

## Strong finishes despite heavy competition at Marist Classic

*Although the boys and girls teams placed seventh and eighth respectively, Cottage Grove still saw some top-place finishers*

**BY SAM WRIGHT**  
*The Cottage Grove Sentinel*

The annual Marist Classic was not much of a Marist track meet as the Eugene high school had maintenance problems with its track. In turn, Willamette High School played host to a total of nine teams, many of which were 5A and 6A schools. The boys from Cottage Grove placed seventh out of nine and the girls finished eighth. But the final results are not disheartening given that schools such as Willamette compete amongst the highest class of competition in the state.

"The team results don't really tell the whole story, because we just don't have the depth that these 5A and 6A schools have," head coach Ricky Knutson said. But Knutson said the benefits of these meets is that the kids "will be battle tested by the time the 4A meets come around."

Cottage Grove didn't have any athlete place first, but several had second-place finishes, and various others finished among

the top 10 in their events.

The throwing events started several hours before the track events, and the Lions showed a wide variety of strength. Juniors Paige Welch and Kaitlyn Brooks were just a few feet shy of placing in the finals for the shot put. They placed 13th and 14th respectfully out of 22 participants in the preliminary round.

For the boys, Brad Geiszler placed ninth overall in the finals, throwing a distance of 38 feet, 10 inches. In the prelims, sophomore Hunter Hall finished just outside of that with 38 feet, 9.75 inches.

In the discus throw, Cottage Grove's Delia Nichols-Ferguson made it to the finals and finished eighth with a throw of 77 feet, eight inches. On the boys' side, Seth Green finished fifth with 118 feet, eight inches. The javelin throw saw Melissa Powers and Kaitlyn Brooks finished seventh and eighth, respectively. Hunter Hall finished in sixth for the javelin.

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Photo by Sam Wright

Tucker Porter takes flight in his first long jump attempt on Saturday.

## Seven to be inducted into CGHS Hall of Fame Saturday evening

On Saturday evening April 9, Cottage Grove High School will play host to the ninth annual Cottage Grove High School Athletic Hall of Fame induction ceremony. It will be held in the high school's cafeteria. The event is open to the public with a social hour beginning at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m. and the ceremony beginning at 7 p.m. Dinner tickets can be purchased for \$20 by calling the Cottage Grove High School office.

For 2016, the high school will have seven inductees. The first is the entire 1979 football team, along with community contributor Jerry Braunberger, coach Curtist French and four athletes: Shauna Pupke Lewis, Lynn Wiltse, David Dawson and Jason Saunders.

The 1979 football team finished its season with a 10-2 record, the best in CGHS history against the state's "big school" competition. The Lions, coached by Bill Siler, went 8-1 in league play and then beat Canby and previously undefeated Grant in the playoffs. The Lions lost to Corvallis, which ended up finishing as the state champion. Curtist French coached the Li-

ons in football, basketball and track from 1936 through 1944. With football, French led the Lions to five league championships and finished his career as a Lion coach with the best football record in CGHS history (46 wins, 17 losses and six ties).

Jerry Braunberger served CGHS athletics for 25 years as the athletic trainer (10 years), athletic director (13 years), South Lane Recreation Coordinator (15 years) and also was instrumental in developing the Bohemia ball fields and the acquisition of the property that has now become the site of the present high school.

Shauna Pupke attended CGHS from 1970 to 1974. She was a multi-sport athlete and competed in cross country, track, basketball and swimming. At one time she held three track records for the 440-yard dash, 880-yard dash and the mile. Pupke competed in six state meets and won 11 letters as a Lion.

Lynn Wiltse attended Cottage Grove high school from 1972 to 1975 and was a two-time All-American swimmer for the Lions. Her specialty was the 100-yard backstroke. Wiltse was a

two-time district champion and earned second and third place medals in two different state meets against the highest classification competition.

David Dawson was an elite wrestler in Cottage Grove, attending the school from 1981 to 1985. Dawson earned a second place state medal at 98 pounds in 1983 and a fourth place medal at state in 1982. He was a two-time district champion and also competed in football, baseball and golf.

Last but not least, Jason Saunders was a multi-sport athlete from 1986 to 1989. He is one of the few Cottage Grove High School athletes to earn first team Midwestern League (highest class of competition) in both football and basketball. As a tight end, Saunders led the league in receptions in 1987, and at the post position he led the Lions to a winning record in basketball. He also earned honorable mention honors as a first baseman in baseball. Saunders lettered in all three sports during all three of his high school years.



*Athlete of the Week*

Michael Tharpe nears personal best in 110-meter hurdles



The senior finished in second place at the Marist classic with a time of 15.36, 0.16 seconds away from his personal best.

## Speedway season opener this Saturday

Free admission to first 60 people

**BY BEN DEATHERAGE**  
*For the Sentinel*

Saturday, April 9 will kick off the 2016 season for Cottage Grove Speedway. This year marks the 60th year of action at the historic quarter-mile clay oval, and a special promotion will be offered for fans. The first 60 people to show up when the front gates open at 4 p.m. will get into the race for free. Classes in action include 360 Sprints, Late Models, IMCA Modifieds, Street Stocks and the Quality RV Hornets.

"It is so awesome that Cottage Grove Speedway can say they've had racing here for the last 60 years," commented CGS Promoter Heather Boyce. "We're expecting a very good car count with cars coming from all over the area and out of state."

For the 360 Sprints, several of the top drivers from the state of Washington will be making the journey south. But that doesn't mean anyone should count out some of the stout local talent that will look to open their campaign up with a victory after the first round. An additional \$100 bonus to the winner is up for grabs courtesy of Steve Zeek.

Season Passes are still on sale and are available until the end of April. The Season Pass gets holders into every single race on the 2016 schedule as well as specific reserved seating if fans have a certain place they would prefer to sit. Those interested in purchasing just a reserved seat (which currently go for \$40) or would like to purchase a season pass should contact Heather Boyce at (541)-729-8666 for more information.

Tickets are Adults \$13, Juniors/Seniors/Military \$10, Youth (ages six to 12) \$5, Family Pass \$30.00 and Children 5 or under are free. Pit Passes will be offered for \$30 each.

The Pit Gates will be opening an hour later than normal, 1 p.m. on Saturday, to give teams enough time to fill in their paperwork. For those who would like to get paperwork filled out before arriving to the track, forms can be found on the track website. Front Gates will open at their regular 4 p.m. time and racing is scheduled to start at 6:30.

## Base running proves major key in Lions' success

*Three wins in a row gives Cottage Grove momentum going in to league play*

**BY SAM WRIGHT**  
*The Cottage Grove Sentinel*

After only one win and three tough losses during the Volcano tournament last week, the Lions seem to be back on track, taking out any frustration on their past three opponents. Coming off of a 10-0 loss against Summit, Cottage Grove didn't want Pleasant Hill to get the better of them, and the Lions handed them a solid 7-3 loss in Cottage Grove on Tuesday, March 29.

However, the Pleasant Hill game wasn't a sure thing from the beginning. After each team scored one run in the first inning, the Lions barely took the lead 2-1 in the bottom of the fourth and even then, Cottage Grove was still struggling to get on base. Pleasant Hill responded, shutting down the Lions offense in the fifth inning and scoring one run in both the fifth and the sixth innings to take a hopeful 3-2 lead over the Lions nearing the end of the game.

But the bottom of the sixth inning saved Cottage Grove, as they started a rally. With hits from batters such as Brett Oliviant and Payton Presley, the Lions racked up five runs before the Billies were able to send



Photo by Sam Wright

Ryan East slides into third after taking advantage of a bad pitch and stealing the base.

themselves back to the dugout. The bottom of the sixth inning put the game out of reach for Pleasant Hill and the Lions walked away with a solid win, though it came harder than the score may suggest.

The team overall finished the game with a .214 batting average. The only lower batting averages came from a 7-4 loss against Roosevelt and a 10-0

loss against Summit. But the batting is expected to improve as the season progresses, as Head Coach Dan Geiszler says that the coaches try to work on confidence when players step up to the plate.

"If one or two previous at-bats don't go well, the players can get a little rattled," he said. "We just have to make sure they're confident each time they step up

to the plate."

And while the Lions work on their batting, they have other strategic weapons in place to score runs.

Two days after the Pleasant Hill victory, Cottage Grove hosted Stayton and shut down the Eagles with ease in an 8-0 win. The batting average was much better than the previous game, but the real key to win-

ning against Stayton was base running, something that is a huge part of the Lions' game. Cottage Grove was able to steal home plate at least three times during the game and feasted on the errors made by the worried and rushed Eagles.

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