

The most exciting games of 2017-18

A look back at the good and great moments of the last year

By Zach Silva

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The 2017-18 high school sports year has now come and gone. A year ago, I did not fully know that my life would soon be consumed by the joy that is high school athletics. But after a year full of buzzer-beaters and blowouts, I decided to rank the top 10 games of the year played at area schools (Cottage Grove, North Douglas, Yoncalla and Elkton).

Please remember, this is just my list and yours may look very different — and that's okay. (Just know that yours is probably wrong, though.)

Okay, here we go.

Honorable mention:

I would like to note that the North Douglas boys' basketball team's 56-47 loss to Triangle Lake almost made the list just because of the dominance of the Laker guards. And by guards (plural), I mean guard (singular). And by guard (singular), I mean Parker Wynn.

Triangle Lake had six players suited up for this game and there was no doubt that the entire offense was going to go through Wynn. Everyone in the gym knew it. North Douglas threw everything it had at him but Wynn looked at the defense draped all over him said "nah," hit a step-back three and finished with 30. Just an amazing performance. Now to the list.

10. Yoncalla boys' basketball defeats Rogue River 71-61

The first thing that should be noted is that Rogue River won just one game this year. So, that's not good. Although it seemed like the Eagles should have just rolled straight to a victory, Rogue River was able to hang around, causing Yoncalla's Ted Wickman to go off. Wickman turned it on in this game as he dusted Rogue River off to finish with 28 points, 14 rebounds, 11 assists and 6 blocks.

9. Cottage Grove boys track and field first place finish at districts

This was exciting in the same way it would be exciting to watch the Golden State Warriors play a college team in basketball. You know the Warriors are going to dominate but at least part of you is intrigued enough to watch.

And if you think, *no, maybe it was closer than that*, it really wasn't. Cottage Grove was so confident that it would win that it brought championship shirts along for the final day. That is a serious flex on the rest of the league. There was never a doubt that they would win. And why should there have been?

There was Jacob Woods and Hunter Hall getting a combined 53 points together — and that's without including the 4x100 relay that Woods was on. Throw that in with a strong distance group, hurdlers and Mitchell Krokus suddenly jumping out of his mind, things come together pretty nicely.

District meets are not supposed to be won by 89 points.

8. North Douglas boys' basketball beats Elkton at the buzzer

Against their rivals, the Warriors survived their fourth

Warriors fall in quarterfinals



PHOTOS BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

North Douglas' Hope Morgan (left) is relieved from her pitching duties last Friday in a 13-0 loss to Kennedy in the quarterfinals.

North Douglas softball beats Knappa in first round, loses to second-ranked Kennedy in state playoffs

By Zach Silva

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An up and down season came to an abrupt end last Friday on the road as the North Douglas softball team fell to Kennedy, 13-0, in the state quarterfinals.

Weeks before the first pitch of the season was thrown, things took a turn when pitcher Nicki Derrick, who helped lead the team to a state title last season, tore her ACL in the final seconds of the basketball season. It was an injury that loomed over the entirety of the season.

"Nobody gave us hope of doing anything this year. I mean, they wrote us off. They really did. They said, 'Well, without Nicki they can't do anything.' But we made it to the quarterfinals of the state playoffs. So, I'm really proud of these girls," said head coach Jesse Rice after last Friday's loss.

But before they could play last Friday, their playoff journey went through Knappa.

On the road last Wednesday, the 10th seeded Warriors started the playoffs with a 6-4 victory over the seventh-seeded Loggers.

"We've been struggling with popping the ball up, and our last few practices we've focused on hitting. We focused on getting out there and waiting for the right pitch and not getting too anxious," said Rice.

"But you know, they were much more focused today. Found the pitch to swing at and keep the ball on the ground and it paid off."

It paid off right away for the visiting team. After recording the first out, they opened up the inning with four straight singles from Joanna Alcantar, Whitney Anderson, Hope Morgan and Amy Dooley that led to three runs. Another single from Alcantar in the third gave way to a 4-1 advantage before the Loggers scored another run in the fourth to keep the game interesting.

In the fifth inning, it was North Douglas coming out active on the bats and aggressive on the base paths. Morgan

started things off with a line drive to the fence for a double. On Dooley's hit to right field, Morgan was waved home off of a bobbled ball and poor throw that saw her score. Subbing in for Dooley, Bailey Holcomb was able to score from second off a passed ball to first.

"At that point we had scored those two runs, they were a little bit rattled," said Rice.

"And at that point, the pitcher, catcher — their mind is always on the baserunner. Get a baserunner on so they're not just thinking about the batter. They also have to think about the runner. Get them worried about ya," Rice added.

Behind Morgan's seven strikeouts, the

Warriors' defense stayed tough until the seventh inning.

"I didn't think I was ready to carry the team like that and then with the support of everybody on the team, it helped me keep going. At the end, we made a few errors, so I got a little off my game but then got back on," said Morgan.

Dropped balls and hit batters led to the bases being loaded with one out. After a batter was walked in, and an error in the field, the Loggers had cut their deficit in half before the Warriors ended the inning.

"Nerves kind of took over, had a couple of those oops moments, but we stuck with it. I just think we played a really good game today," said Rice.

With the win, the Warriors punched their ticket to the quarterfinals where they would face Kennedy in the playoffs for the fifth consecutive season.

"We always end up meeting Kennedy. And it's going to be a battle. They were the team we beat to go to the state championship last year. And they didn't have one senior on the team. They lost no one," said Rice. "They are disciplined and they are going to be there and they are mad at us for knocking them out last year. They want it bad."

Just like last season, it was the higher-seeded Kennedy hosting the Warriors but that is where the similarities stopped last Friday as the Trojans ran away with a 13-0 five-inning victory.

"All year long they've been telling me, Kennedy is the real deal. And they



Shortstop Whitney Anderson fields a grounder on Friday at Kennedy.

SOFTBALL see B3

Cottage Grove football staff honored

Gary Roberts, Kyle Tucker and Jeff Drumm receive awards from OACA

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After a historic football season for Cottage Grove, the awards keep coming in. This time, for the coaches.

At an awards banquet in Eugene on May 19, the Oregon Athletic Coaches Association (OACA) honored Cottage Grove head football coach Gary Roberts

with head coach of the year for 4A football.

"It's a nice way to end what's been a pretty unbelievable year. It's just another thing that is a reflection of the good guys that I have to work with and the good kids that we have to coach. You know, it's just icing on the cake or something like that," said Roberts.

"It's something that is shared with by all the coaches. And they're all valuable to what we do. It's been a great group of kids, it's a great group of kids to work with. So yeah, it puts a nice finish to the year."

Additionally, Kyle Tucker was one of seven coaches honored as assistant coach of the year and Jeff Drumm was honored with the Dave Johnson Contributor Award.

Roberts, who nominated both Tucker and Drumm, was happy to see the pair get recognized.

"With both those guys they're really well-deserving. I mean, Kyle has done a lot for our district and he's done a lot for the football program. I was here for seven years or so and after he came on board we were able to add a few more pieces to our coaching staff and it really rounded

us out," said Roberts.

For Drumm, his presence is felt not only in Cottage Grove but around the state. On Friday nights in the fall, he can be found in the press box running the scoreboard, taking stats and acting as the PA announcer.

His work doesn't stop there as he helps run the state wrestling tournament in the winter and has his hand in track and field in the spring.

"He does a lot of stuff behind the scenes and a lot of times those are the people that are the unsung heroes," said Roberts.

Athletes of the Week



This week's athletes of the week are the members of the soccer team the French Fries. The undefeated U-14 team were the winners of the South Valley Athletics spring soccer tournament.



The French Fries pose with their trophies.

PHOTO C/O SMILEY GLENN

EXCITING see B2