

Rain, rain won't go away

Rain fills the opening week of the spring season

By Zach Silva
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A wet opening week to the spring sports season saw cancelled baseball and softball games across the region.

The Cottage Grove baseball team was able to get in their opening game on Tuesday but saw their home opener last Thursday cancelled and rescheduled for this Thursday. The Cottage Grove softball team was in a similar boat as their scheduled home opener on Tuesday was cancelled before they were able to play their first game last Friday at Douglas.

The Elkton/Yoncalla teams both saw one game cancelled in the week and the other was playable. For the Warriors of North Douglas, they did not have as good of luck with the weather as both baseball and softball had all three of their scheduled games cancelled last week.

With the forecast calling for 100 percent chance of precipitation today, and a 90 percent chance on both Thursday and Friday, the upcoming week does not look promising for the games that are to come.

How-to (maybe) win your bracket pool UPDATE

Things did not work out as planned

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Now, I think just as a general rule brackets, much like fantasy football teams, are something that other people really don't care about. But since I wrote about how to have a successful bracket last week, I feel compelled to provide an update about the state of my own bracket.

The premise of my entire column last week was that I used to know things about college basketball and my NCAA tournament bracket would go poorly. Using simple logic, I then assumed that by knowing significantly less about this year's college basketball teams, my bracket would then, by default, do much better.

I was – in a word – wrong. The state of my bracket is – and apparently always will be – in a state of turmoil.

It would be easy to think that with all of the upsets that have taken place this tournament (I'm looking at you UMBC) that everyone would be doing poorly which would mean that I am no worse than anyone else. I, too, assumed that but at the end of the first round my bracket was in the 7th percentile in ESPN's tournament challenge. That means of the over 17 million brackets, there were nearly 16 million better than mine. Great. At that same moment, my best friend's bracket was in the 99.9th percentile while my always reliable sister Abe currently sits in the 96th percentile.

Regardless of anything else, I can say with the utmost certainty that next year will be my year to shine.

Lions drop two games in opening week



Cottage Grove's Conner Browning fires in a strike against Molalla at home on Friday.

PHOTOS BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

Weight lifter and instructor Andrea Macauley refuses to be slowed down

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After opening the season with two losses, Cottage Grove baseball head coach Dan Geiszler's message to the team is simple: be more competitive.

"After today, I'll be honest, I'm pretty frustrated. We pitched really well... We played pretty good defense. But just the competitiveness – the lack of competitiveness is kind of showing through in the first week of games," he said after Friday's 2-1 home loss to Molalla.

It was the second time in as many games that the Lions were in a position to win but were unable to finish. On Tuesday, it came in the form of Cottage Grove losing to Henley 9-5 on the road. The Lions were up on Henley, a team that finished second in state a season ago, 5-0 heading into the fifth inning before scoring four runs in the fifth and seventh inning, and a run in the sixth, to win 9-5.

"We were up 5-0 going into the fifth on a really good team and just gave it away. Just that lack of fire and want to get it done no matter what. And we're lacking that right now," said Geiszler. "And

that's what I told them right there. I just said, we've got to find some guys that are going to find a way."

On Friday afternoon at Kelly Field, Molalla started the game off fast scoring their only two runs of the game in the top of the first inning. Conner Browning got the start for the Lions and he threw 63 pitches in five innings and finished with four strikeouts. Wyatt Sayles pitched the last two innings and had one strikeout and gave up no runs.

A Sayles single in the bottom of the fourth, got the bats moving in the inning for the Lions and he scored the lone run of the day for Cottage Grove. The Lions finished the game with two hits.

Down 2-1 heading into the bottom of the seventh inning, Cottage Grove was suddenly in a position to tie the game with runners on first and third and no outs. In an attempt to get Matt Zumwalt home from third, Jaxon Simmons bunted the ball which resulted in a pickle that saw Zumwalt tagged out but Cottage Grove runners advance to second and third with just one out in the inning. A Koltin Britton strike out followed by a pop-up from Trey Husko finished the game.

"We're not asking these guys to hit homeruns, you know, in that last inning we had guys in scoring position and we

couldn't even put the ball in play and that's just pretty frustrating," said Geiszler.

After playing at Pleasant Hill on Monday (after our print deadline; results in next week's paper), the Lions now have five games in the next four days. Geiszler sees this stretch of games as a time for the team to begin to show what they can bring to the table for the team.

"That's exactly what our other conversation was: where do we go from here. And that's next week in practice

and games we're going to find out who can compete and if you can't compete, you're not going to play," he said.

"That's a hard you know truth and a hard fact but you know that's where we're at right now and if we can find nine people that are going to compete, they're going to play and that's what next week is about. It's 100 percent about competing in practice, in games and the nine that compete are going to rise to the top and the ones that can't aren't. And that's where we're at."



Molalla's Damian Pingo makes a diving tag on Cottage Grove's Matt Zumwalt in the bottom of the seventh inning.

Team competition kicks-off track season for Cottage Grove



PHOTOS BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

Zarah Wemple (right) just edges out Matty Ladd (left) in the 100 on Friday.

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The intra-squad track and field meet to kick off the Cottage Grove season was built around a ruse. What was disguised as a fun competition of teams within the greater team – complete with fun team names and face paint – was ultimately a way to see how the runners, jumpers and throwers stacked up against each other before the season begins.

"I remember being in high school and we had time trials some times and I hated it. I was a distance runner, I don't want to run the 100 and the 400, but they're all excited to do it today so in some ways we kind of trick them into having fun with the time trial aspect of it," said head coach Ricky Knutson.

Male and female captains were voted on and then paired up to create four teams within the greater track team. The captains then drafted the rest of their squad from the 103 athletes that are out for track this season. This created four teams: Blue or Bust, Bruiser Brigade, 2EZ, and G.O.A.T. (Greatest of All Time) that will compete in events throughout the season.

"The first year I took over as head coach in 2012 I met with the seniors and I asked them what do we need to do a better job of and [team-building] was one of the biggest things that came up. So the squad competition stuff has kind of evolved since then," said Knutson.

The competitions, often inspired by challenges from the TV show "Survivor" and other various gameshows, vary throughout the season but the teams stay the same. The team that places the highest at the end of the season is commemorated with a plaque and the members of the team get t-shirts. As the captains of the team's want to win, strategy for drafting on their team came into play.

"We wanted all-around athletes. Last year we made some picks with people that were very specific in one thing. Well they did really well in their respective [event], when we had squad competitions which are usually pretty silly stuff we didn't have a good balance. So we really wanted people that were dynamic and versatile in multiple things," said senior Cooper Ladd who, for the second year in a row, is a captain of G.O.A.T. with teammate Zarah Wemple.

CG Track continued on B3

Athletes of the Week



This week's athletes of the week are the Cottage Grove softball team. The Lions won their opening game of the season on Friday 15-10. Last season, the team never scored double-digit runs in one game and scored 50 runs on the entire season. This win matches the amount of wins the team had over the last two seasons.

