

GOLF

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question that they were still hungry for more.

"We still went in with the same mentality as if we weren't going to state: wanting to win," said junior Nick Russo, who shot 188.

Prior to this year, teams qualified for state exclusively through their district tournaments.

"It was kind of neat to play for something during the season," coach Russo said. "Previously they were just matches that you used to get better so that you could peak at the district tournament."

Coach Russo added that the special district format, which blended teams from the Sky-Em and Oregon West leagues, made for more competitive tournaments.

The 4A state tournament began shortly after noon on Monday at Quail Valley Golf Course in Banks. As the OSAA has limited the state field to 10 teams, Cottage Grove is assured of realizing a recent goal of finishing in the top 10 of the state (the Lions placed 11th last year), but they could be in contention for a top-five finish.

Based on district tournament scores, Seaside is a prohibitive favorite to win the state title, and Marshfield, Valley Catholic and Scappoose are expected to round out the top four. Cottage Grove had the fifth-best district score, just ahead of Hidden Valley and Baker/Powder Valley.

Prior to Sunday's practice round, only Sandoval had played the state tournament course.

"There are going to be part of the course that we don't know. But we have to play with confidence and not be scared about shots we have to make," Conrad said.

Cottage Grove was in eighth place after a 375 round on Monday. Conrad led the way with an 83, which left him in 19th place individually.

Softball ends season with losses to Sweet Home

CG must replace a core group of seniors in 2016

BY MATT HOLLANDER
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

McKenzie Cochran went 3-for-4 to lead the Huskies to a 10-3, season-finale victory over the visiting Lions on Friday. Taylor Sayles went 2-for-3 with a home run, Lizzy Wittse went 2-for-3 and Kassidy Whisler doubled for Cottage Grove (5-10, 8-15 Sky-Em).

Sweet Home (14-6, 11-4 Sky-Em) also defeated the Lions 8-6 at Taylor Street Field on Wednesday. Sayles and Wittse each hit 3-for-4 at the plate for Cottage Grove.

While the Lions were all but eliminated from the playoffs headlining into last week, coach Cheryl Frieze was proud of how they finished out the season against the Huskies.

"Overall, the girls played very well," she said. "We had a bad fourth inning on Wednesday where we made a few errors, but we battled back from that. We haven't always been able to overcome our mistakes this season, but we did that on Wednesday."

Frieze said that Friday's game was characterized by a lot of quick trips to the plate and some well-placed hits by Sweet Home.

Cottage Grove won two fewer games this year than last, but Frieze said that 2015 was not a total disappointment.

"I'm really happy with how far the girls have come this year. We would have wanted to have a better season but there were a lot of things that prevented us from doing that, including injuries," said the second-year head coach.

The Lions have threatened to make the post-season in each of the past two years, and if they are to breakthrough next year they will have to



photo by Tori Fullerton

Cottage Grove finished fourth in the Sky-Em League for the second consecutive season. Next year they will look to breakthrough into the playoffs.

do it without their nucleus of seniors: Katie Lyons, Sayles and Wittse.

Frieze said that the team will need more production and leadership from returners Whisler, Lindsey Clarke, Kalea Galbreath and Kamryn Ortloff, as the program develops young talent. Also toward that end, Frieze said that she is hoping to start a summer league for incoming high school players.

If there is a silver lining for Cottage Grove, it's

that the Sky-Em is not as strong as it has been in the past. This year's playoff representatives Elmira, Sweet Home and Junction are ranked 11th, 21st and 30th, respectively.

"It seems as though a lot of programs are suffering from a talent gap, and I think it's critical that we take advantage of this window while it's open," said Frieze.

Carter, Cox, Ashley, Sine and Maricle win at CGS

BY BEN DEATHERAGE

Cottage Grove Speedway was able to beat out the weather and complete its entire program on Saturday, May 16, which was Community Sharing Night. A very good car count was on hand in the pit area and some really exciting racing would be put on display for the crowd. Classes in competition included the Extreme Sprints, IMCA Modifieds, IMCA Sport Mods, Street Stocks and Hornets.

In the Extreme Sprints, Sutherland's Cooper Desbiens was fast right off the bat. The teenage led the first couple of laps before being passed by

Orion Redmond of Roseburg on lap three. Redmond cruised along for quite some time, but it wasn't long before he was pressured for the lead.

That pressure came from Cottage Grove native Colby Carter. Carter eventually overtook Redmond on lap fourteen. The two then stayed close to one another in traffic, but Carter held on for the win.

Redmond finished in second over Cooper Desbiens. Cottage Grove's Danny Horner finished fourth while Ricky Ashley, out of Thurston, was fifth.

Carter was the Jim's Tire Factory Fast Award winner and the Medford's Dave Hibbard was the winner of the Dot's Trophy

Shop Trophy Dash. Heat race winners were Ricky Ashley and Horner.

The IMCA Modified main event was a thriller. Only a couple of incidents occurred, making the race pretty much stoppage free. Jake Mayden of Springfield set a wicked pace for most of the race. It looked like Mayden was going to pick up the victory but Kinzer Cox worked his way through the field and took over the lead on lap twenty-one. Cox, of Cottage Grove, pulled away from the rest of the field and made his second straight victory lane.

Creswell's Gus Cooper finished second while Mayden ended the evening in third. The rest of the top five would consist of Braedon Hand, of Cottage Grove in fourth Curtis Towns, also of Cottage Grove, in fifth.

It was a clean sweep for Cox as he was the Jim's Tire Factory Fast Time Award winner, victor of the Dot's Trophy Shop Trophy Dash, and won his heat race. Jacksonville's Mark Wauge won the other heat race.

The IMCA Sport Mod feature saw Jayson Nelson turn heads in the first half of the race. The Springfield native went to the front and set a quick pace in only his second Modified start of his career. Jasper's Gene Ashley eventually caught and passed Nelson on lap seven. Ashley held on for the victory.

Jimmy Owen, out of Cottage Grove, was the runner-up and Nelson finished third. Crow's Scott Akin was fourth and Roy Kirk Jr. got fifth.

It was a clean sweep of the evening's events for Gene Ashley as he was the Jim's Tire Factory Fast Time Award winner as well as victorious in both



Photo Courtesy of Dirt Monkey Productions

Cottage Grove native Colby Carter won the Extreme Sprints event on Saturday.

and stayed in front of the field to pick up the win — his second of the season.

Josh Corley of Westfir was second followed by Eugene's Andrew Mathers in third. Crossing the wire in fourth was Chris Pierce from Cottage Grove and Forte was fifth.

Josh Corley was the Jim's Tire Factory Fast Time Award winner and won the Dot's Trophy Shop Trophy Dash. Heat race wins were picked up by the Dexter's Taunton Swaim, and Justin Austin of Pleasant Hill.

Cottage Grove teenager Evan Britton was second while Steve Begely from Eugene was third. Picking up a clean sweep, Sine, was the Jim's Tire Factory Fast Time Award winner and was triumphant in the Dot's Trophy Shop Trophy Dash and the heat race.

Last but not least the Hornets were out in full force. Marcel Forte from Junction City was the early race leader. Forte led for most of the race but faced some challengers in the later stages. Veneta's Joe Maricle seized the lead on lap sixteen

and stayed in front of the field to pick up the win — his second of the season.

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Cottage Grove Speedway will be extremely busy this Memorial Day Weekend with three nights of action on tap. First the Kage Karts will be in competition for the second time this season on Friday, May 22, and racing is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday. Classes on Saturday include the Extreme Sprints, IMCA Sport Mods,

Street Stocks and the Hornets. Sunday will feature the Western Sprint Tour 360 Sprints, IMCA Modifieds and Hornets.

General admission to the Kart race on Friday will be FREE of charge. Pit Passes are \$10.00 and Car and Driver fees will be \$35.00. The Pit Gate will open up around 3:00 PM and the Pit Meeting is at 6:00 PM with Hot Laps and Racing to follow.

On Saturday Admission prices are: Adults \$13.00, Juniors/Seniors/Military \$10.00, Youths (Ages 6-12) \$5.00, and 5 & Under FREE. On Sunday tickets are Adults \$15.00, Juniors/Seniors/Military \$13.00, Youths (Ages 6-12) \$8.00, and 5 & Under FREE. Both nights the Pit Gates open at 2:00 PM, Front Gates 4:00, Qualifying 5:30, and Racing begins right around 6:45.

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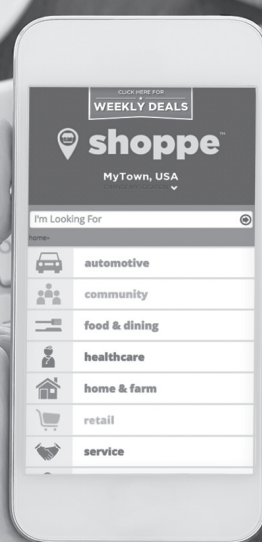
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