

Warriors prepare for playoffs

The defending state champions squeeze their way into the postseason

By Zach Silva
zsilva@cgsentinel.com

The Warriors are heading back to the state softball tournament.

Heading into the final week of play, it was all but a guarantee as North Douglas sat in third place in league play with a weeklong series against the second-place team in league, Oakland. With only two teams making it out of the league, it was the Warriors who stepped up.

"We've come back strong the last one and a half weeks are starting to peak at the right time," head coach Jesse Rice told *The News-Review* on Saturday.

In the first game of last week's series, the Warriors fell 8-7 on the road to put the team in a hole in the standings. On Thursday things started to look up for the team. But not before they found themselves in some trouble.

In the first game of a double-header at home with the Oakers on Thursday, it was Oakland striking first as they went up 4-0 in the first inning. It was then the North Douglas offense there to pull the team together as they turned three doubles and smart base running in the bottom of the first inning into five runs to take the lead. A pair of runs for North Douglas in the second inning kept the offense flowing.

On the defensive side, besides a passed ball that led to a run in the fourth inning, the rest of the game the Warriors kept the Oakers in check. Pitcher Hope Morgan finished the game with eight strikeouts.

In the second game, the team fought for a 5-4 victory to secure the two-seed, and home field, going into the weekend's league tournament.

In the league tournament, the top seed, Monroe, has an automatic berth in the playoffs while teams two through four in the standing battle for the final spot. This meant Oakland faced North Douglas for the fourth time in six days on Saturday with the playoffs on the line.

With Whitney Anderson and Joanna Alcantar both recording a pair of hits, the Warriors were able to hold on to a 3-2 victory.

Morgan finished the day with five strikeouts.

With the win, North Douglas secured a spot in the 16-team state playoff tournament. Ranked eighth in the state, the Warriors will enter the postseason as a 10-seed. The defending-state champions will begin their playoff run later (May 23) on the road at Knappa. The Loggers finished the season 14-8 and have won 10 of their last 11 games.

Stay connected!
Follow @sports_cgs on Twitter for updates throughout the week.

Woods takes home two titles



PHOTOS BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

Jacob Woods speeds ahead of the field and to a victory in the 200 at Hayward Field on Saturday.

By Zach Silva
zsilva@cgsentinel.com

Cottage Grove finishes sixth as a team behind big weekend from Jacob Woods

It's been a constant for Cottage Grove sports all year long. Jacob Woods: state champion.

"He is awesome under the biggest spotlight... You just know he's going to perform. He did at the state championship football game, he did it on his last jump in the long jump at the district meet," said Cottage Grove High School head track and field coach Ricky Knutson. "You know, when the stage is huge, that's when he's his best."

Instead of on the football field, this time it was Woods winning the 200 and long jump while taking second in the 100 at last weekend's State Track and Field Championships at Hayward Field. He was also named 4A athlete of the meet.

With the pair of wins, Woods, who holds the CGHS all-time record in the 100 and has the second fastest time in the 200, further cemented himself into the school's history by being the fourth male to win two individual track titles in a year, and the first to do it since 1962.

"It's really hard to put into words. You don't get to be around young people like that very often," said an emotional Knutson of Woods. "I don't know what else to say. It's been a crazy ride."

In the first day of state competition, it was Woods starting his weekend off with a win in the long jump behind a 21-foot leap.

"Honestly, the mindset was just try to get a [personal record] and score high points for my team. I wasn't fully expecting to win. Everybody was having a pretty bad day because of the headwind and everything," said Woods. "Had a kind of flat mark, it was a decent mark, 21-feet, but nobody ended up beating it."

With the second fastest time in both the 100 and 200 prelims, he went into Saturday looking to score. In the 100 final, it was North Bend's Jonathan Chilcote just edging Woods out at the line by .11 seconds. Determined not to fall to second again, Woods was ready for the 200.

"You know, after the 100, I was a little upset. I knew it was my last time ever competing for high school and my team needed the points and I just really wanted it. So my legs hurt, shaking before the race, I just had to give it everything I got though," he said.

With a fast start, he came around the turn in first place and was able to hold off the competition and sprint to a time of 22.34 to take the title.

"I just tried to keep the pace and I knew if I was going to win I had to beat that corner and make everyone feel a little uneasy. And then that last bit I just had to try not to die and then that last 10 meters everything was on fire," said Woods.

The other top performance of the weekend for Cottage Grove was from sophomore Jimmy Talley, whose 19-second PR propelled him to a second-place finish in the 3,000 in a time of 8:57.

"It felt really fast but it didn't feel like breaking nine fast. So I was kind of surprised when I looked at the clock and I was pretty pumped up when it happened, too," he said.

Coming into the race, first place finisher John Kavulich was the only racer

to have broken the nine-minute barrier with his previous best of 8:43. With that in mind, Talley knew that the real race would be fighting for that second spot.

"So I was talking to my coach and he was telling me not to stay up in the front pack for like the first few laps because it was going to go out fast. State meets always do," he said.

Biding his time, Talley moved up

TRACK see B2



Jumping into a headwind, Woods did enough to take first place in the long jump.

Eastburn named head basketball coach

By Zach Silva
zsilva@cgsentinel.com

The Cottage Grove girls' basketball coaching job has been filled.

After Kevin Yoss resigned from the position last month, a press release from South Lane School District last Friday announced that Steve Eastburn, 61, will be taking over the program.

"We are so excited to get a coach of Steve's experience and background. He has had a lot of success coaching basketball at different levels in Oregon. He has shown tremendous leadership and ability in building a successful program and helping kids develop into great players," said CGHS athletic director Gary Roberts via the press release.

Eastburn has coached, as either assis-

tant or head coach, across classifications around the state for over 20 years. After being a youth coach for eight years in South Eugene, he was an assistant coach and head JV coach for 11 years before taking over as head varsity girls coach for nine.

In 2009 (the year South finished second in state) and 2011 he was named 6A state coach of the year. After averaging six wins a game from the 2013-14 season to the 2015-16 season, his contract was not renewed. He then was an assistant at 5A Marist Catholic High School for a year before being the head coach at 2A Crow where the team finished 14-10 last season.

"It was a new experience working at the 2A level, a smaller school. But it was very rewarding. I really enjoyed my time

there and the kids out there are absolutely wonderful," he said.

But now Eastburn is making his first foray into 4A where he will be greeted with a team that finished 13-10, tied for first in league and are returning a number of impact players.

"Looking at the roster, the returning players they have, it's really exciting. They have a lot of good kids and a lot of good size. So I'm really excited to have the opportunity to coach there. I'm looking at that as a real privilege," he said.

More than what happens on the court, Eastburn prides himself on building relationships with his players.

"When you've coached for a long time you figure out wins and losses take care of themselves. So basketball is going to take care of itself, also. If you can coach,

you can coach... It's the other intangibles," he said. "It's the relationships you build with the players and let them know that you care about them and take an interest in them and support them in their other activities and support them being student athletes."

Eastburn got to do exactly that last week as he went to Hayward Field to watch freshman Matty Ladd compete in the high jump at the state meet.

"That was exciting to go out and see one of the basketball players participating in the state track meet. It doesn't happen every day. You just do those things as a coach, you go out and support those kids. That's the plan for the program. Let them know you care and they will go out and work hard for you and that's all you can ask of them," said Eastburn.

Athlete of the Week



This week's athlete of the week is Cottage Grove's Jimmy Talley. Running a 19-second personal best, Talley took second in the 4A 3,000 at the OSAA State Track and Field Championships.



Talley lets out a celebratory scream after finishing second in the 3,000.
PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA