

Sky-Em time: What the Lions need to improve on and what they are doing well

Cottage Grove's loss to Elmira on Friday has given the team insight on what it needs to improve on, but also what it is effective at

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The girls' basketball team started off on the wrong foot in league play with a loss to the Elmira Falcons on Friday evening. The Falcons put the Lions away 50-34 in a game where shooting was ultimately the deciding factor.

Elmira shot proficiently throughout the game, especially from beyond the three-line and at the free throw line. In fact, it was the outside shooting game that beat the Lions.

Cottage Grove outscored Elmira 24-0 in the paint, but the Falcons shot nearly 30 percent from the three-point line (five of 17), while the Lions sank only one of six. The Lions were also only seven of 27 from the free throw line (26 percent) while the Falcons sank 17 of 30 free throws (56.6 percent).

Turnovers were once again a big issue for Cottage Grove. The Lions turned the ball over 19 times while the Falcons only gave it up 10 times.

The game was slow for the Lions from the start, managing only six points in the first quarter. A little life was sparked in the second quarter, and Cottage Grove increased their score to 20 just before the half ended. But Elmira still managed to score 11 points in the first quarter and a painful 19 points in the second quarter for a 10-point lead to start the third quarter.

The start of the second half was even slower than the start of the first half for the Lions, but they did manage to slow down Elmira for a little while. The two teams combined for



Photo by Sam Wright

Hannah Albrecht deflects a pass from South Umpqua's point guard. The Lions have used this effective three-quarter-court press to stuff offenses.

only nine points total in the third quarter, but it was the Falcons who scored eight and the Lions who scored one. The Lions did eventually outscore Elmira in the fourth quarter, 13-12, but the game was far too out of reach and a comeback didn't seem feasible.

Head Coach Kevin Yoss stated that shooting was definitely the issue.

"We just weren't hitting shots," he said. Yoss added, however, that the field goal issue was more or less an isolated incident, and field goal percent-

ages have been much better in earlier games.

What remains a consistent issue, according to Yoss, is the free throw shooting.

"Games could've turned out much differently if we did better at the free throw line," Yoss said. And the numbers don't lie.

The Lions lost by 16 points against Elmira, but they missed 20 free throws. Had Cottage Grove shot free throws as well as the Falcons, the game could have been 41-50, a much more manageable deficit to come back from in the last minutes

of the game. The Lions most accurate shooting on the night was Ema Gardner, who shot 57 percent from the field (four of seven) but missed all four of her free throws. High scorer Reilly Kelty came away with 11 points but was only 35.7 percent (five of 14) from the line.

But what the Lions are doing very well is rebounding. Cottage Grove out-rebounded Elmira 43-31.

"We have a goal to have 12 or more rebounds more than the opponent each game, and Friday we reached that goal," Yoss

said.

In their loss against Stayton, the Lions won the rebound battle 37-23 and in their win against South Umpqua, they had a whopping 55 rebounds (32 offensive, which accounted for 22 second-chance points) against 36 rebounds. Kelty and Gardner accounted for 11 each against Elmira.

Furthermore, the Lions have proven to be very annoying defensively. Cottage Grove displayed a 3-2 three-quarter-court press defense that has given them takeaways and a lot of

points off of turnovers.

Moving forward, Yoss says the team will focus on ball handling to reduce turnovers and free throw shooting.

"We're smart enough to make the right decisions, but we have to make sure we are passing the ball physically well," Yoss said, adding emphasis that passing the ball comes from the physical effort of both players involved in the pass.

This week, the Lions take on Sisters and Sweet Home at Cottage Grove High School.

Lions end two-game losing streak with powerful win over Elmira Friday

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Boys' basketball fans need no longer worry, for the Lions have ended a two-game losing streak by simply dismantling Elmira in a 59-41 rout of the Falcons on Friday evening.

Cottage Grove had just come off of two losses: a close overtime loss to South Umpqua at home and then a road loss to Stayton three days later.

The Lions were scheduled to face Gladstone last Thursday, but Portland weather had different plans, and the game was cancelled. That moved the Elmira game up a few days to play on Friday instead of the following Tuesday, which was fortunate for the Falcons as it was probably best to get this game over with as soon as possible.

It took Cottage Grove a while to really break away, but the lead was never truly threatened all game. The Lions went up 13-7 in the first quarter and then outscored the Falcons again 15-10 to take a 28-17 lead at half-time. The Falcons showed a bit of life by outscoring the Lions 16-14 in the third quarter, and making it a nine-point game going into the fourth.

Cottage Grove had lost its last two games by allowing fourth-quarter surges by the other team, but it didn't seem like it was going to happen this time. With DeJean Alonzo, Blake Sentman and Kory Parent leading the way, Cottage Grove had their own fourth-quarter surge with 17 points and keeping the Falcons to only eight points. The 18-point win is the largest

win margin Cottage Grove has had all season. In the 15-point win over Marist Catholic, the Lions led by nearly 30 points at one point in the game, but a late run by Marist brought its deficit to only 15 by the end of the game.

Cottage Grove shot 44 percent from the field and allowed Elmira to shoot only 31 percent.

The Lions were barely out-rebounded (30-31) by the Falcons, but Cottage Grove forced more turnover, capitalizing on those turnovers along with second-chance opportunities.

Alonzo led his team with 14 points on the night, shooting an accurate 71 percent from the field and was one-for-one from beyond the three-point line. Sentman followed Alonzo with 13 points, shooting five-of-nine from the field (two-for-four from three. But the two top-scorers were both only 50 percent from the free throw line.

Parent finished with 11 points with only two shots from the field (one of them being a three-pointer), but was perfect on his six free throws.

The Lions proved once again that a balanced team that works together is a successful one. No single player (except on a few occasions) blatantly outscored his teammates. Alonzo usually finds himself among the top-three scorers, but does not usually lead the team. With Hunter Gipson adding eight points to the effort, Cottage Grove's top four scorers were all within 6 points of each other. Compare that to Elmira, whose leading scorer was seven points ahead of the next player.



Athlete of the Week

DeJean Alonzo brings Lions out of losing skid in Sky-Em opener



Photo by Sam Wright

DeJean Alonzo led the Cottage Grove Lions in scoring on Friday in their Sky-Em debut against the Elmira Falcons. Alonzo is the second highest scorer this season with 105 points.

Cottage Grove's next games against Sisters and Sweet Home will be difficult. Sisters currently holds the number one spot in the Sky-Em and is ranked fourth overall in the state. But the Outlaws have the same 9-4 record as the Lions.

Last year, it was Junction

City that held the number one spot as league play began, and the Lions beat them twice. It will be interesting to see how this year's Cottage Grove team takes on the Sky-Em league.

Matmen fall to Falcons in Sky-Em dual

See results on pg. 3B

Report hunt results by Jan. 31 \$25 penalty for not reporting deer and elk tags

Any hunter who purchased 2016 big game or turkey tags needs to report their hunt results by the deadline, which is Jan. 31, 2017 for most tags.

Hunters are required to report on each deer, elk, cougar, bear, pronghorn and turkey tag purchased—even if they were not successful or did not hunt. Sports Pac license holders need to report on each big game or turkey tag issued.

Hunters have two ways to report:

Online via www.odfw.com or reportmyhunt.com either at home or by visiting an ODFW office with a computer available for Hunter Reporting (ODFW field or regional offices in Adair Village/Corvallis, Bend, Clackamas, La Grande, Portland-Sauvie Island, Roseburg, Salem Headquarters, Springfield, Tillamook.)

By telephone: Call 1-866-947-6339 to talk to a customer service representative from 6 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. PT, seven days a week.

Reporting deadlines are:

Jan. 31, 2017 for all 2016 hunts that ended by Dec. 31, 2016

April 15, 2017 for all 2016 hunts that end between Jan. 1-March 31, 2017

Hunters need the following pieces of information to report, which takes just a couple of minutes:

Hunter/Angler ID number (located on ODFW licenses, tags and applications; this is a permanent number that stays the same from year-to-year)

The two digit Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) number of the Unit you hunted in most and the Unit you harvested an animal in if successful.

The total number of days hunted (including mentoring youth), the number of days hunted in the WMU hunted most, and the number of days hunted in the WMU you harvested an animal in if successful.

\$25 penalty for not reporting deer and elk tags

Hunters who fail to report 2016 deer or elk tags on time will be penalized \$25 when they purchase a 2018 hunting license. This penalty is assessed once, regardless of the number of unreported tags.

As of Jan. 10, 2017, about 53 percent of elk tags and 51 percent of deer tags have been reported for hunts with a Jan. 31 reporting deadline. ODFW will be sending reminder postcards to hunters who haven't reported yet later this month.

"The information hunters provide is needed to evaluate hunting seasons and tag numbers," said ODFW Game Program Manager Tom Thornton. "We really appreciate hunters taking a few minutes of their time to complete the report."

The funds generated by penalty fees are being used to increase Oregon State Police patrol and enforcement of winter range closures in Oregon. These closures help deer, elk and other wildlife survive the winter by limiting disturbances from people.

CYAN MAGENTA YELLOW BLACK