

Lions one win away from taking Sky-Em; only Elmira can contest for tie

With the regular season coming to an end, Cottage Grove's worst possible outcome would be a tie for first with Elmira

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Only one team stands in the way of the Lions and the Sky-Em title, and even if Cottage Grove loses their last two games against Elmira, they will still be tied for first in league play.

After defeating the Sweet Home Huskies twice in a row, Cottage Grove sits at 11-2 in league play and 16-6 overall, while the Falcons are 9-4 in league play and 15-6 overall. Therefore, the worst possible outcome for the Lions will be a league tie at 11-4. However, the patterns this season suggest that Cottage Grove has a more than fair chance to take the Sky-Em alone.

The Lions have already defeated the Falcons in mid-April, 7-5. Although it was a tough battle that took the game into extra innings, Cottage Grove came out first, starting rallies, stealing bases and racking up runs. The only issue that the Lions will have to work on from their last meeting with the Falcons is their closing game. While there have been many games since then that have shown improvement, the last two wins against Sweet Home show that there is still work to be done.

The Lions went up 8-6 by the end of the fourth inning after allowing five runs in the bottom of the third. Cottage Grove managed to extend its lead 12-6, a comfortable margin going into the final half-inning. But the Huskies started a rally and were able to rack up four runs before the Lions were able to put them away. Two days later, a similar incident occurred.

Cottage Grove was up 4-0 at the start of the sixth inning, but the Huskies scored three in the



Hunter Harris pitches against Elmira. The senior has racked up a total of 38 strikeouts in 39 innings.

Photo by Gary Ordway

sixth and one in the top of the seventh to tie the game 4-4. Fortunately, the Lions have shown their ability to endure and shine in high-pressure situations such as the nine-inning game against Sutherlin, where Cottage Grove prevailed 4-3. The Lions snuck away with one extra run off of a base hit to end the game.

More errors and slower play is more likely to happen later in the game, but there is still some

defensive tidying up to do.

But Cottage Grove shouldn't fret too much. Brett Ollivant has proved himself a capable pitcher throughout the season, and first baseman Hunter Harris has just the arm to relieve Ollivant in the final two innings.

The senior Harris has a low earned run average (ERA) of 1.94. Ollivant's is a little lower at 1.51, but that can be attributed to Harris pitching a lot more at

the beginning of the season. Ollivant may have the lower ERA, but Harris has the lowest batting average against him at .174 in just under 40 innings pitched. He also leads the team in strikeouts with 38 of the Lions' 105 strikeouts on the season. This is what makes Harris the best closing pitcher for Cottage Grove. His fierce pitching leaves batters struggling to make contact with the ball. And since the se-

nior will only pitch two, maybe three innings as a closer, he doesn't have to hold back in fear of tiring out his arm.

Closing and hitting will be the Lions keys to success in the last two regular season games. The Lions sit at a .276 batting average while the Falcons barely surpass that with a .297.

Cottage Grove is known around the league for being aggressive when it comes to bas-



Athlete of the Week

Senior Hunter Harris (left) goes into his last two regular season games as a Lion this week. The first baseman has delivered 38 strikeouts on the mound, holds a .323 batting average with 21 hits and 17 RBIs. He also holds the lowest batting average against a pitcher with .174 and an ERA of 1.94

erunning, and currently holds 85 stolen bases. However, the Falcons have even more at 104 stolen bases. The Falcons are ahead of the Lions in most statistical categories, but Cottage Grove holds the most important statistic, and that is the win over Elmira.

R. Ashley, Cox, Donahoo, and Corley collect Cottage Grove wins

BY BEN DEATHERAGE
For the Sentinel

The streak of wonderful racing at Cottage Grove Speedway continued when action resumed at the historic quarter-mile clay oval on Saturday, May 7. Even though there were some other large activities in the vicinity, the Cottage Grove facility was still able to attract a decent car count and a pretty good crowd. Classes competing included the Clark Printing Extreme Sprints, IMCA Modifieds, Late Models, and the Quality RV Repair Hornets.

The Clark Printing Extreme Sprints started with Roseburg's Don Waddell the car to beat. Waddell put up a phenomenal performance and blazed the trail for the first 10 laps. He was overtaken on lap 11 by Ricky Ashley from Thurston. Ashley worked consistently on the high side and found himself being chased quickly by some challengers, notably Cottage Grove's Patrick Dills.

Ashley was able to maintain the top place position for the rest of the distance to collect his first career CGS Sprint Car victory. It was also the first occasion that the #85 Maxim had made it to the winner's circle as his two previous Sprint Car wins at Sunset Speedway Park in 2012 were in a car he did not regularly drive.

Dills placed second, followed

by Eugene pilot Raquel Ivie in third. Medford native Dave Hibbard was fourth, and completing the top five was Roseburg's Dusty Redmond.

Dills was the fast time of the night, and victorious in the Dot's Trophy Shop Trophy Dash was Sutherlin teenager Cooper Desbiens. It was female domination in the heat races as Raquel Ivie and Boston, Massachusetts driver Allison Journey were the winners.

A very entertaining IMCA Modified race occurred. Kinzer Cox snatched the lead early. The Cottage Grove youngster surrendered the lead on lap three to Eric Ashley. Ashley, of Jasper, set a very wicked pace but ultimately lost the position to Cox on lap 17. Cox stayed up front the rest of the way to win his first race of 2016.

Eric Ashley ended the evening the runner-up, while Cottage Grove's Tyler Smith was third. The rest of the top five would consist of Springfield native Steven Sturdevant in fourth, while fifth place went to Jake Mayden, also out of Springfield.

Kinzer Cox was the fast time in qualifying, and Cottage Grove's Curtis Towns was the winner of the Dot's Trophy Shop Trophy Dash. Only one heat race was run during the night, and Ashley finished in first place.

The Late Model feature would practically go from green

to checkered. There was a caution on the opening start, but it would be the only time that the field would be bunched back up. Lebanon ace Josh Sim put himself at the front on lap one. Sim held the lead for a little bit before being passed by Salem's Britton Donahoo. Donahoo had no issues after getting to the lead. Donahoo cruised the rest of the distance to win his first career Late Model event.

Mike Peters from Cottage Grove was fast time, and Britton Donahoo was the winner of the Trophy Dash. Like the IMCA Modifieds, only one heat race was run, and Donahoo was the victor.

Last but not least was the Quality RV Repair Hornets. Junction City's Marcel Forte led the first circuit. Forte held the position until lap five, when Josh Corley made it around him. Corley, of Westfir, stayed there for quite some time.

With just a few laps to go, Veneta's Joe Maricle got by Josh Corley and pulled away. Unfortunately Maricle went off the top of turns one and two with a couple of laps to go, giving the lead back to Corley. Corley stayed up front the rest of the distance to win his third straight main event of 2016.

Marcel Forte was second, followed by Springfield's K.C.

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Tough competition at Wally Ciochetti Invitational

Tharpe fifth, Albrecht third at home meet



Reilly Boyce leaped his way into the top 10 in the long jump on Friday.

After coming off of a great road performance last week, the Cottage Grove track and field squad saw a much tougher competition from many 4A teams they had yet to see.

For the boys, Henley took first, followed by North Bend in second, Scappoose in third, Newport in fourth and Cottage Grove in fifth. For the girls, Siuslaw took a surprising first-

place win, followed by Scappoose and Henley in second and third. Cottage Grove finished ninth overall.

The Lions came very close to first place in a lot of events but just didn't hold out against some stronger programs. Connor Howard finished in second place in the 100-meter dash with a time of 11.44 seconds, and Michael Tharpe grabbed fourth

with 11.44 seconds. Howard also placed third in the 200-meter with 22.98, both times shy of a personal best.

In the 3000-meter race, freshman Konrad Raum ran a very strong race to finish in fifth in 9:32.71. Raum was one of two freshmen to finish in the top five, and the other one was Siuslaw

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Join us May 13th & May 14th

\$5.00 FAST FRIDAY MAY 13TH

Clark Printing Sprints & PHRA Dwarf Cars
Kids 12 and under are free
and 13 and over is just 5 bucks!
Gates open at 5pm
and racing starts at 7pm

SATURDAY MAY 14TH
GRAD NIGHT

All high school seniors are FREE
with ASB card!!
Clark Printing Sprints, PHRA Dwarf Cars,
Late Models, Quality RV Hornets
Normal time and price on Saturday