

Warriors drop pair, prepare for final week of season

North Douglas boys lose games to Days Creek and Glide

By Zach Silva
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In a game carrying Skyline League playoff implications, it was North Douglas falling to Days Creek 47-39 last Tuesday on the road.

"I mean, it's hard to find positives when you lose," said North Douglas head coach Tyler Vancil after the loss. "The things we talked about we didn't really execute... We need to execute better, it's that simple. This is a tough place to play, Days Creek is a great team."

In the first matchup between these teams, it was the Warriors (12-9, 7-3 Skyline) finding success down low against the Wolves (15-5, 9-1) on the way to a victory. But on Tuesday night, Days Creek's defensive adjustment and North Douglas turnovers created problems for the Warriors in a jumbled game.

"Our plan was to get it in the post and when we could, we did but they did a good job at helping backside. Our biggest plan coming into the game was to not turn the ball over and we turned it over too much. That's been our kryptonite all year is turning the ball over. Just unforced," said Vancil. The Warriors finished the contest with 15 turnovers.

The game got off to a slow start as both teams struggled to score early leading to an 8-8 tie after one quarter of play. The Wolves began to get shots to fall in the second and built up a nine-point lead. Throughout the game Days Creek leaned on a balanced scoring attack that saw 14 points from Rocco Muir and 13 from both Caleb Kruzic and Blake Ellis.

"It was a weird game. The flow, I didn't feel like we were just churning on our offense like we try to do. But hey, I'll take it," said Days Creek head coach James Ellis. "They didn't get into what they wanted to get into. I thought we did a good job defensively, I think they did a good job defensively. We just came out on top this time."

After cutting their deficit to five at halftime, North Douglas took a brief lead in an out of sync third quarter – in which neither team's offense proved to be effective at scoring – but trailed by one heading into the fourth.

Days Creek pieced together an 11-2 run stretching from the end of the third through the middle of the fourth to take control of the game. The Warriors wouldn't go away easily and a Cal Parks three-pointer with less than a minute to play made it a three point game. Cal Parks finished with a team high 12 points while Tanner Parks had 10.

"Cal is so good and so elusive, I mean, you saw how we lost him when we hit the three," said Ellis. "He was my number one guy in the huddle and we lost him and I was like, 'What are we doing?'"

The game then came down to free throws where Days

WARRIORS see B3

Lions roll past Vikings for victory



PHOTO RHEA FLOREZ/CGHS PHOTOGRAPHY

Cottage Grove's Reilly Kelty faces a crowd of Siuslaw defenders last Friday night at home. Kelty scored 24 points for the Lions as the team won 64-31.

Behind a strong second-half team performance and 24 points from Reilly Kelty, Cottage Grove scores victory

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Here comes Cottage Grove. Heading into the second half of the Sky-Em season, the Lions are tied for second in league and have found their rhythm. Using a 43-point second half, the Lions (12-8, 4-2 Sky-Em) cruised past Siuslaw (0-6, 4-16) 64-31 at home on Friday night.

"At the beginning of the season we were kind of having problems like flowing together as a team and we've been working on that a lot at practices and I think it paid off," said Cottage Grove junior Reilly Kelty. Leading all scorers with 24 points,

Kelty was dominant throughout the game to the point that when she came off the floor in the third quarter, she had recorded more points (18) than Siuslaw's entire team (17).

"Well, obviously Reilly can take over a game," said Cottage Grove head coach Steve Eastburn. "She has that athletic ability (and) it's completely upon Reilly to decide if she wants to do that or not. When she does, she's really fun to watch play because she's just such a natural athlete: she's physically strong, she has good skills, great attitude, good kid. But, like every player, we always want more."

While the Cottage Grove scoring took off in the second half, the Lions grabbed a 10-point lead in the first quarter and looked like they were going to run away with the game as soon as it started. Their lead was cut to as few as five as the

Vikings kept threatening to make a run but were ultimately doomed by free throws. In the first half Siuslaw shot five-of-20 from the line and finished 13-of-38 in the game.

"I didn't think we were playing bad in the first half, we were just fouling them and the game was so disjointed. We couldn't get any running going because we were fouling all the time," said Eastburn. Adding, "Those guys not making free throws helped us. So, against a Marshfield, against a Junction City, Marist they're going to make more. So we've got to get that cleaned up."

After a second quarter slog that saw Cottage Grove outscore Siuslaw 6-2 (with all of Cottage Grove's points coming from Kelty), the Lions began to light up the scoreboard in the second half as they extended their lead to 18 after three quarters of play.

As Siuslaw tried to ramp up their defense in the fourth quarter, the Lions walked into easy opportunities during a 22-2 run.

"We got it going. Obviously we wore them down, then they, I guess, felt like they had to press us late there and that didn't work to their advantage because we scored, what, three or four really quick, easy ones," said Eastburn. "And then it just steamrolled and it was over."

Cottage Grove freshman Gracie Arnold had 10 points in the fourth quarter and finished with 15 on the game. Matty Ladd had eight points and Ema Gardner added seven for Cottage Grove.

The Lions now have four games remaining and are locked in a battle for second place in Sky-Em. Marshfield (19-1, 6-0) sits at the top of the standings and the Pirates are ranked number one in 4A. Cottage Grove is tied with Marist (12-7, 4-2)

while Junction City (12-8, 3-3) is one game back in the standings.

On Tues. Feb. 5, Cottage Grove played Marshfield on the road (after *The Sentinel's* print deadline) and will travel to Elmira on Friday. Next week it is a battle between the teams vying for second as Cottage Grove hosts Junction City on Tuesday and Marist on Friday. Earlier this season the Lions lost to the Tigers and defeated the Spartans.

"The fun stretch. This will really determine how good of a team we are. We want to be playing our best basketball at the end of the season which I think we are trending towards," said Eastburn. "If you like competition, that's how you want it to end so I'm pumped about that. I can't wait. I can not wait to see what our girls produce so that's what it is all about."

Cottage Grove holds on for overtime win



Cottage Grove senior Jasper Nichols-Ferguson drives to the basket Friday night against Siuslaw.

Lions pull ahead in overtime after close contest

By Zach Silva
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When it mattered most, Cottage Grove got the job done.

In a game that neither team led by more than five points throughout regulation, it was the Lions (5-15, 3-3 Sky-Em) coming up big in overtime on Friday night against Siuslaw (5-15, 0-6) to take a 58-50 league win.

"We knew that we just needed to be able to go out there and execute what we do," said Cottage Grove senior Dylan Graves who finished with 15 points. "We beat them last time and we weren't playing our best basketball (tonight) so we knew we needed to create the energy

and get it higher just so we can execute what we do."

In the final minutes of the fourth quarter, the Lions were able to do just enough late to force the extra session. The Vikings took the lead with 17 seconds to play after Caleb Hennessee hit a free throw to complete a three-point play. Down one, the clock ticked away as the Lions looked for an open shot. Freshman guard Landon Colburn fired in a pass to Jasper Nichols-Ferguson who was fouled on a lay-up with 2.8 seconds to play. Ferguson missed the first, which prompted a Siuslaw timeout, and hit the second to send the game to overtime.

"They were definitely back and forth. When we scored then the crowd was going nuts and then they got that and one and their crowd was going nuts so

emotions were back and forth," said Graves. "But Jasper was hitting that free throw. I told him to stick out his hand and his hand was going 100 miles per hour but he hit it and it was awesome."

Once in overtime, the Lions were able to take off – including a pair of lay-ups from Nichols-Ferguson to start the scoring for Cottage Grove – and outscored Siuslaw 10-2 on their way to the team's third league win of the season. Nichols-Ferguson finished with 15 points for Cottage Grove while Creed Lufkin and Colburn each had 12.

Cottage Grove played Marshfield yesterday (after *The Sentinel's* print deadline) and travel to Elmira on Friday. The team will finish the season at home next week with games against Junction City and Marist.

Athlete of the Week



This week's athlete of the week is North Douglas junior Sofia Alcantar. Alcantar had 19 points, seven rebounds, six steals and five assists last Tuesday (Jan. 29) in a road win over Days Creek. To read more about the game, turn to B3.



North Douglas' Sofia Alcantar drives through the lane against Days Creek for a lay-up.

PHOTO BY BECKY GERRARD