALL



photo by Matt Hollander

Cottage Grove's Lucas Ward went 2-for-5 against Junction City on May 7.

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that can change within a game as well.”
Trailing 9-1 with two outs in the fourth inning, Lucas Ward got on base with a single to right field. Bellamy then brought him home with his triple. Elias Stock scored Bellamy with a single to center field. And with two men on base, East took Daulton Hofer's pitch out of the park and closed the Lions' deficit to three runs.
Although East has only seen a handful of at-bats this season, Geiszler said that he certainly wasn't waiving a white flag when he brought him in as a pinch-hitter.
“I put him in there to get a hit,” Geisler said. “He's been swing the bat real well in practice and deserves an opportunity. I thought he gave us the best opportunity to score in that situation. He came through, and it was a great moment for him.”
The Lions forced a quick 4-and-out by the Tigers in the bottom of the fifth but were unable to draw any closer during their next at bat, although Ward had reached third base.
Junction City scored an unearned run in the bottom of the sixth inning to extend their lead to 10-6.
After Stock popped-up to start the seventh inning, the Lions had three straight singles by Ollivant, Thomason and Allen. Ollivant scored on Allen's hit, and Thomason came in on a passed-ball to bring the Lions within two runs.
Back at the top of the order, Payton Presley

scored another run on a ground out.
Cottage Grove would put the winning run on base, but Ward flew out to center field to end the game.
Given how close the game ended, the Lions were left to rue the early mistakes that put them in such a deep hole.
“Everybody got up after we started to rally, but before then everyone was going through the motions,” said East. “It's really tough losing because this was a must-win for us. And now, all that's guaranteed for us is two more games. A lot of people are going to take away lessons from this season. We were overthinking what we needed to do instead of just going to play ball.”
Despite the sense of finality after Thursday's game, the Lions may have a better-than-slim chance to advance to the postseason as one of the three non-automatic qualifiers. At No. 18, Cottage Grove is currently (4 p.m. Monday) the state's highest-ranked fourth-place team.
And while the Lions close the regular season with two games this week against No. 8 Sweet Home (13-7, 9-4 Sky-Em), the other schools vying for at-large bids, including Molalla, Cascade, Valley Catholic and Mazama, will be underdogs against at least one opponent this week.
The Lions were scheduled to play at Sweet Home on Tuesday and will host the Huskies on Friday. The season finale is Senior Day for Tristan Mihan, Stock and Thomason.

SOFTBALL

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another Junction City run until the fifth inning.
By that point, however, several officiating calls had gone against the Lions, and they appeared rattled when Junction City capitalized on those calls to start scoring runs.
“We're very disappointed,” said Cottage Grove coach Cheryl Frieze. “We let some bad calls take us out of the game. We got down on ourselves and made some mistakes afterward. Prior to that we were doing great, and the girls were playing very well; hitting the ball and doing what they needed to do.”
Trailing 4-3 to start the bottom of the sixth inning, Junction City got two runners on base by virtue of Cottage Grove errors, and Bumcrot scored the tying run on a ground-rule double to center field. With the bases loaded, Jordawn Spangler brought in the go-ahead run with a bunt single.
The Tigers would score four more runs in the sixth to give themselves a comfortable margin of victory.
“There was a lot at stake for both teams,” Campbell said. “I tried to downplay that pressure with my group, but you really can't. Early on we were way out in front of

our pitches. We were anxious to make something happen instead of letting it happen.”
Frieze said she wasn't surprised that Junction City's offense came alive in the latter innings. She pointed out that the Tigers scored eight runs in their first meeting, and they left eight runners on base in the first four innings of Wednesday's game.
“We could have made it comfortable early and we didn't,” Campbell said. “But these things can build like a crescendo. Once you start scoring runs, it becomes contagious. And when things go bad, it goes bad in waves.”
Frieze said that the team hasn't spent much time talking about the postseason but knew what was at stake against Junction City, and she said they were naturally pretty upset in the wake of Wednesday's loss.
Junction City beat Cottage Grove 9-0 on Friday to complete the season sweep and lock up third place in league.
The Lions finish the regular season this week with two games against Sweet Home — at home on Tuesday and away on Friday. Tuesday's game was senior day for Amanda Anderson, Katie Lyons, Taylor Sayles and Liz Wiltse.

Twins take five golds at Taekwondo World Open champs

It hasn't taken very much time at all for twins Bridget and Sierra Tilley to find a groove in their new home — at least when it comes to taekwondo.
Last weekend at the US World Open Championships in Portland, Bridget and Sierra, who moved to Cottage Grove earlier this spring, combined to win five gold medals in the blue-belt division of individual forms, pairs forms and sparring.
According to their father, Norman, Bridget and Sierra have only been competing for a year-and-a-half, but they already have significant achievements on their resume. Last year, they were co-national champions in the forms, and they took first and second in the same at the Pan American games, also in Portland.
“This all started by accident,” said Norman. “We only looked into taekwondo because the dance studio they wanted to join had closed.”
Bridget and Sierra train at the US Taekwondo College in Eugene.

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