



Section B

South Lane County Sports and Recreation

SPORTS

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

Contact Sports, 942-3325 or e-mail zsilva@cgsentinel.com

STATE CHAMPIONS

Cottage Grove 48, Marshfield 14



Cottage Grove's Chad Bottorff breaks through an opening during the state championship game.

PHOTOS BY CGHS PHOTOGRAPHY CLASS/CHANDLER BASCUE AND JORDAN HAGEWOOD

CYAN MAGENTA YELLOW BLACK

By Zach Silva
zsilva@cgsentinel.com

Cottage Grove football wins its first title in school history

It was yet another victory for the Cottage Grove football team.

It was a familiar storyline: the offense overwhelmed the opposition as the defense allowed just two touchdowns; the team – that won by an average of 30 points per game this season – did what they had done all year but this time the stakes were higher; this time they displayed their dominance in the 4A state championship.

A year after finishing second in state, the Cottage Grove football team completed its undefeated season Saturday at Hillsboro Stadium and beat Marshfield 48-14 in the 4A state championship game to win the first football title in school history.

“Last year after we lost, all of our juniors, going to be seniors, said that we’re going to come back and we’re going to do it. We are all just persistent, I would say. And we knew what we had to do to get back and we did it all season and we just went crazy with

it,” said Cottage Grove senior Hayden Glenn who was named player of the game.

It was the Lions' third time in the championship in the last three years but the first time they were able to take home the previously elusive title.

“When we walked off the field last year... our guys were disappointed but they were hungry to get back here and they worked really hard and I'm so proud of them for what they did. I can't – it's unbelievable. Because I, you know, it's easy to think that you're going to get there but it's a lot of work,” said head coach Gary Roberts. With the win, Roberts became the winningest coach in Cottage Grove football history.

Coming into the game Roberts had a little extra motivation as he was facing off against his alma mater.

“I heard from a lot of people this week that I knew and I care about. A lot of well wishes,” said Roberts who noted that there were also those who wanted their home team, the Pirates, to win.

As the rain came down at Hillsboro Stadium, the Lions began the game with the ball. Looking to ease their way into the game, the Lions put to-

gether a 15-play drive in which they marched 80 yards that was capped by a Chad Bottorff one-yard touchdown run. After a Jacob Woods interception that was followed by a Cottage Grove punt, Marshfield's quarterback Grant Woolsey found Zach Kellar for an 85-yard screen play.

All tied up, the Lions then did what they have done all season: scored fast and frequently.

It started with quarterback Dylan Graves finding Woods on a 43-yard screen play for a touchdown. After a Glenn interception, it was Graves faking two handoffs and finding Woods downfield for a 32-yard touchdown reception.

“His speed is incredibly mind blowing. I know that I can give him the ball and let him do his thing and he'll definitely get to the end zone,” said Graves about Woods. Graves finished the game 10-of-13 passing for 193 yards and three touchdown passes, all of which were to Woods.

After another defensive stop and a 16-yard Marshfield punt, the Lions started on their drive on the Pirates 31 and quickly capitalized this time with a Juice Clafin three-yard rush that put the Lions up 28-7 halfway through the

second quarter.

The Pirates offense, that had averaged 43 points per game coming into the game, showed signs of life as they powered through the Lions defense for the first time all day and made their way downfield and scored a touchdown. It was their last score of the game.

Marshfield started with the ball in the second half but were stopped by the Lions on fourth down and then the scoring floodgates were once again opened for Cottage Grove.

Graves found Woods for another touchdown, Erick Giffen forced a Woolsey fumble that Clafin ran back for a 60-yard score and then Clafin scored another offensive touchdown to put the Lions up 48-14 with a quarter left to play.

Marshfield came close to scoring in the final quarter but on fourth and goal were dropped for a loss by the stingy Lions defense.

“On fourth down I could look them in they eyes and I knew that I had trust that we were going to make the play,” said Cottage Grove's Cooper Ladd. “Especially down here on the fourth down on the goal line that pretty much sealed the game.”

The final whistle sounded and Cot-

tage Grove's dream of a title became their reality. The rain continued to pour and tears were mixed with raindrops as the Lions were handed the coveted state championship trophy.

“It feels, words can't describe how I'm feeling right now. It's just been four years of grinding. I've been there all summer for the last four years and it's just been a picture, it's just been a dream and I finally just, I finally have it in my hand. When I had that gold medal in my hand I just didn't know what to say. It brought tears to my eyes seeing coach hold that blue trophy,” said Ladd.

It became a frenzy on the field as coaches, players, parents and fans found each other and embraced each other, took pictures and just smiled as they rejoiced that the title was finally theirs.

“All of the hard work has paid off. All the pain has paid off,” said senior Nate Farrell. “Here we are and it's paid off. I won a state championship with every one of those guys. I know them by name, I know them by heart.”

For a recap of the undefeated season, turn to pages B3 and B4



A host of Lions chase down a fumble in the first half.



As the sideline cheers him on, Jacob Woods sprints past the Marshfield defense for a touchdown.

Athletes of the Week

This week's athlete of the week is the Cottage Grove football team for its success not just in the championship but all season. Here is the team by the numbers:



0 15 48 78 100+

Number of losses this season

Slimmest margin of victory this year

Average amount of points they scored this season

Touchdowns Cottage Grove scored this season. They gave up just 23

Messages (texts/emails/Facebook messages) that head coach Gary Roberts received after the game

