

## Elkton holds off North Douglas

*Elks prevail in top team showdown*

By Zach Silva  
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Hannah Maxwell was tired of losing to North Douglas.

"I've been playing North Douglas my entire life – since fifth grade – and we've only beat them once and that was my freshman year. And we haven't beat them since then so we really wanted to beat them and we thought this was the year. And it was," she said.

Maxwell, who finished with a game-high 18 points, led Elkton (15-3, 6-1) past fifth ranked North Douglas (15-4, 5-2) 33-30 at home on Friday night in a battle between two teams at the top of the standings in the 1A Sky-line league.

As her teammates rushed the floor and celebrated, Maxwell began to tear up as Elkton, the constant little-brother to their cross-county rival sized up and won a physical game.

"I got bit. I have teeth marks on my arm," said Maxwell.

It was not always a pretty game. The young teams each start three sophomores and combined for 57 turnovers (Elkton 30 and North Douglas 27) in a contest that had one lead change and was always within five points.

"That was like, two young teams, a lot of defense and not a lot of offense. And a lot of turnovers," said Elkton head coach Rob Parker.

As an Allison Swearingin three started the game for the Elks, the offense started to work but North Douglas was never far away. In the second quarter that saw only six points scored (Elkton four, North Douglas two) it was clear that it was going to be a game that was carried by defense.

"We didn't get a lot of points off of turnovers. So we just, we've been working all week on being patient in our half-court offense. We knew that if the score was low that we had a real good shot at them," said Parker. "We wanted to get the ball inside to Hannah because we felt like they couldn't – if they were playing man to man she's going to be tough to cover."

Throughout the season, both teams have rolled through non-conference opponents and conference opponents alike as they have been able to turn turnovers into instant offense. Last week the Warriors had 49 points off of turnovers in one game.

But in the second half the Elks dropped out of their press and into a 2-3 zone that forced the Warriors to beat them off the dribble. North Douglas did themselves no favors as they missed their first 14 free throws of the game stretching into the third quarter.

"We had not shot them well early this season but we had gotten better. Last two games we were 70 and 63 (percent). But it's not the same crowd energy, not the same crowd noise, not the same importance in the game," said North Douglas head coach Jeff Davis.

In the final minutes of the third quarter the offense began to come alive for both teams. Payton Black and Abby Whipple hit back-to-

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## Lions remain perfect in league play



Cottage Grove's Ema Gardner surveys the Sutherlin defense on Friday night at home.

PHOTO BY MIRANDA MCCASLINE

### Lions get a pair of wins against the No. 5 ranked team and the four-time defending state champs

By Zach Silva  
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It was a birthday wish come true for Cottage Grove point guard Tara Child.

"This is the best way [to celebrate]," said Child. "I was like team, we got to get a win; it's my birthday."

The Lions (7-7, 3-0) did just that as they defeated fifth ranked Junction City (12-4, 2-1) 43-33 at home on Tuesday night to stay unbeaten in league play.

With the exception of Cottage Grove's loss to Gladstone, all of the team's losses to teams from Oregon have come from squads that are currently ranked in the top 11 at the 4A level. Determined not fall to the same fate, the Lions came out victorious.

"I feel great and I know the girls do, too. Finally got over the hump tonight. That's the best defense we've played all year and we were consistent from the tipoff until the end I thought," said head coach Kevin Yoss.

Coming into the game, the Tigers were averaging a conference-high 52.5 points per game. But through forced turnovers and the Lions leaning on their height to win the rebound battle, Cottage Grove created issues all game that Junction City was unable to overcome.

For the Lions, the team was able to take advantage on the block throughout the entire game. Cottage Grove boasts four players over 6'1" and the undersized Tigers

were no match. Leaning on 6'3" Reilly Kelly and 6'2" Murphy, from the start, the Cottage Grove posts were unstoppable and helped build a 22-13 lead at the half. Kelly finished with 13 and Murphy 12 points.

"One thing we've had trouble with is our posts have been falling away on short shots and we didn't do that in practice the last couple of days and tonight we fol-

lowed through with that again and shot better and got to the line some," said Yoss.

In the third quarter, the Lions took off.

Outscoring the Tigers 13-7 on the quarter, it was Child again and again pressuring the Junction City guards and coming away with fast break points getting the Lion lead up to as many as 16 points. Child finished the game with 11 points.

"I thought that Junction City was going to be one of our hardest competitors and looks like we did okay for that," said Child.

In the fourth quarter, the Tigers began avoiding the Lions inside and started shooting more jumpers. Hailey Bruhn off the bench found success as she was able to pull-up time and time again but it was too little, too late and the Lions walked away with a victory. Bruhn finished with a team-high 10 points.

What was more important for the Lions is not that they won but that they won in a fashion that can be replicated for the rest of the year.

"I don't think anything changed. I thought we did a really good job of knowing when we had a good match-up tonight and trying to get it to them and I thought we did a fantastic job of that tonight," said Yoss.

The Lions continued their success on Friday at home as they beat the once immovable Sutherlin Bulldogs 53-22. The Bulldogs (7-10) have won the last four state championships but have now lost two of their last three games against the Lions.

On Friday the Lions were led by Kelly who finished with 18 points, eight rebounds and six steals. Ten different Lions scored during the game.



PHOTO BY MIRANDA MCCASLINE

Matty Ladd hits a free throw against the Bulldogs.

## Cottage Grove bounces back after loss



PHOTO BY IRENE NICHOLS-FERGUSON

Jesse Ellingworth cuts through the lane for an easy score against the Tigers.

### Lions answer loss with a week full of wins

By Zach Silva  
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After beating Junction City as a player while at Creswell, Tuesday was Nick Finley's first crack at the Tigers as a head coach.

"That's a good win for us. I grew up in Junction City so I knew (Junction City head coach Craig) Rothenberger pretty well. And that's who we beat in '04 in the state championship so it was good, that was a good win for us. It was exciting," said Finley who is in his first year coaching the Lions.

After dropping the first game of league play last Friday to Sisters, the Lions righted the ship this week with a pair of wins against Junction City and Sutherlin.

On Tuesday at home, it was Lions and Tigers.

In a game that neither team was able to pull-away with, the Lions were led by a steady stream of buckets from Trenton Grover and Jesse Ellingworth.

In the first quarter, the 5'10" Ellingworth was able to get in the lane and work his way to the rim for a pair of perfectly executed step-through lay ups. Grover ended the quarter for the Lions by hitting a

pair of threes. Grover finished the game with a team high 21 points for the Lions and went six-of-twelve from three-point range.

But not to be outdone, the Tigers hit three three-pointers on the quarter.

"We changed things up and came out and zoned them and they just shot the lights out. So we went to man to man and our defense looked pretty good; at times," said Finley.

With the defensive pressure intensified in the second quarter, Cottage Grove was able to spark a 10-0 run to take a momentary seven-point lead.

"[We] did a really good job of hounding the ball and that's what we have to do. I mean, what we want to do is get out and pressure them," said Finley. "It would be like a quarterback in football sitting back there with all the time in the world, they can find guys open. But if you've got pressure, they can't."

Despite neither team scoring in the final 3:20 of the second quarter, the Tigers had rallied back and trailed just one heading into the half. Spurred on by a pair of Colton Ditlefsen threes in the third quarter, the Tigers had a four-point advantage heading into the final quarter of play.

And then the Lions turned it on. In the final period of play, Cottage Grove outscored the visiting team 21-10.

What helped turn the tide was a pair of steals from

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## Athlete of the Week



This week's athlete of the week is Elkton's Austin Luzier who scored 21 points for the Elks in a win against North Douglas on Friday.



PHOTOS BY BECKY GERRARD

