

Warriors work for a win

North Douglas outlasts Elkton

By Zach Silva
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It was home sweet home for North Douglas on Friday night.

After falling on the road to Elkton two weeks ago, the Warriors beat the Elks at home 56-41 to stay in the race for first place in league play.

The two teams are locked in a three-team race for first place in the Skyline Division with Days Creek. The Warriors will play the Wolves in a pivotal league game on Friday.

"You know all the kids did a good job tonight, we've grown so much in two weeks. Mentally, there were things that happened tonight that I think two weeks ago would just consume us," said North Douglas head coach Jeff Davis.

Before the game began, the Elks received words that starting senior guard Allison Swearingen tore her ACL and will be out for the rest of the season. Swearingen joined sophomore Aspyr Luzier (fractured growth plate) as the second Elkton starter to be sidelined with an injury.

"It was an adjustment. A couple girls had to play positions they don't normally play so I told them we'll work on that," said Elkton head coach Rob Parker. "You know, they were upset. They let some easy baskets go and stuff, but I told them we'll work on them in practice and take care of it. We'll be fine."

In the first half, the game was close throughout. The Warriors never trailed and led by as many as four points.

For every North Douglas fast break point, often led by Nicki Derrick who finished with 17 points, it was Elkton finding an answer often in the form of a Hannah Maxwell jump shot. Maxwell finished with 14 for the Elks.

In the second half, the Warriors, a team predicated on their transition offense, slowed down as they worked their offense. The first offensive possession took 1:20 of game time.

"We still think we can do both, we haven't quite figured that out, but we have enough foot speed that we can run down the floor and run an organized break and get some easy ones," said Davis.

The game changed when with 5:16 left to play in the third quarter Maxwell picked up her fourth foul for the Elks and was pulled from the game.

Down two when Maxwell came out, the Elks stayed close and a Samantha McCall bucket got the lead to three when it looked like the Warriors were about to run away with it. But without their best player, the North Douglas attack was too much and a quick 8-0 run at the end of the quarter extended the lead to 11.

When Maxwell returned in the fourth, she scored the first time she touched the ball and the Elks were able to get the lead down to five. As the Elks were looking to get back into the game, Maxwell was called for her fifth foul as she was working to get in position under the basket.

"We played a lot of the game with four sophomores and a freshman and I thought

WARRIORS continued on B3

Cottage Grove powers past Elmira



Cottage Grove's DeJean Alonzo finds a lane on offense against Elmira.

PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

Lions get mid-week home win, fall to Sisters on Friday

By Zach Silva
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While Elmira's basketball coach Nick Garman felt right at home in Cottage Grove's gym, the Lions showed up to spoil the evening.

Garman – a lifelong Cottage Grove resident, one-time CGHS head coach and current teacher at CGHS – and his current Falcons (4-16, 0-6) team faced off against some of his current students on Tuesday night where the Lions (13-6, 4-2) won 76-60 for their fourth win in a row.

"We get together pretty much after every league competition and we talk," said Garman's CGHS colleague and Cottage Grove's head coach Nick Finley. "Whether they're playing Sisters and we're playing Sutherlin or we kind of help each other out, talk and tell each other what we see. And yeah, we talk a lot about basketball."

The conversation shifted as the Lions scored over 70 points for the fifth time this season.

"Well you know, it would have been a lot nicer if they were a lot slower," said Garman about the Lions team that has now won 10 of their last 11 games.

In the opening minutes of the game, it was an electrifying Lions attack that included three-pointers on three straight possessions to give the home side an early 15-2 advantage. Cottage Grove's Jesse Ellingworth finished the quarter with 11 of his game-high 23 points.

In the second quarter, it was Cottage Grove's Jasper Nichols-Ferguson who made his Lions debut. Nichols-Ferguson, a junior, joined the team three weeks ago and has not played since sixth grade. The 6-foot-6 big man began his career with an emphatic block.

"He was huge for us down low. Their big kid is big and strong and he pushed us around and Jasper is big, strong and tall and so he affected the kid's shots and was able to push him back and get him off the spot

where he wanted to be. Great first game," said Finley.

After the game got as close as six points, the Lions rolled out to another run to get their lead back to as many as 14 before the Falcons closed the gap. Elmira's Logan Bender and Kellen Smith orchestrated a 17-6 run in the third quarter got the Cottage Grove lead down to two points.

Bender finished with 22 for the Falcons and Smith added in 18.

"They went on a scoring run and we didn't play good defense. They were hitting shots and we weren't playing defense and we made it easy for them," said Finley. After a missed Elmira lay-up on a chance to tie the game, the Lions took off.

It was a team effort as buckets from Jordan Hagewood, DeJean Alonzo and Ellingworth paired with Elmira turnovers carried the Lions to get back to an eight point lead. The Falcons were able to hang around at the start of the fourth before the Lions cleaned up turnovers and turned Elmira's defensive pressure into three-on-one opportunities that resulted in easy buckets.

"I knew eventually we could snap out of it and come back to reality and be able to take advantage of the fast break, push the ball," said Finley.

The hometown Garman saw it in the same light. "We turned the ball over too many times, didn't rebound well. But Cottage Grove is a better team," he said.

On Friday night, the Lions fell to Sisters on the road 47-45. It was the second time the team lost to Sisters by two points this season. Hagewood finished with 13 and Alonzo had 12 for the Lions.



Cottage Grove's Markus Julien tries to dribble past a defender on Tuesday night.

PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

Reaching New Heights



Ema Gardner looks over a defender as she searches for an open teammate.

PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

Cottage Grove's height presents the team with opportunities

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There are a lot of skills a basketball player can get better at: shooting, rebounding, sprinting. The list goes on. But, as the old adage goes, you can't teach height. You either have it, or you don't.

And the Cottage Grove girls have it.

The Lions feature four girls on their team that are listed as 6 feet 1 or taller. This includes freshman Matty Ladd at 6 foot 1, sophomore Ema Gardner and senior Keara Murphy at 6 foot 2 and sophomore Reilly Kelty at 6 foot 3.

No matter who they play in the 4A classification, there is no one that can match the Lions for size. The Lions are quite literally head and shoulders above the competition. Teams are lucky to have one player who stands at least six feet tall and just six teams in this classification have two girls listed at being at least six feet tall. No team has three and the Lions are the only squad with four. The only other team in the state with four girls over 6 foot 1 is 6A's Benson. "(The other day) Sweet Home's coach said,

"That's really hard to guard! I'm glad I'm on this side of it and not having to deal with the other side because I'm not sure how we would handle that," said Cottage Grove head coach Kevin Yoss.

Height and basketball go hand-in-hand as is clear when looking at the best teams in the state. In the 6A classification, Southridge is ranked number one and have three girls on their team over six feet including Cameron Brink who is 6 foot 4. At the 5A level, second-ranked Marist, who will be joining the Lions in the Sky-Em league next season, features two players listed at 6 foot 1 and one player 6 foot 2.

To get to that next level of success, last year Yoss threw out the old playbook so he could make way for an offense that capitalizes on the team's height.

"We instituted a post offense that takes in consideration three posts that we're able to utilize," said Yoss. "We started that early last year and have just been working on that since that time. Since we knew we were going to get another tall player this year so it's worked out well."

As the team has grown into its new identity, it has not been without some hurdles throughout the process. Earlier this season, despite their new system, the Lions struggled offensively and the onus was put on not the Cottage Grove bigs but on their guard play.

NEW HEIGHTS continued on B3



Athlete of the Week

This week's athlete of the week is North Douglas' Jake Gerrard. Gerrard hit a buzzer beater to defeat Elkton at home on Friday night.



PHOTOS BY BECKY GERRARD

