

## Lions can't be tamed

*Cottage Grove boys' soccer undefeated in league play*

By Zach Silva  
[zsilva@cgsentinel.com](mailto:zsilva@cgsentinel.com)

As fleet of foot as the Cottage Grove boys soccer team is, this season has seen them struggle to get out to fast starts. This continued last Tuesday when the Lions (6-0-1, Sky-Em 5-0) hosted Junction City and despite a slow start defeated the Tigers (1-6-1, Sky-Em 1-3-1) 3-0 with all three goals coming within 15 minutes at the end of the first half.

In the early going, it was Junction City that was playing like the better team. They disrupted any flow from Cottage Grove and controlled possession. By the 20th minute, the Tigers had created chances and Colton Ditlefsen had twice worked into the box for some near misses.

"These guys are just slow in starting, I guess," said head coach Vern Stewart. "And eventually they get it together."

It was at the end of the first half when the Lions got it together.

In the 33rd minute, a Junction City turnover in their own half, the Lions got the ball to Konrad Raum who was able to take a touch at the edge of the 18-yard box and sent a shot to the upper left corner of the goal. The ball was deflected by Junction City's goalie but found the back of the net to put the Lions up 1-0.

"Konrad had a nice goal," said Stewart. "We talked about shoot[ing and] he shot. It wasn't a perfect shot but the keeper made a mistake and it was a goal."

After the goal, the Lions seemed to be playing with a little more energy as they maintained possession and were completing passes that had previously been off target.

With just three minutes left in the half, the half Jasper Nichols-Ferguson got a steal deep in the Junction City half. He found Kyle Conley who was momentarily dispossessed in the box. Conley stayed with it, won back the ball and struck the ball to the right side of the goal for a Cottage Grove score.

With the Lions up 2-0 with less than three minutes remaining in the half, their work was not done. Raum found Conley for a chance that just missed wide.

But with under ten seconds left in the half, Nichols-Ferguson passed wide to George Cervantes who was outside the 18-yard box on the left side of the goal. Knowing the clock was winding down, Cervantes immediately played the ball into the box where Kyle Browning put it away a moment before the clock struck zero.

The Lions went to the break up 3-0 with Stewart looking for the team to correct any bad behaviors that they played with in the opening 30 minutes of the game.

"At [halftime] I told them the score didn't matter. I want to see you first to the ball, talking, movement, all the things that they know how to do," said Stewart. "And I told them to take shots. And if it goes in, it goes in and if it doesn't it doesn't matter. 3-0, that's a very good score."

The second half, the Lions came out a different team. Now with a comfortable lead, they controlled the game with possession and poised passing. They created a handful of chances in the second half that saw Raum, Conley and Browning all get close to scoring a second goal but were unable to get past the keeper.

Thursday the Lions went on the road and beat Sweet Home 5-1.

## Home, Sweet Home: Lions stay undefeated



On one of his four receptions, Jacob Woods tries to avoid a Sweet Home defender and pick up extra yards.

PHOTO BY CHANDLER BASQUE

### *Cottage Grove football rolls over the previously undefeated Sweet Home Huskies to stay perfect on the season*

By Zach Silva  
[zsilva@cgsentinel.com](mailto:zsilva@cgsentinel.com)

On paper, it looked like the Cottage Grove football team was going to be tested in ways that they had not seen this year. Facing the previously undefeated Sweet Home Huskies at home, a team who had allowed just 20 points through their first four games, Cottage Grove was going to need to bring their A game to compete in this battle of top 10 teams in 4A.

They did just that as they overpowered the Huskies to win 53-12 and improve to 5-0 on the season.

"I knew that they were a good team, they're undefeated just like we were and honestly, intimidating," said Cottage Grove quarterback Dylan Graves who finished 12 for 16 on the day for 183 yards passing and two touchdowns.

Sweet Home started the game with the ball and after four plays found the end zone on a 62-yard passing play to take an early 6-0 lead.

"I thought our kids did a good job at answering their touchdown. We had kind of went into the week with hey we got to make them put together drives,

they are kind of a big play team," said head coach Gary Roberts. "And then we give up a big play on the third or fourth play. So our kids did a good job at buckling down and making them line up again. And then from then on in we did a good job."

After that initial score from the Huskies, Cottage Grove went on to score 53 unanswered points. Not only were the Lions scoring, but they were scoring in every way – except a punt return – possible: kick return, interception return, receiving, rushing, field goal and a safety.

It began with an explosive first quarter that saw the Lions put 27 points on the board. After going down early, Erick Giffen returned the ensuing kick for an 80-yard touchdown.

On the next offensive drive, Graves found Hayden Glenn for a 17 yard touchdown pass. Just a few plays later, it was Jacob Woods on defense coming up with an interception that he ran back 40 yards for the touchdown to put the Lions up 20-6. And on the next offensive drive, a 22-yard Woods reception was capped off by a Juice Claffin one yard rushing touchdown to put the Lions up 27-6 at the end of a busy first quarter.

"I had expected us to play well but I don't know if I had expected us to do what we did. Especially early where it seemed like we stymied them. I was real proud of our kids," said Roberts.

In the second quarter, it was the Lions defense that continued to make big plays. The Huskies had

worked the ball down to the Cottage Grove 3-yard line where they faced a 3rd and one. The Lions defense swarmed their running back Austin James for a loss of five and the defense made another stop on fourth down to give the offense the ball.

Moving away from the quick strikes in the first quarter, the Lions then marched the ball 90 yards downfield over 10 plays ending with a Graves to Giffen 19-yard touchdown connection to go up 34-6 at the half.

In the second half the Lions worked through the run game after making halftime adjustments to accommodate for Sweet Home coming out in a different defensive set than they normally run. After a Graves interception and a Giffen made field goal, the Lions struck again through the air with a Woods 38 yard touchdown reception to put Cottage Grove up 46-6.

Woods finished off his busy day of 77 receiving yards on four receptions, 52 yards on a kick return, 39 yards on a punt return, 60 yards on his interception return with a 12 yard rushing touchdown to put the Lions up 53-6.

"You've just got to trust in yourself and your offense," said Woods. "I've been with [my teammates] since like day one and we've just grown up and trained together and after last week's performance we really picked it up this week."

The Lions will now move on to face the Sisters Outlaws (2-3) on the road next Friday.



A Cottage Grove receiver looks to find the end zone.

PHOTO BY CHANDLER BASQUE



The Cottage Grove defense shuts down the Sweet Home run game.

PHOTO BY CHANDLER BASQUE

## Athlete of the Week



*This week's athlete of the week is sophomore cross-country runner Jimmy Talley. Talley finished first for the Lions at both races last week and took an entire minute off his personal best time. To read more about Cottage Grove cross-country turn to page B4.*



**Ages 5 and Under – FREE**  
**Ages 6-12 \$5.00**  
**ALL OTHERS JUST \$10 BUCKS!!**



**OCT 6TH FOR KAGE KARTS**  
**OCT 7TH FOR IMCA MODIFIEDS**  
TODD'S AUTO BODY SPRINTS,  
DWARF CARS, IMCA SPORTMODS,  
QUALITY RV HORNETS