

## Elkton hosts Tip-Off Classic

Four teams come to Elkton to start basketball season

By Zach Silva  
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Last weekend's Elkton Classic followed a simple script: Monroe beat everyone while Elkton and North Douglas beat Willamette Valley Christian.

The four-school event took place last Friday and Saturday and saw the boys' and girls' teams of each school play a pair of games. There was plenty of action and plenty of games. Here is a closer look at how North Douglas and Elkton performed at the annual event.

**North Douglas Girls**  
**Game 1: Monroe 49, NDHS 24**

**Game 2: NDHS 46, Willamette Valley Christian 33**

On Friday night, a talented 2A Monroe side was ready to play.

"They hit us with a little barrage and we just didn't respond," said North Douglas head coach Jeff Davis.

The Dragons were overpowering and they turned 31 North Douglas turnovers into 27 points as they stormed away with the win. Senior Kyndal Martin led the way with 21 points and seven rebounds.

Sophomore Natalie Thompson led North Douglas in scoring with 12 points while Sam MacDowell, Abby Whipple and Riley Black each added four points for the team.

"The conversation last night was about the number of turnovers we had and what kind they were. They were about our body language, our competitiveness. Our approach to the game," said Davis.

On Saturday, the Warriors had new life as they paired a strong fourth quarter performance with an all-around complete game from Whipple that lifted the team to their first win of the season. When the North Douglas offense half-court would stagnate, it was Whipple there time and time again to lift the team up. She finished with 21 points go with 10 rebounds, six steals, three assists and two blocks.

"Abby was more assertive... on both ends of the floor. She picked up two quick fouls last night so we had to take her out," said Davis. "And we've got to have her available, we choose when she comes out. Not the officials."

Tied at the half at 19, the WVC defense started to more closely hone in on Whipple which opened up scoring chances for Thompson. Thompson finished the game with 16 points.

"You know, the Thompson kid is tough as nails. Not a lot of high school experience but you watch her over the course of the season and she's just going to get better. She's tough," said Davis.

A two-point game heading into the final quarter of play ballooned into an easy North Douglas victory as the team picked apart WVC with their half-court offense, press break and the same out of bounds play that twice resulted in a wide open layup; the combination of all three turned into a 17-point quarter.

TIP-OFF see B3

# Lions power past Bulldogs in opener



Cottage Grove's Reilly Kelty goes up to block a shot last Thursday night against North Bend at home.

PHOTOS BY ANGELICA MANUNTAG/CGHS PHOTOGRAPHY

*Cottage Grove gets stronger throughout the game to capture opening night victory over North Bend*

By Zach Silva  
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While North Bend hung around early, it was the Cottage Grove girls' basketball team outlasting the Bulldogs on the way to a 43-24 season-opening victory at home last Thursday. Leading the way for the Lions was a pair of post players in Reilly Kelty and Ema Gardner who finished with 13 and 12 points respectively.

But in the early going, North Bend was hanging around and finding ways to work past the Cottage Grove defense that often features a trio of six-foot players on the backline while

the Bulldogs' tallest player stood at 5-foot-9. Regardless of height, North Bend took a fleeting first quarter lead.

"At times (our defense) was good and at times, especially late in the game, it was horrific. Just horrific. We were standing, we were getting split. They were zipping passes through us, we weren't rebounding on the backside," said first-year Cottage Grove head coach Steve Eastburn. "So we will work on that tomorrow."

But the lead was short-lived as the Cottage Grove offense began working past the North Bend zone at the end of the first quarter and outscoring the Bulldogs 13-6 in the second quarter.

"We had been struggling in practice against zone stuff so that was really good that we got to see that and we got to work 32

minutes on our weakness. And I thought we got better as the game went on, moving the ball," said Eastburn. "You know, the one extra pass and stuff. Starting to take some perimeter shots that they were afraid to take early on. Whether they go in or not, we've got to take them."

The Lions developed a comfortable lead as eight different Cottage Grove players scored on the night. Freshman Gracie Arnold had eight points while five Lions (Tara Child, Sam May, Mikaela Blomquist, Megan Schatz and Matty Ladd) each scored two points.

Cottage Grove just edged out North Bend in rebounding 34-31 but committed 31 turnovers on the day.

"It's good to put the uniforms on, run, play somebody different," Eastburn said of the team's

first game of the season. Adding, "I think we have enough experience through the coaching staff that (the on-court performance) will take care of itself. But let's build some really strong relationships where, when we face adversity, we're strong. We're

strong. And the girls, we have a really good group of girls."

The Lions played Gladstone last night (past *The Sentinel's* print deadline) and face Hidden Valley tomorrow (Dec. 6) at home and travel to North Valley on Saturday (Dec. 8).



Sawyer Weybright steps up the defense for Cottage Grove.

## Frank leads North Bend to road win

By Zach Silva  
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There were no panic bells going off one game into the season, but Cottage Grove received a harsh dose of reality last Thursday in their season opener as North Bend came to town and ran past the Lions for a 60-39 victory.

"It's a long season. It's a process. You



PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

North Bend's Jayden Frank drives to the basket.

know, one game doesn't define your season," said first-year head coach Seth Hutchison after the loss. "I thought this was a good stepping - you know, just kind of a bar to gauge where we're at. We've got to go back to work."

Offense proved hard to come by for the Lions throughout the contest as they hit just eight field goals on the day.

For North Bend, a newly 5A squad, guard Jayden Frank was on a scoring mission from the first possession. Frank, who was player of the year in the Far West League a season ago in addition to second-team all-state, scored at will netting a game-high 27 points on the day.

"I think I was just being aggressive, sometimes a little overly aggressive in turning the ball over but I think being aggressive from the get-go and setting the tone early helped us out," said Frank. "It was a great way to start. First game, everybody is a little nervous, every-

body is a little rusty and we got to get back into it. To go out there and play a good game like that, it means a lot going forward."

Cottage Grove trailed by nine in the early goings of the first quarter but a six-point scoring surge in the last minute lifted the team to within five points heading into the second quarter. Instead of a trend, it proved to be just a fluke from Cottage Grove as North Bend opened up the second quarter with a 15-2 run to push the Lions away.

The Lions struggled to find an offensive rhythm scoring just one field goal in the quarter but being aided by six made free throws by senior guard Erick Giffen. Giffen finished a perfect eight-of-eight from the line as he led the team in scoring with 12 points on the night. As a team, Cottage Grove finished 23-of-29 from the line.

"I think we played great defense," said North Bend's Frank. "I think the only time they got baskets was when we fouled and they were at the free throw line or we didn't get back on defense in transition.

I think our defense really started everything for us."

Things didn't get better for Cottage Grove after halftime as North Bend outscored them 20-6 in the third quarter. The Lions scored just one field goal in the third and early in the fourth trailed by 30.

With the North Bend starters out, the Lions found a modicum of offense scoring 12 points in the quarter. Dylan Graves and Creed Lufkin each finished with eight points for Cottage Grove.

"We've got to get tougher. We've got to be a little more physical. We've got to buy in to what we're running," said Hutchison. "I think we were taking steps in that, but this is a whole new offense. I don't expect them to know it right off the bat. Like I said, it's a good bar-setting game. And let's go from there. Yeah, move on to the next one."

Yesterday (after *The Sentinel's* press deadline) the Lions hosted Gladstone at home. On Saturday (Dec. 8) they have their first road test as they face North Valley before returning home Tuesday (Dec. 11) to host Sisters.

## Athlete of the Week



*This week's athlete of the week is North Douglas' Abby Whipple. On Saturday against Willamette Valley Christian, Whipple had 21 points, 10 rebounds, six steals, three assists and two blocks.*



Abby Whipple pulls up to shoot at the Elkton Tip-Off over the weekend.

PHOTO BY BECKY GERRARD