

North Douglas dominant in victory over Elkton

Warriors use strong defense in wire-to-wire win

By Zach Silva

zsilva@cgsentinel.com

Entering the game, it was an outstanding defense matched up against an electric offense. The North Douglas girls' basketball team that has held teams to an average of 29 points per game facing against cross-county rival Elkton, a team that has been scoring nearly 50 points a game.

But on Saturday night in Elkton, it was the power of defense guiding North Douglas to a dominant 43-19 victory over the Elks.

"That's who we've been a long time. Hidden amongst all that talent we've had in the past and all that size is that the kids play defense," said North Douglas head coach Jeff Davis.

The Warriors held Elkton scoreless in the first quarter, to two points in the third quarter and, until North Douglas emptied their bench, the Elks had not scored in the fourth.

"The game starts on the defensive end. Until the last minute thirty, [Elkton] had 10 points. Every shot they got was contested," said Davis. "And you know, thought the kids stayed on the ground well, thought they communicated on screens well. We've got a couple of really good defenders on our team."

Included in that mix is senior Riley Black, a regular on the Skyline first-team all-defensive team; senior Abby Whipple who had four steals on the game and was constantly thwarting the Elkton offense; and sophomore Natalie Thompson who, throughout the season, has been given the task of guarding the opposing team's top offensive player.

"I play my game. They are part of the team so it doesn't matter if it's their best player, I just play my game," said Thompson on her defensive matchups for each game.

"Here's the way [Natalie's] wired: she came out, she's hurtin' and I said, 'Come let me know when you're ready,'" said Davis. "And she comes over about 10-seconds later, 'I'm okay, coach,' and of course has that big smile."

On Saturday, it was also Thompson's offense that stood out as she led the team with 17 points. Whipple added 10 points and nine rebounds for the Warriors. North Douglas poured on 13 points in the first quarter for a 13-0 lead and just build on their advantage throughout the night and at one point led 43-10.

For Elkton - where the whole school seemed to be sick within the last week including the principal, basketball coach, the basketball team and the band - nothing was working and the team was missing their long shots and at the rim.

"That happens sometimes. When you're missing your layups and bunnies, close shots around the basket... I don't know what you do," said Elkton head coach Rob Parker. "And then what happens is because we start missing, they start changing what they on offense, they start looking for outside shots. And if you're not making your bunnies you're probably not going to make those either."

WARRIORS see B3

Lions start league-play with win



PHOTOS BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

All five Siuslaw defenders are locked in on Cottage Grove's Erick Giffen as he looks to drive to the basket. Giffen gave the defense problems throughout the night as he finished with 22 points in a Cottage Grove 59-42 victory.

Cottage Grove defeats Siuslaw on the road 59-42 to start Sky-Em season

By Zach Silva

zsilva@cgsentinel.com

After opening the season with 10 straight losses, it was Cottage Grove, winners of three of their last five games, starting league play with a victory. Friday night on the road the Lions (3-12) secured a 59-42 victory over Siuslaw (5-10) to open the Sky-Em regular season.

"We can't let preseason define us and define our season. The seniors and the coaches have just been preaching, getting better every day, showing up to games ready to play and by the end of league, hopefully, we'll be at our peak to make the tournament," said Cottage Grove senior Erick Giffen after the victory.

Giffen, who finished the night with 22 points, was the catalyst for the Cottage Grove offense early as he scored 13 points in the opening quarter of play. With shots from distance, at the rim and at the free throw line, Giffen was scoring in a variety of ways whenever he wanted to as the away

side jumped out to a 19-8 lead.

"In the first quarter I was just playing really aggressive and getting good looks and my teammates were getting really open, too. So when they were open I would just give them the ball and cut and they would give it right back," said Giffen. "So our offense was just really clicking in the first quarter and it started on defense, too. We had really good defense."

Siuslaw struggled against the Cottage Grove defense and the team was rushing shots from the inside as they tried to avoid the outstretched arms of Creed Lufkin, Jasper Nichols-Ferguson or Shambay Trapp. The Lions finished with nine blocks on the night including six from Nichols-Ferguson.

As the Vikings stopped looking inside for offense, they were buoyed by the three ball and hit three three-pointers to close the half on a 9-1 run to cut their deficit to 10.

"Defensively I thought we played pretty well. Forcing tough shots is something I preach all the time," said first-year Cottage Grove head coach Seth Hutchison. "You know, force tough shots over the hand, limit second shots and we can be a

good team defensively."

After a seven point third quarter from both teams, the Vikings looked to make a run but it was Cottage Grove, a team that has been susceptible to giving up leads, putting together a late 9-2 run to seal the victory to start 1-0 in league play.

"Our team is starting to mature in the



Cottage Grove's Jasper Nichols-Ferguson blocks a Siuslaw shot on Friday. Nichols-Ferguson recorded six blocks on the day.

sense that okay, [Siuslaw is] going on a 4-0 run, we've got to pull it out, we've got to get a good shot, end that run. Take the momentum back," said Hutchison. "That's something they're starting to realize as the season goes on and that comes with experience and I think they're starting to get that experience."

Lufkin finished the day for Cottage Grove with 13 points.

The victory marked Cottage Grove's second straight win after defeating 5A Crook County earlier in the week 49-40.

"That Crook County game kind of just showed us what we're capable of if we put it all together. And we still had some lapses in that game but you know, you can see the light bulb starting to click, you can see things start to process quicker in the kids minds and it shows," said Hutchison. "These games show us what we are capable of you know and if we do the things that makes us successful, take care of the basketball, take good shots, we limit turnovers, that's what happens."

On Tuesday, after *The Sentinel's* print deadline, Cottage Grove played third-ranked Marshfield (11-3) at home. On Friday the team hosts Elmira (6-7).

Cottage Grove victorious in busy week



Cottage Grove's Logan Lowerey records a pin against Creswell on Wednesday night. Lowerey won his weight class at the Sutherlin Wrestling Classic on Saturday.

Over three days of wrestling, Lions have success including Sky-Em dual meet title

By Zach Silva

zsilva@cgsentinel.com

The Cottage Grove wrestling season is divided into two parts.

"BC and AC," said coach Rich Herzog. "You've got Before Christmas and After Christmas."

"BC" the team puts the work in, gets in shape and continues to learn new skills. Now in the "AC" stretch of the season, Herzog sees that this team is working into their top shape as they are in the heart of the schedule and prepare for districts in the not-too-distant future.

Last week, the team was able to turn their "BC" training into "AC" results in a full week of wrestling that featured the team winning the Sky-Em Dual Championship for the first time since 2010.

The week also saw the team win a three-way dual meet at Creswell on Wednesday and take seventh at the Sutherlin Wrestling Classic on Saturday.

"So [the meets are] a coaches' report card: how well are we doing? And I've got my little notebook that I pack around and take notes and that's what we work on for the week," said Herzog. "This is the grind for us this week."

The week started on a positive as the Lions went to Creswell and defeated Churchill, South Eugene and the home team.

In the seven matches against Churchill, five Cottage Grove wrestlers recorded pins on the way to a 51-12 team victory. Against the Axe the Lions continued to roll as they won 60-4 with five wrestlers winning via fall.

Cottage Grove's Fernando Soto-Cruz, with what was the match of the day for the Lions, won his match at the

WRESTLING see B2

Athlete of the Week



This week's athlete of the week is North Douglas' Tanner Parks. Parks had 14 points against Elkton on Saturday night and continues to be an instrumental part of the offense.

"The kid is five-foot-eleven at best, maybe six foot, if he's wearing big shoes," said North Douglas coach Tyler Vancil about Parks. "He just plays much bigger than he is and that's a great thing to have."

To read more about North Douglas, turn to B3.



Tanner Parks takes a free throw against Yoncalla last Friday night.

PHOTO BY BECKY GERRARD