

Lions hold on to beat Outlaws in dominating homecoming game

Sisters was down 24-0 at halftime, but a third-quarter surge wasn't enough to topple Cottage Grove who ran away with a strong 34-22 victory

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove is now guaranteed a winning season after defeating Sisters on Friday. Even if the Lions lose the rest of their games, they will still end the season with a 5-3 record, and that's the absolute worst-case scenario.

Cottage Grove was in top form during their Homecoming game against the Outlaws. Despite a few hiccups in the second half, the Lions maintained their poise and denied a Sisters comeback.

The first half was completely dominated by Cottage Grove on both sides of the ball. Defensively, Sisters' quarterback, Tanner Head, felt consistent pressure and found difficulty completing passes downfield. Most completions from the senior came from quick-outs or screen passes. The rush defense was just as effective, and the Outlaws failed to establish a run game and even turned the ball over on a forced fumble, which eventually led to a Cottage Grove field goal.

Senior quarterback Blake

Sentman led the Lions' offense on four scoring drives in the first half, where he had multiple rushing touchdowns and spread the ball out to a variety of receivers.

Sentman delivered several clutch throws that allowed Cottage Grove to convert on third down, one of which was a high pass to Jacob Woods who made a leaping grab to put Cottage Grove in the red zone. After that, Sentman displayed his speed and ran the ball to the outside to finish the drive with a short rushing touchdown.

The Lions ended the first half in total control, up 24-0.

Sisters' only loss prior to this game came from reigning state champions Cascade, and the Outlaws weren't going to roll over quietly. Sisters came out scoring two touchdowns on back-to-back drives, and Cottage Grove wisely took an opportunity for a field goal to maintain a two-score lead.

In the middle of the fourth quarter, the Lions had been

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Jacob Woods leaps into the air for a first-down reception late in the first quarter.

Photo by Sam Wright

James wins varsity girls' Jefferson Invitational

Boys and girls place second overall

On Tuesday, Sept. 27, the Lion harriers raced at the Jefferson Invitational. Many had personal or season bests on the mostly flat course around the host's high school and the huge neighboring farm field along a river.

Sabrina James had a breakout race, winning the girls varsity in a time of 21:47. With Kaitlyn Brooks, Nadia Witt, Kenzie Parsons, Savannah Davis and Kate Johns joining her, they pulled off a second-place team finish out of the 14 full teams competing.

The boys saw a fifth-place finish from Konrad Raum, teamed with strong performances from Paesen Timm, Eric Cortes, Jesse Ellingsworth, Jimmy Talley and Max Gause. This propelled the boys varsity squad to their own second-place team finish among the 23 teams that raced.

The junior varsity runners did a 3K race in this competi-

tion, with personal bests from Jacob Justis, Konnor Owens, Justin Francis, Cody Smelser, Matteo Liserre, Adam Marsh, Morgan Brock, Mitchell Johnson, Lake Fultz, Braedon Rinck and Johnny Witt. They placed second out of the 11 complete teams they faced.

The girl JV runners also placed second (out of seven complete teams) with personal records from Tyra Gordon, Lexie Hall, Tatiana Baird, Jessica Ray, Emma Sexton and Allie Harris.

Top 10 finishers that joined Sabrina and Konrad in the days racing were Tyra Gordon, Paesen Timm, Jesse Ellingsworth and Konnor Owens.

This was a new meet for the Lions. Their journey to Philomath this coming Saturday for the Paul Mariman Invitational against many of the top 4A teams in the state.



Courtesy photo

Sabrina James won the girls' varsity race with a time of 21:47 last Tuesday.

Soccer gears up for second half of Sky-Em League play

After a few tough losses and confident triumphs, the boys' soccer team has made adjustments, changed systems, reversed changes, and adjusted some more over the season

BY SAM WRIGHT
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The boys' soccer program has had a fairly even season so far. The team recently wrapped up its first half of Sky-Em play and it sits at two wins, two losses and one tie. Head Coach Vern Stewart says that the team isn't quite where they expected to be but it's been an unexpected season.

"It's been a weird year," Stewart said, "A lot of teams we expected to be strong weren't that strong and the other way around." Last week Cottage Grove went 1-1, beating Sweet Home 1-0 on Tuesday and lost to Sisters 0-1 on Thursday.

Stewart says that he hoped the team would have one more win than it currently does and didn't really expect to tie any-

one either. For those who don't recall, Cottage Grove held a 1-0 lead over Elmira up until the 75th minute where an exhausted Lions' defense allowed the Falcons to score and end the game in a tie.

The challenges Stewart has been facing this year all fall within a lack of familiarity with the players. Though coaching boys' soccer is nothing new to the veteran coach, Stewart wasn't given much time to learn the strengths and weaknesses of his players.

"We've made a lot of adjustments. I've learned that some players that have played up front in the middle their entire careers are actually much more effective at the back positions," he said. The Lions were introduced to a new system that Stewart uses: a 4-2-3-1 formation, and

after a few losses, Stewart initially thought that it wasn't the right system for the team.

But the coach was wrong, and after stepping away from the formation for a few games, Cottage Grove plans to go back to the 4-2-3-1 system.

"I've discovered it wasn't the system that wasn't working, it was that some players fit better in other positions," Stewart said. For example, Stewart has moved Kyle Browning back to a defensive position, though he has usually played in more forward positions. Stewart has also moved freshman Fernando Soto Cruz to a forward position, though the freshman didn't play against Sisters.

Stewart said that there have been a lot of pleasant surprises from his players this year. George Cervantes, a sophomore,

has shown great speed and skill according to the head coach. Junior Alexander Clifton has also burst onto the scene after not having played soccer since middle school.

"He's just having a blast, he's a great player," Stewart said of Clifton. He also mentioned Jackson Perkins being a great defender and a player who has improved throughout the season.

Cottage Grove now enters its second round of Sky-Em opponents, and Stewart and the Lions feel confident.

"We have to make sure we're not playing down to weaker teams, and I think we may even beat some teams that have already beaten us," he said.

The Lions head to Elmira on Thursday, Oct. 6.



Athlete of the Week

Blake Sentman leads Cottage Grove to 5-0



Blake Sentman epitomized "dual threat quarterback," with many of his touchdowns this season coming from his legs, but he still scores and gets the bulk of his yardage through the air. Sentman was responsible for all four touchdowns against Sisters. This week, the senior completed 14 of 28 passes for 330 yards and one touchdown. While he only tallied 17 yards rushing on 11 carries, Sentman totalled three touchdowns on the ground.

Yoncalla, Mapleton set state record

The OSAA has a new record for the highest-scoring football game in state history. On Friday, Yoncalla traveled to Mapleton, where the teams racked up a total of 180 points against two eviscerated defenses. Yoncalla had 15 touchdowns, tying the state record with Huntington's 105-0 win over Powder Valley last year. The previous record was held by Triad and Elkton, where Triad defeated Elkton 106-66 in 2012.

"It was a fun game, but I told one of the kids when it was over: 'OK, we can turn the Xbox off now and go back to playing real football next week,'" said Yoncalla Head Coach Matt Bragg.



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