

Warriors and Elks battle for 1A supremacy

By Zach Silva
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On Friday night, the eyes of 1A's Skyline League will be locked in on the girls' basketball matchup between fifth ranked North Douglas (15-2) and 13th ranked Elkton (13-3). With both teams having beat up on lesser opponents throughout the season, they'll come in to find out how they stack up in conference play.

The style of plays for each team is strikingly similar. Both teams are fully reliant on a full-court defensive pressure to spark their offense and have been feeding off opposition turnovers all year. The teams both have a shared loss against 2A's undefeated Oakland team and until the Elks fell to Days Creek last Saturday, the teams were both undefeated in league-play.

Additionally, both teams came into this year with relative unknowns about how good they would be. A year after earning the two seed at state, the Warriors entered the season with a new core of players who have been thrust into more prominent roles.

The team has been anchored by the play of junior Abby Whipple and sophomores Nicki Derrick and Rylie-Jo Olds who all played in last year's state tournament. This year the team has been bolstered by guard Sofia Alcantar who, with her speed and quick hands, has given teams trouble all season.

"We're kind of babes in the woods here," said North Douglas head coach Jeff Davis. "We've had some experience in Baker City but we're not talking about significant minutes for this group."

For the Elks, the team made it to the second round of the playoffs last year but coming into this season, were also without last year's stars. The group is led by senior Hannah Maxwell who, offensively, can get to the rim at will. Allison Swearingen, a senior guard, is Maxwell's running mate who has been able to lock teams down on the defensive end. A host of sophomores that came in ready to play meaningful minutes have propelled Elkton to find early season success. Now the Elks are looking to prove that they belong in the top tier of 1A teams.

For Elkton, there is no greater challenge than North Douglas. Since the 2011-12 season, the Warriors, who dropped down to 1A in the 2014-15 school year, are 13-2 against Elkton.

"They're a good team, they're still a good team," said Elkton head coach Rob Parker. "We've seen them play, we're just going to go play them; nothing special. We'll do what we do and they'll do what they do. Jeff and I have been coaching against each other forever so we know what each other does. Just go and play, nothing special."

For Davis and the Warriors, he sees this game as a time that his team has to execute and find out where this team stands.

"So we're thankful, regardless of outcome, that we get to play them. We still think that we're climbing the hill, still getting better. If it means with youngsters that we've got to stub our toe a time or two, that's part of it," said Davis.

Lions outdone by Outlaws in league opener



Cottage Grove's Jordan Hagewood works his way to the basket on Friday night.

PHOTO BY IRENE NICHOLS-FERGUSON/CGHS

Sisters scores a bucket with 4.9 seconds left in the game to secure a road victory

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For Cottage Grove's first year head coach Nick Finley, it was a "disappointing" way to start league play.

"That was a disappointing game. We talked about that, that hasn't happened much this season where we've been, the coaches, have been disappointed. And we were disappointed in that game," said Finley after Friday's 50-48 home loss to Sisters.

Coming into the game, the Lions were confident as they carried a six-game winning streak and were facing a Sisters team that was missing last year's first team all-league player Ty Horner who was sidelined with an injury.

Pounding the ball inside, the Outlaws took an early six-point lead that the Lions answered. An 11-3 run during the end of the second quarter and start of the third quarter gave the Lions a nine-point lead, their biggest advantage of the night.

"These kids are interesting. They show up to play and then they decide to take a little break and tonight it seemed like we were flat the entire game," said Finley. "There were stretches there, minutes at a time, where we scored eight points in like a minute and then we wouldn't score for four minutes and then we would score eight points."

In the fourth, the Outlaws took a 39-38 lead which

was their first time being up since the first quarter.

It didn't last long as Jesse Ellingworth, who had been diving and fighting for loose balls all night, made the right play for the Lions as he splashed home a three, one of five on the night, to give Cottage Grove a temporary lead.

Ellingworth finished with a team-high 19 points.

"The one thing that kills us about Jesse is his unwillingness to shoot when he's open. He knocked down five threes tonight and yet, you swing the ball to him and

he's wide open and he doesn't shoot," said Finley.

"We need to get his confidence going because he could score 20-25 points for us a night. I mean, he's a good player. And defensively, he's a solid player."

As the Lions continued to battle it was errant plays down the stretch, and throughout the game, that seemed to spell their demise.

"These one-handed behind the back passes, those got to go. You know, those 25-foot threes, we don't need those. We can get easier shots. I don't know," said Finley.

As the teams traded buckets down the stretch, it was Trenton Grover hitting a three to tie the game. After a Sisters bucket, and a methodical Lions possession, Jordan Hagewood got a lay-up that tied the game at 46 with just under two minutes to play.

After Sisters hit a pair of free throws, it was the Lions who found DeJean Alonzo who got fouled with 40 seconds left. Alonzo tied the game by sinking both free throws.

In the final possession, Sisters worked the ball around as they used clock until Noah Richards cut through the lane and scored with 4.9 seconds left. After a Cottage Grove timeout, Erick Giffen sprinted the length of the court and got a shot to go for the Lions but was no good. "They're kids and they're in front of their home fans and they want to put on a show. And I think that kind of got to them tonight... They wanted to make the fancy pass or they wanted to get their fans to go 'ooh' and 'aah' instead of just go out and play basketball and win," said Finley.



PHOTO BY IRENE NICHOLS-FERGUSON/CGHS

Cottage Grove's DeJean Alonzo pulls gets to the lane on Friday night.

Cottage Grove smothers Sisters in win



PHOTO BY IRENE ZARAH WEMPLE/CGHS

Cottage Grove's Reilly Kelly skies over the Sisters defense and scores.

Lions attack early and often to start league play with a win

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After four losses in their past five games, it was a good time for a Cottage Grove win. And it came to the Lions on Friday night at home as they dusted off Sisters 51-16 in their first league game of the season. "Feels good. It was badly needed," said Cottage Grove head coach Kevin Yoss.

Getting charges and steals, the Lions were locked in from the start as they outscored the Outlaws 24-2 in the opening quarter.

"One of our goals... was to come out and have a fast start which we did. Second quarter wasn't very good. First quarter was great," said Yoss.

In the second quarter, Cottage Grove was no longer a team imposing their will but a team that was equal to their opponent. In the quarter the Lions outscored the Outlaws 7-5.

"I told them, that's the difference. Those are the quarters that are hurting us against good teams. And if we can eliminate that and can have longer stretch-

es we'll be fine. That's what has been the difference against the good teams is the stretches that we're playing poorly. And I just told them, we can't do that," said Yoss.

In the second half the Lions were back to their first-quarter selves as Reilly Kelly continued to dominate. Kelly finished the game with 15 points in just 17 minutes of play.

What aided the Lions throughout the game was their height. With Kelly at 6-2, and Matty Ladd, Ema Gardner and Keara Murphy all above six-feet tall, the Outlaws, who don't have a player over 5-10, struggled to get inside and to get rebounds. The Lions outrebounded the Outlaws 43-30.

"We did a really good job tonight of going and getting the rebound. We've struggled to do that at times especially late in games when we really needed it so I was pleased," said Yoss.

With a 34-point advantage heading into the fourth quarter, the Lions were able to lean on their bench players in the fourth quarter to see the game out.

"I thought they did really well. Matty Ladd at the end really showed what she can do so I think the future looks bright for her. And a lot of those girls are either freshman or sophomores and I thought they did really good job coming off the bench," said Yoss.

Athlete of the Week



This week's athlete of the week is North Douglas sophomore Sofia Alcantar. On Friday against Yoncalla, Alcantar finished with 13 points, 10 steals, seven assists and five rebounds. For more on the Warriors turn to page B4.

