

FALL SPORTS PREVIEW

A look at the upcoming Lions' football schedule

With the jamboree this week, take a look at what to expect from each game in Cottage Grove's regular season

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Lions' football team will kick off its season this Friday at its Jamboree against North Bend and Phoenix. The Lions are coming off of an average season last year (4-5, 3-2 Sky-Em) but have now stacked their coaching staff with Marty and Jordan Johnson.

It will be easier to assess how the Lions will do this season after watching their scrimmages against North Bend and Phoenix, but we can still analyze the team and its opponents and how the match-ups might play out.

Game 1: Newport (1-7)
Newport finished fifth in the Oregon West League with their only win coming from Yamhill-Carlton, which finished sixth in their league. The Cubs said goodbye to seven seniors but will have 11 in the class of 2017 to come back and reassert them-

selves on the field. Newport has recently struggled in 4A competition and the Lions should be able to start their regular season with a win.

Game 2: Madras (0-8)
Finishing last in the Tri-Valley League was Madras High School. The White Buffaloes went without a win for the entire 2015 season in a league whose strongest team finished 10th overall in the state. Madras returns in 2016 with a smaller senior roster after losing 11 seniors last year and returning with only eight. Last year, the Buffs opened their season against Junction City where they lost 47-0. Though Cottage Grove will be on the road in the game, the Lions should be able to tackle Madras with ease.

Game 3: Scappoose (10-2)
This game has the potential to set the tone for the entire season. The Scappoose Indians were one of the top 4A teams in the

state last year after going undefeated in league play and losing only to Cascade in their opening game and the state championship game. Scappoose is a strong football program and has even produced NFL quarterback Derek Anderson, who is currently backing up Cam Newton on the Carolina Panthers. However, Scappoose saw the departure of 21 seniors, more than any opponent the Lions will play, and they will be bringing back 10. The season after Cottage Grove went to the state championship game, the team started off 1-4 on the season and didn't have much success after. With the departure of so many key players, it will take the Indians at year to re-establish their dominance. If all goes as predicted, Cottage Grove will enter the game 2-0 with a lot of momentum and energy and ignite the passion that the team sometimes struggled to

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Photo by Sam Wright

The Lions had a lot of success on offense against Elmira. Fans should expect to see more of that explosiveness this year.



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Athlete of the Week: Bexten returns to Lumberjack Show

World champion stops by the Gene Campbell Memorial Lumberjack Show at the W.O.E Fair

The Western Oregon Exposition Heritage Fair is always accompanied by the annual Lumberjack Show that takes place Friday evening and Saturday afternoon. Friday's show featured big log bucking, women's stock saw, open axe throw, youth axe throw, open double buck, modified saws and the hot saw events.

Though the show is small in comparison to many national competitions, the Gene Campbell Memorial show is full of ripe competition that fills the fair's bleachers each year.

The show was honored with the presence of one specific competitor that is known nationally in the lumberjack community. T.J. Bexten returned for another weekend of competitive woodcutting. Before coming to Cottage Grove, Bexten was in Wisconsin for a competition, and soon after he will head back across the country to West Virginia to compete again.

It is because of Bexten's personal relationship with event coordinator Kevin Dunnavin that Bexten competes in Cottage Grove, but it is by no means a chore for him.

"It's a really great atmosphere with a lot of great people; it's always a lot of fun," he said. While official results are currently pending, Bexten walked away with winning the pro stock saw and modified saw events.

Bexten has been competing in lumberjack events since the mid 90s and hopes to continue his career for a while longer.

"It's a dying sport, but it takes a lot of work and practice to be good at it," Bexten added. For someone who competes regularly, Bexten says that these types of athletes have to consistently work and train to successfully compete.

"It depends how often you compete, but for someone like me, I usually work on it most days."

The results will be available in next week's edition with even some local Grovers making great times and throwing accurately.



Photo by Sam Wright

T.J. Bexten makes a clean cut in the modified hot saw event.

Good form!

Kellen Bridgens (right) works on his swing form as assistant coach Rick Bengston watches on at South Valley Athletic's annual tennis camp. The camp took place from Monday through Friday last week as kids of all ages worked on their tennis skills. Tennis instructor Bob Reed spearheads the camp each year. This year, the camp was booked to capacity with plenty of kids (25) looking to increase their skills on the court.



photo by Jon Stinnett

Meet the Lions night cancelled due to heat wave

Fall teams enter season without annual scrimmages

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Due to blistering temperatures surpassing 100 degrees on Friday, the Meet the Lions Night at Cottage Grove High School was cancelled. Usually to enter the fall season and kick off the school year, all of the fall sports teams gather to play scrimmages, but this time, coaches, administrators and parents all agreed that it was safer to not host the event with such high temperatures.

"It was a collective call between myself, the school district and (CGHS principal) Udosenata," Athletic Director and Head Football Coach Gary Roberts said. Roberts went around to each coach to inform them of the hot conditions Friday would bring and each coach agreed it was best to cancel for the safety of the athletes.

Instead, teams gathered early Friday morning to take team photos and host practices while the weather was cooler.

A major concern was that the turf field at Cottage Grove High School amplifies the heat.

"The OSAA heat index doesn't take into account how much hotter the turf makes it," Roberts said. He noted that as the temperature climbed to a height of 104 degrees, players on the turf field would have been practicing in what felt like 120-degree heat.

With jamborees approaching this week, there wasn't much of a concern to make up the cancelled event, though it was up to individual teams to decide if they wanted to host a scrimmage of their own.

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