

## Brett Ollivant preps to leave CGHS



After years as a Lion athlete, Ollivant says goodbye to the gold and blue as he prepares to graduate this June

By Madison Layton  
For The Sentinel

After earning Sky-Em League Pitcher of the Year, First Team All-League and Second Team All-State accolades as a junior, Cottage Grove High School pitcher

and senior Brett Ollivant has returned to the mound for his final season with the goal of defending the team's league title.

Now in the home stretch of the regular season, the Lions "definitely still hold our own destiny as far as going to the playoffs," Ollivant said. "We just need to win out, win a lot of games, and we'll be fine."

The Lions (7-4 in league play) are current defending league champions after taking home their first league title in 25 years last season. It was in that same season that Ollivant established himself as an integral member of the team, after having swung between junior varsity and varsity as a freshman and becoming a full varsity player his sophomore and junior seasons.

But Lions head baseball coach and Cottage Grove High School physical education teacher Dan Geiszler had seen a glimpse of Ollivant's talent for the sport before he was even in high school. Geiszler coached number 15 in the summer between Ollivant's seventh and eighth grade years.

"He's always had just natural baseball instincts," said Geiszler. "[It's] something you can't teach."

Ollivant got his start in baseball at just five or six years old in Creswell before making the move to playing the for the youth league Babe Ruth in Pleasant Hill.

"I was an active kid," Ollivant laughed, explaining his introduction to baseball. "[My parents] put me in it because they got tired of me running around the house."

Prior to joining the Cottage Grove High School team as a freshman, Ollivant had seen most of his playing time at shortstop or on second base. But he recalled that it wasn't long after joining the varsity squad that he began to practice pitching for the Lions.

"It was a rough transition for a little bit," Ollivant said of his first few games at the varsity level. "It was definitely a little intimidating to be out there with all those seniors who had worked really hard."

But Ollivant soon got into the swing of things, playing summer ball and using off-season practices to improve his skills. That extra work paid off for Ollivant and the Lions baseball team as a whole last year when the team won its league title and Ollivant took honors for pitching

"It was pretty cool that I could be a part of that," Ollivant said, "especially will all the seniors we had last year."

The win brought recognition from locals around town; Ollivant recalled getting stopped by residents who congratulated him and

teammates on the accomplishment. And if locals didn't recognize the boys by face, players could rely on their jerseys and hats bearing their school's name hung in the back of their cars to earn them a pat on the back or a handshake.

After the Lions stellar 2016 season, Geiszler said Ollivant continued the practice habits he had set before and prevented the accolades from allowing him to think the work was over.

"Some people could kind of rest and say 'well I was really good as a junior, I don't need to do anything because I'll just be better as a senior.' That's never the case unless you work," Geiszler said. "He's put in the work."

Now, nearing the end of his final season with the Lions, Ollivant is focusing on helping his team retain their title, while also preparing for his own future.

In the fall, Ollivant plans to attend Lane Community College to complete his prerequisites before moving on to another college. He is juggling the decision to play baseball for the Titans while taking classes in Eugene.

Next up, the Lions will take on Sisters on May 2 before traveling to Sutherlin on May 9.



## Lions fall to Junction City in doubleheader

By Kyle McGowen  
For The Sentinel

Heading into Friday's double header with the Junction City Tigers, the Cottage Grove Lions baseball team knew that they would need a pair of wins to

remain in the Sky-Em conference championship race with the Sisters Outlaws. The Lions had won with a 7th inning rally the day before at Elmira 9-7 and were in a prime position to set up a big date with the Outlaws on Tuesday at Kelly field if they could take care of business against Junction City. However, the Lions bats struggled to get going in either game as Cottage Grove dropped both matches against the Tigers.

"We pitched and played defense well, giving up three runs and five runs", Lions coach, Dan Geiszler said. "Normally we are going to be right in the game and have a chance to win."

The Lions had a chance during the 3rd inning of game one to get a few on the board but left the bases loaded. Cottage Grove did manage to take a 1-0 lead in the 5th inning after Hunter Gipson was able to steal home, but Junction City responded in the 6th by scoring three runs. The Lions, for the second time in as many days had the chance for a 7th inning rally but Jaace Cross struck out with bases loaded and sending the Lions to a game one 1-3 loss.

"Offensively we struggled a lot against some pitchers we probably shouldn't have struggled against, that was frustrating. We got our guys up that we wanted in key situations but we just couldn't come through."

Cottage Grove attempted to respond in game two of the double header but again couldn't get things going offensively. Things unraveled quickly for the Lions in the 5th inning when Junction City expanded on its 1-0 lead by scoring four runs and taking a 5-0 lead. The Lions did get on the board in the 5th when Wyatt Sayles got on an RBI single bringing home Brett Ollivant and then shortly after that Gipson made his way to home plate to cut the score to 5-2. Sayles pitching was solid in the 6th inning giving the Lions

Please see **BASEBALL B**



## Athlete of the Week



Sabrina James improved her 3000m time during Meet of the Champions by 27 seconds. The feat earned her a third place finish and a #7 ranking in the state. Congratulations, Sabrina!

# Cottage Grove Speedway

Join us May 5th for **FAST FRIDAY & \$2 TACOS**

Celebrate Cinco do Mayo with us! Enjoy **FREE** admission and \$2 Tacos!!!  
IMCA Modifieds, Quality RV Repair Hornets

May 6th for **FAN APPRECIATION NIGHT**

Join us for a full night of racing along with a meet and greet session with all of our fabulous CG Speedway race car drivers!  
Late Models, IMCA Modifieds, IMCA SportMods, Quality RV Repair Hornets, Limited Sprints - Winged