

# 6 Cottage Grove Track and Field



Cottage Grove sprinters complete a speed workout.



Cottage Grove sprinters and distance runners work on their core strength.

## Team Rundown:

There are high hopes heading into the track season for Cottage Grove. On the boys' side, the sky is the limit for the team.

"Going into this year, I think this is the first time in the last three years that I – and as much as I hate to say it because I don't like to be a favorite – I think the boys are this year," said head coach Ricky Knutson about the team's chances at districts. "We really only graduated two guys that scored at the district meet. We bring back almost every single guy."

Included in that list are Jacob Woods (100, 200, long jump), Konrad Raum (1500, 3000) Erick Giffen (high jump, triple jump), Hunter Hall (javelin, shot put), Markus Julien (triple jump) and Jared Simmons (discus) who are all among the top returners in their respective

events.

With a loaded team coming back, there is both a level of confidence that this team has what it takes to compete for a state title – or even earn its first trophy at the state meet since 1977 – and a level of caution about counting its chickens before they hatch.

"Things have to go well. We have to be healthy, we have to get a little lucky and we have to have a really strong performance at Hayward Field once we get people qualified," said Russo. "Because obviously, we can't overlook the district meet."

On the girls' side there is an air of uncertainty hanging over the Cottage Grove team.

"There are a lot more unknowns on the girls' side. So, it's going to be fun to see – a lot of girls are going to have opportunities," said Knut-

son.

A year after finishing second by just five points at the district meet, the Lions enter the season with a Hannah Albrecht-sized hole on their team. Albrecht, a senior last season, scored 26 individual points at the district meet last season in addition to being on the 4x400 relay team that claimed second place.

"I think the most exciting thing on the girls' side is seeing who is going to step up and fill in some of those spots. We're going to have really rely on girls that are brand new," said Knutson.

The top returners on this year's team include Zarah Wemple (100, 200), Cassidy Herbert (shot put, discus) Faryn Dahlen (100 hurdles), Tyra Gordon (100 hurdles), Keara Murphy (high jump, triple jump) and Sydney Boxberger (triple jump).

## Team Perspective with Jacob Woods

*On what he's looking forward to this season*

I'm looking forward to training to get better. I really want to beat the school record this year (in the 100). It's 10.98. (My personal record is) 11.17. It's been the record a long time. At least more than 10 years.

That's the biggest goal. And then pretty much just PR in everything and I actually want to win state in the 100, too.

*On the success of this team*

I definitely feel that our team can get the league title again considering how many people we brought through our senior year and everything. But all the guys that come out this year and hopefully a few more come and we can definitely get some points in the state meet and it's possible to place and it's also, it would be hard, but it's possible to get that first place.

Dr. Brent Bitner  
350 E. Washington  
Cottage Grove, OR





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