

The pain of second place

An unintentionally dramatic reaction to a good season

By Zach Silva
 zsilva@cgsentinel.com

Quietly sitting on a bench in a bar, people around me exited into the rainy Portland night last Saturday. With heads hanging low, those around me went through the vicious cycle when your beloved team loses: they comforted loved ones, made their way to the back of the bar for another drink and uttered empty words about next year being different.

But this time, that wasn't me. I went for a fourth option as I blissfully dreamed of a better world: a world where I didn't care about sports.

I pictured no football on Saturday. Or Sunday. Or even Monday, Thursday or Friday. The 82-game NBA season (not including playoffs!) is meaningless. March is not a basketball month but just another month. The soccer season that stretches from March to December is out the window. You just, like, hang out and that's your whole life. No missed shots, dropped passes or inept clock management can slow you down. Your emotions are not tied to a group of individuals playing a game.

I longed for this simpler reality after the Portland Timbers played in the MLS Cup and, as you can probably guess, they didn't quite win. In fact, they even lost. The boys in green fell to Atlanta United 2-0 on the road and it was not enjoyable. Zero-out-of-10 would recommend.

Sitting there, I remembered the ever-wise Hermione Granger saying, "Maybe [I don't understand Quidditch], but at least my happiness doesn't depend on Ron's goal-keeping ability." This fictional character talking about a game played on broomsticks, makes a great point but for some terrible reason (entertainment, excitement, camaraderie, my literal job, friendship, human connection, etc.) here I am still dependent as ever. Just continuing to care about things such as Damian Lillard's scoring ability, Jamal Adams' defensive ability (or any other form of [player] + [skillset] + ability) season after season.

Surrounded by fellow fans of the team I have loved since a fateful evening when my uncle took me to a game before the Timbers had achieved MLS status, I was pained as I stared blankly at the projector and watched as Atlanta celebrated their great fortune. Their fans had everything I wanted: the cup, happiness and Darlington Nagbe. And I, with Timbers fans across the room, in Atlanta and all around the world, just had the pain that is second place.

When a team you cheer for finishes in last place – an all-too familiar reality I face being a New York Jets fan – it certainly doesn't feel great but you never expected to have a great season. You never believed and convinced yourself that this was going to be the year. When a team you cheer for is good but not good enough – here's looking at you Portland Trail Blazers – you have to believe, for your own sanity, that next year will be better but you are still content with what you have. It is the idea that something will

SECOND see B3

Mustangs ride defense to victory



Cottage Grove's Reilly Kelty is met with a double-team against Hidden Valley at home last Thursday.

PHOTOS BY JADEN DOOLITTLE/CGHS PHOTOGRAPHY

Hidden Valley gets mid-week win over Cottage Grove; Lions defeat North Valley over the weekend

By Zach Silva
 zsilva@cgsentinel.com

Plagued by injuries and a scoring drought, the Cottage Grove girls basketball team lost to Hidden Valley last Thursday night at home 35-20.

"Drought? Wow. What was that when the Midwest, when they had that famine? The Dust Bowl," said Cottage Grove head coach Steve Eastburn after the game. "We had 10 points at halftime, 11 midway through the fourth quarter." Over a 23-minute stretch of game time from the end of the first quarter to the final minutes of the fourth, the Lions scored five points.

Cottage Grove was dealt a blow early on when senior point guard Tara Child suffered a knee injury halfway through the first quarter and had to be helped off the court. Child did not return to the game and is currently being ruled out for the next "couple weeks" with a bone

bruise.

"I just know that it is very traumatic for her," said Eastburn. "You know, something you might hear pop and it's just scary. You just hope for the best." In the fourth quarter Cottage Grove's Reilly Kelty suffered a head injury after a three-person collision near the basket.

In the first quarter, it was defensive pressure for the visiting Mustangs that gave them an edge early and throughout the game. It was coming from all sides as Jenelle Hurley recorded seven steals while the 5-foot-seven senior Kylee Lyon wreaked havoc on the Cottage Grove bigs as she recorded four of the team's seven blocks.

"I was impressed with all the shots they blocked. I was surprised. I knew they were very fast, I knew they were athletic and long but boy, they had a ton of blocked shots," said Eastburn.

For Hidden Valley head coach Joel Jessee, he was pleased with the defensive production but not surprised by what they accomplished.

"That's how we play. That is our game. That's what we do, we did that last year and the year before. That's our style of

defense to be tenacious, not back down," he said.

While Hidden Valley defense was in seemingly every passing lane, the team got cooking on the offensive end early hitting four threes in the opening quarter. The team went seven-of-sixteen on the night and finished with 14 points on the night while teammate Hallee Jessee went four-of-six from downtown, with three in the first quarter, to finish with 15 points to lead all scorers.

Head coach Joel Jessee, Hallee's father, was thrilled with his daughter's production on the night and played a role in making sure she had a good game.

"My daughter has been a big problem this year for us in not hitting shots. So I took her out on a daddy-daughter date and said, 'Hey, what's going on?' We talked about it and I told her all day today that this is going to be her game so it was just kind of one of those things that she couldn't miss," said Jessee.

After a slow start on the year, Hallee was pleased to find her shot.

"This game, it was a big game changer for me," said Halle. "I was focused on



Junior guard Kate Bachelder was called upon after starting point guard Tara Child went out with an injury.

my scoring (in past games) so coming in focusing on my defense first, definitely helped me gain my shot getting into the game. Not focusing on scoring. It definitely came naturally."

COTTAGE GROVE see B2

Triad hangs on for overtime victory

North Douglas puts together a 21-2 run to secure overtime before falling to the Timberwolves

By Zach Silva
 zsilva@cgsentinel.com

It was the ultimate comeback that fell just short.

Playing in the Lowell Tournament on Friday night, the North Douglas boys basketball team rallied from an 18-point third quarter deficit to force overtime against Triad before falling 60-57.

"It sucks to lose one like that. But it's nice (because) that's what preseason is for. Now I know what my team is capable of doing in spurts like that. If you put four quarters together like that, you'll be a pretty good team," said North Douglas head coach Tyler Vancil.

After offensive stagnation in the first half that saw eight points in the first quarter and nine in the second, the War-

riors switched to a 1-3-1 defense that utilized Lowell's court – 12-feet shorter than a regulation court.

"So a 1-3-1 on this court is really tough because you can't spread the defense out as much as you want," said Triad head coach Jason Young. The Warriors cut the lead to 11 early in the second half before the Timberwolves rallied back to a 47-29 lead in the final minutes of the third quarter.

But then the defense clicked for North Douglas and the shots that had been missing started falling as the team put together a relentless five-minute stretch of basketball – starting at the end of the third quarter through the first half of the fourth quarter – that saw them go on a 20-2 run. This gave the Warriors the lead at 50-49 with 4:00 minutes left to play in the game.

"That fourth quarter was the best defensive effort that I've seen out of them all year. I mean, it was fantastic," said

Vancil. "We had a couple mishaps in our 1-3-1 that just, a couple mental breakdowns and they got it down low and scored some easy baskets in the third quarter. But after that, they tightened it up in the fourth quarter and they didn't get those anymore."

The lineup that featured Koldan Frieze, Cal Parks, Tanner Parks, Justin Smith and Killian Bond brought the team back and, with sparing substitutions, that unit played the majority of the third quarter, all of the fourth and overtime. That group, led by 15 points from Frieze, scored 52 of North Douglas' 57 points on the game. Tanner and Cal Parks were each in double-figures with 12 and 11 points respectively.

"They were gelling so well that I couldn't break them up," said Vancil. Adding, "They were dying out there. They were dying but we couldn't break up that chemistry because they were so intact together that it was working out so

well."

In the second half of the fourth, the offense stalled for North Douglas as they scored just three points in the final four minutes. Triad, who had not had any offense in the fourth quarter, hit their second field goal of the quarter, a three-pointer from Ethan Roe, with less than 10-seconds to play to push the game into overtime. The Warriors outscored the Timberwolves 20-6 in the quarter.

But it wasn't over yet.

"I said, 'Forget everything that just happened. We get some extra basketball, can't worry about the last four quarters,'" Lowell's Young told his team heading to overtime. "That's all I said, 'We can't worry about everything that just happened.' With kids, it's emotional. You give up the lead and kids are mad at themselves, can't believe they gave up the lead. So you've got to forget about it."

The overtime period started with the **NORTH DOUGLAS** see B3

Athlete of the Week



This week's athlete of the week is Kaleigh Soto who had 23 points in the team's 54-9 victory over Canyonville Academy. For more on how area teams performed last week, see B3.



Kaleigh Soto runs the offense last year against North Douglas.

PHOTO BY BECKY GERRARD