

Lions still on top after eight-game winning streak ends against Sisters

After Cottage Grove handed Sisters its first loss at home in eight years, the Outlaws struck back and ended the Lions' winning streak



Photo by Gary Ordway

Wyatt Sayles swings against Elmira where the Lions took home a 7-5 victory and a top spot in the Sky-Em League.

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Through its first six games, the Cottage Grove baseball team was sitting at a 2-4 record after a few tough losses against difficult 5A and 6A opponents at the Volcanoes Tournament. At that pace, the Lions looked like they could be sitting on a 5-10 record, but they now sit on 10-5 and are the top-ranked team in the Sky-Em League. The record did not come without struggle, and the struggle did not come without triumphant moments.

At the beginning of last week, the Lions were on a six-game winning streak after devouring

the Junction City Tigers, 12-2. At the time, Elmira held the top of the Sky-Em and both the Falcons and Lions had one game in between before the Lions were able to challenge Elmira for the top seed in the league.

Before that game, the Lions had already shown their potential to be the Sky-Em champions by handing Sisters its first loss at home in eight years.

A common case that the Lions have seen in many of their victories is a lower batting average than their losing opponent. In their 6-2 win over Sisters, Cottage Grove had a .290 average, while the Outlaws finished with a .333 average. But the

statistics (and results) show that the Lions' heavy focus on base running is a more effective strategy.

Cottage Grove had five stolen bases compared to Sisters' two. The play-calling has been immensely potent for Head Coach Brad Geiszler, who describes their base running strategy as "very aggressive." But the Lions have 68 total stolen bases that more than double the national average in high school baseball. Cottage Grove has only been caught stealing a base four times, giving them a 94 percent success rate. On most wild pitches, Geiszler sends his base runners in a sprint to the next

base. A lot of times, that base happens to be home plate, and the panic that the runners induce renders errors, and the Lions end up making their opponents pay dearly for their mistakes.

The big win picked up momentum for Cottage Grove as they won three more against Sutherlin, Junction City and Sweet Home. Elmira then traveled to Cottage Grove on April 13, where both teams were 4-0 in league play, but the Falcons held the top spot with the better overall record.

The Lions were able to rally

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Athlete of the Week

Presley hits 1.000 to boost Lions to the top of the Sky-Em



No. 8 Payton Presley was crucial in his team's victory over Elmira. The senior batted perfect game against the Falcons and to sum it up, hit a two-run home run in extra innings to win the game and put his time at the top of the Sky-Em League.



Boys' track dominates at Sweet Home

Despite sluggish starts and slower times, the boys' track team looks top notch against 4A competition

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Up until Tuesday, April 12, the Cottage Grove track and field team had been facing 5A and 6A opponents at every meet. Because of that, the teams have struggled against the depth of larger schools, and while a few individual first places are won, the teams never had a chance to earn a top spot overall. Tuesday's meet changed that, at least for the boys' squad.

Cottage Grove finished first, beating out Sisters and Sweet Home, and it was the Lions' house for the entire meet. When all the points were racked up, Cottage Grove's score exactly doubled that of second place Sweet Home (184 against 92). The boys won 11 out of the 17 events and were still fighting for positions in the top three in events they did not win.

The meet saw a little change in arrangements as Michael Tharpe participated in the 100-meter dash and won with a time of 11.63 seconds.

"He's too good of an athlete to just have in three events," head coach Ricky Knutson said of Tharpe. But Knutson has been cautious about Tharpe due to some hamstring issues in the beginning of the season.

Connor Howard took home first place in the 200-meters with a time of 23.45 seconds, and he won the 400-meter dash in 51.75 seconds.

The 800-meter run was also taken by Cottage Grove. Freshman Erick Vallejo Giffen ran the race in 2:19.36.

The 1500 meters did not see a Cottage Grove winner, how-

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Redmond, Hanson, Braaten and Corley collect CGS victories

BY BEN DEATHERAGE
For the Sentinel

Another great turnout of race fans was in attendance for the Saturday, April 16 races at Cottage Grove Speedway. The pits would see a wonderful turnout of competitors with teams traveling from all over the state of Oregon as well as Washington and California. Classes in action included the Clark Printing Extreme Sprints, IMCA Modifieds, IMCA Sport Mods and Quality RV Repair Hornets.

The Clark Printing Extreme Sprints would be on hand for their first race of 2016. Roseburg driver Don Waddell and Medford's Bailey Hibbard would share the front row. Hibbard would take the lead only to have a caution occur in the opening start. On the second attempt, Dusty Redmond, from Roseburg, would put his No. 57 Rocket out in front.

Redmond would be challenged on several occasions but kept all potential threats in check. A late race restart with seven laps to go gave second on back a chance to challenge, but Redmond would get the job done in the end. With the victory it marked the first career triumph for Redmond after coming so close over the years.

Eugene pilot Raquel Ivie was second, followed by Dave Hibbard of Medford in third. The rest of the top five would be made up of Thurston's Ricky Ashley in fourth and fifth finishing Chelsea Blevins in fifth.

Fast time of the night was



Courtesy photo

Dusty Redmond celebrates his victory with his family.

Cottage Grove native Patrick Dills. Blevins was victorious in the Dot's Trophy Shop Trophy Dashes, while Dills and Ivie won heat races.

The IMCA Modifieds would have a caution-filled main event. Springfield's Steven Sturdevant would put up an impressive effort. Sturdevant would battle fiercely for the coveted top position with Jasper's Eric Ashley.

Sturdevant would secure the lead on lap 11 for much of the race, though constant pressure continued to build. With the

quantity of the caution flags, it would eliminate the possibility of lapped traffic and wipe away all of the progress Sturdevant had made on building up a decent-sized lead. Sturdevant would lose the top spot on lap 21 to Craig Hanson of Albany. Hanson would build some momentum via the high side of the race track to make the pass coming out of turn four. Hanson would show the field the rest of the way to win his first race of the year.

Steve Sturdevant would finish

a respectable second, while third was Nick Trenchard from Klamath Falls, driving for car owners Rich and Nicky Biehn. Redmond's Mark Carrell crossed the line fourth, while Kyle Casson was fifth.

Monte Bischoff of Medford would be fast time of the night. Nick Trenchard would pick up the victory in the Dot's Trophy Shop Trophy Dash, while heat races would be won by Craig Hanson, Brad Martin and Bischoff.

A good crop of IMCA Sport

Mods was in attendance for their first race of the campaign. Six different drivers would lead at the start-finish line and it was great to see some new faces in the division. One of those new faces was Springfield driver Shawn Hand taking the lead early. Hand would lead the first lap but was passed on lap two by Mike Medel from Medford. Medel would lose the top spot to Hand on the next lap.

Shortly after a lap three re-

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Personal bests achieved at golfers' first tournament win

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Friday marked the first tournament win for Kent Russo and his Lions golf team. The varsity team shot a season-low of 363 at Agate Beach in Newport. Among the team score, several personal bests were achieved. Nick Russo (80), Jeremy Hall (92) and Jessy Thomason (93) were the three of five players that shot personal bests. Dylan Wooten and Trey Husko were the remaining who still shot a solid 98 and 102, respectively. Head Coach Russo says that the Lions will have to keep up this type of play if they wish to remain in the hunt for a league title. It is the first time in several seasons that Cottage Grove is not favored to win. Russo also says that Sutherlin and Junction City will be the teams to beat this season.

"Our goal is to finish in the top three at the district tournament to earn a trip to state," Russo said.

There are four more tournaments remaining before the district tournament begins on May 9.



Join us April 23rd

Round 1 of the 360 Sprint Triple Crown
360 Sprints, Late Models,
IMCA Sportmods, Quality RV Hornets