

2015: THE YEAR IN SPORTS

2015 marks a year of upward mobility for Cottage Grove sports

A list of the best stories in Cottage Grove sports for 2015

1. Girls' Soccer wins Sky Em League

The 2015 girls' soccer team was a great one. The team won the Sky Em League for the first time in CGHS history but had to share the win with Sisters, although shortly after it was announced, the Lions beat Sisters 3-0 after losing to them a few weeks earlier. Cottage Grove boasted five out of the 11 first-team all-league players, and junior Kiana Hemenway was voted player of the year and put on first-team all-state. The Lions ended their season with a loss in their first playoff match against Gladstone.

2. Stewart wins Coach of the Year

Girls' soccer Head Coach Vern Stewart was awarded the Sky Em Coach of the Year award. It was Stewart's fourth year as the head coach and has helped turn the program around. Stewart coached the boys' soccer team at Cottage Grove from



The 2015 girls' soccer team was quintessential in Cottage Grove's trend of athletic improvement.

1995 to 2006 and was then offered a position to start up and coach the women's soccer team at Northwest Christian University in Eugene, where he was able to coach his daughter. After coaching at NCU for three years, Stewart took a two-year break from coaching until Krista Parent, who offered him the posi-

tion of head coach for the Lions girls' team, approached him. It was a special season for Stewart as he started coaching when the seniors first starting playing as freshman and they finally were able to win the league.

3. Ducks fall in Natty

The Oregon Ducks got a bid in the first ever College Football Playoff, where they ran over Florida State 59-20 in the Rose Bowl on the first day of the year. It was an historic moment for Oregon football, as they moved on to the national championship game in Arlington on Jan. 12. But the Ducks were beaten by a much more forceful Ohio State team, 42-20. In the championship, Oregon was held to a total of 132 rushing yards compared to Ohio State's 296. The Buckeyes managed to dominate even with their third-string quarterback Cardale Jones (who racked up 1460 pass yards this season). Entering the New Year, Oregon will face TCU in the Alamo Bowl on Jan. 2.

4. Bordeaux brothers at the state finals

Andrew Bordeaux was extremely close to winning state early in the year, placing fourth overall at 160 pounds and losing to two state champions in

the semifinals and consolation finals. At 152 pounds, his brother Alan placed sixth. The Lions placed 12th overall at the state tournament, just two spots away from their goal of making the top 10. This year, with a few state champions gone to graduation, Andrew Bordeaux is eyeing a state title in 2016.

5. Bowling team to state

The bowling team saw an outstanding season by finishing first out of 14 all-star teams. The team was led by freshman (at the time) Kim Smith who consistently bowled in the 190s. Smith placed fourth at districts to qualify for state, where she helped her team win it all.

6. Football rebuilds

After a rough 2-7 season in 2014, the Cottage Grove Lions improved their record this year, going 4-5, losing to Baker in their play-in match. The team lost key seniors in Daniel Romero and Johnny Conrad, and also lost their starting center, Austin Gordon, who transferred from Cottage Grove. The team saw juniors Kory Parent and Blake Sentman step up to assist seniors Brynden Howell, Michael Tharpe and Reily Boyce in their offensive production. At the beginning of the season, Par-

ent and Sentman traded off at the quarterback position, but the job was eventually given to Sentman, as Parent proved to be extremely useful elsewhere on the field.

There were many triumphs over the course of this season. The victory against Junction City was one to remember during CGHS's homecoming celebration. There was also the blowout at Elmira, where the Lions won 55-28, and that was with Head Coach Gary Roberts taking his foot off of the gas pedal. The Lions will have a lot of returning talent in 2016, and it will be interesting to see how some of the current juniors will step up as seniors and also see some of the younger players begin to be put into Roberts' system.

7. Bball ends in heartbreaker

Girls' basketball had a great 2014-2015 season but lost their play-in match against Junction City in an overtime heartbreaker.

Trailing by two with 14 seconds to play, Cottage Grove inbounced from its own baseline and pushed the ball past midcourt, only to have it stolen away by Junction City. But Taylor Sayles somehow forced a Tiger turnover, dribbled the ball to just outside of the 3-point line and launched a would-be game winner that rattled off the rim

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Andrew Bordeaux will look for a state championship in 2016 after coming very close this past year.

Blanchet sneaks away in fourth quarter

Penalties prove costly in Lions' second loss

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The basketball team traveled to Salem on Tuesday, Dec. 22 to face the Blanchet Catholic High School Cavaliers, where the boys lost a close game 56-50. On the bright side, it's only the second loss of the season.

The biggest differentiator in the game was free throws. The Lions outscored Blanchet on field goals with 20 out of 44 shots made (45 percent) compared to 16 of 37 shots made (43 percent) by Blanchet, but the Cavaliers shot 29 free throws (making 19, a 65 percent rate) and Cottage Grove only shot eight (shooting 100 percent from the line). Even though the Lions were more accurate in scoring during play and during free throws, penalties (or perhaps the officiating) proved to be costly. Cottage Grove also out-rebounded the Cavaliers 25-22, but that wasn't enough to stop 19 (potentially 29) free points.

The Lions had the lead 20-19 going into the second half, and maintained a 41-39 lead going into the fourth quarter, but were

outscored in the final minutes 17-9.

Junior Kory Parent led the Lions in scoring with 17 points, four rebounds and four assists. Blake Sentman was behind parent with 11 points, four rebounds, two assists and one steal. A particularly outstanding performance came from Chance Hopkins. The senior had seven points but totaled 10 rebounds (three offensive, seven defensive), the most out of anyone on either side of the court. Other scorers were Jayden Tucker who racked up nine points, two rebounds and a steal, while Hunter Gipson was held to four points, but had two steals on the game. Tucker Porter had two points with one block and one assist.

The Lions moved to 4-2 on the season, which isn't a bad start considering the their 5-19 season last year. Cottage Grove hosts a holiday tournament this week, where the Lions are hopeful to get another shot at Blanchet. They will then face Santiam Christian on Jan. 2, and kick off league play against Elmira on Jan. 15.



Kory Parent looks to pass in the Lions' game against Blanchet Catholic.



Athlete of the Week

Hopkins rebounds all night long



Chance Hopkins dominated the boards on rebounds with 10 on the night. The senior also scored nine points.