

Sky-Em football preview

By Zach Silva
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While Cottage Grove has gone undefeated over the last two seasons in league-play, a shake-up in the Sky-Em presents the team with new challenges coming into the season.

"We'll see what we're made of because we're going to go down and play a loaded Marshfield team in Coos Bay," said head coach Gary Roberts after last Friday's loss to Stayton.

Here's a look around what the Lions will be facing across the league.

Elmira (3-0)

With what looked like a three-headed monster of Cottage Grove, Marist and Marshfield, it is the Falcons of Elmira who come out of non-league play as the highest ranked team in the Sky-Em sitting at number four in all of 4A.

The Falcons have moved up the rankings beating up on weaker opponents in a Siuslaw (0-3) team that is playing down in 3A this season (and feature 20 underclassmen on the 31-man team), North Valley (0-3)

and Philomath/Alsea (2-1). Philomath/Alsea's record may not be an indication of the team's success as their victories came over a struggling Junction City and Siuslaw.

While the team has looked great on paper – tied for the third-most points scored this season in 4A – the Falcons will see if their non-league success translates to league-play as they host Marist this Friday.

Marshfield (2-1)

Sitting a spot below in the rankings are the Pirates at number five in 4A. Marshfield opened the season with a loss to North Bend (3-0), a team that is currently ranked number one in all of 5A, since then the team has rattled off a win at Gladstone and a 49-0 victory over Klamath Union. This week the Pirates host Cottage Grove and are looking for revenge from last year's loss in the State championship.

"I would think in the back of their mind (my team) would remember the butt-kicking that we received up in Hillsboro last year," said head coach John Lemmons this summer. "Sure hope that

would be a motivating factor. I know that us coaches will be working extra hard."

Marist (1-2)

The Spartans return to 4A has not been what they had hoped for. After a victory over Sweet Home in week one, Marist lost to second-ranked Seaside at home and were blown out by Banks 51-13 last week. Currently 20th in the state, the Spartans, who have previously been dominant in the Sky-Em, will look to compete with the top of the league starting this week at Elmira.

Junction City (0-3)

A season after going 3-6 on the year, it will be an uphill battle to get back to that win total this season. The Tigers lost 48-19 in their opener (though it is listed as a 1-0 forfeit on the team's OSAA page) to Philomath/Alsea, fell 54-20 to Woodburn in week two and on Friday were shutout 57-0 at home against Tillamook.

While their schedule currently optimistically notes they will have a play-in game at the conclusion of the season, it will take an incredible turnaround effort to get to that point this season.

FOOTBALL from B1

did our best to claw back into it. I'm proud of our kids and the way that we fought in the fourth quarter, I just wish that we would have done a better job of execution in the first half and the third quarter."

Friday's game was Cottage Grove's first regular-season loss since October 9, 2015 when the Lions fell 28-21 at Sisters. The coaching staff made sure to remind the team that despite the loss, the sky

is not falling.

"We said this is a bump in the road, not the end of the road. And we can either let one loss define our season or we can regroup and rally. I told them in the huddle, you never let one win define your season and you never let one loss define your season," said Roberts.

With just one non-league game left this season for Cottage Grove, the penultimate game of the season against Phoenix, the Lions

now head to league play. This Friday, the Lions travel to Marshfield (2-1) in a rematch of last season's State championship game. With a number of players injured, the team looks to get healthy and prepare for league.

"We've got to regroup and we've got to get some kids dialed in but we'll do our best as coaches, the kids will do their best and we'll keep this thing going the best we can," said Roberts.

BOYS SOCCER from B1

intensity, a lot more desire. And I think we did a great job," said Stewart.

When Cervantes checked back into the game, he was ready for one more goal. As Nichols-Ferguson controlled the ball at midfield and drew in a host of defenders, Cervantes was ready for the moment.

"I caught Jasper's eye and was like, 'Send it!' And he sent it and there was no one on me because they were all over there and it caught them by surprise and it was an easy touch, dribbled up to the goalie, look the goalie in the eye and just go the other way," said Cervantes.

In the second half, and up four goals, the Lions had sparing chances but were not attacking in the same manner as the first half. Cottage Grove's defense stayed resolute throughout the game and Hidden Valley was never able to get a solid shot on freshman goalie Ty Kishen.

"That's the whole key of having a young keeper is that you have a strong defense in front of him so it builds his confidence," said Stewart. "So he's going to feel better and then the times he does get called into a save he's going to step up."

On Saturday, the continued their winning-form as

they defeated Astoria 2-1 on the road. The team begins league play Thursday at home against Marshfield.



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Cottage Grove's Lathan Van Wagner battles for the ball.

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COTTAGE GROVE HIGH SCHOOL

9/20
6:30 p.m. Volleyball vs. Marshfield
7:00 p.m. Boys Soccer vs. Marshfield
7:00 p.m. Girls Soccer @ Marshfield
9/21
7:00 p.m. Football @ Marshfield
9/22
TBD Volleyball @ Sisters Invitational
10:00 a.m. XC @ Camp Rilea
9/25
6:30 Boys Soccer @ Elmira
7:00 p.m. Girls Soccer vs. Elmira

NORTH DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL

9/20
6:00 p.m. Volleyball @ UVC
9/21
7:00 p.m. Football vs. Elkton
9/25
6:00 p.m. Volleyball vs. Elkton

YONCALLA HIGH SCHOOL

9/20
6:00 p.m. Volleyball vs. Elkton
9/21
7:00 p.m. Football @ Lowell
9/22
2:00 p.m. Volleyball @ Mohawk
9/25
6:00 p.m. Volleyball @ Glen-dale

ELKTON HIGH SCHOOL

9/20
6:00 p.m. Volleyball @ Yoncalla
9/21
7:00 p.m. Football @ North Douglas
9/25
6:00 p.m. Volleyball @ North Douglas

Pac-12

WEEK 4

Friday, September 21

Washington State @ USC 7:30 PM

Saturday, September 22

Arizona @ Oregon State 1:00PM

Stanford @ Oregon 5:00PM

Arizona State @ Washington 7:30PM

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