

Spartans spoil senior send-off

Marist game-winner downs Cottage Grove on senior night

By Zach Silva
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It was one of the top Sky-Em teams matching up against one of the teams at the bottom of the league as Cottage Grove (5-19, 3-7 Sky-Em) hosted Marist (16-7, 9-1) last Thursday. The Spartans, fresh off a 50-22 victory over fifth-ranked Marshfield earlier in the week, had their hands full against the Lions as they needed a go-ahead jumper in the final 15 seconds of play to snag the victory.

"I'm just proud of these kids for competing, playing hard. They could have checked out a long time ago but they didn't. They kept fighting, they kept playing hard. Buying in," said first-year Cottage Grove head coach Seth Hutchison. Adding, "I'm so proud of these seniors. On senior night, coming out playing hard, playing under control, playing together. And I thought that was a great performance that they had out there. It was nice to see them be competitive on their last game on this court in that uniform."

While Marist ran away with in the first matchup of the season on the way to a 62-49 win, it was a different offensive story on Thursday. While the Spartans have shooters up and down their roster, a combination of a cold shooting night and the Cottage Grove defense allowed the Lions to hang around.

"We didn't let them get in a rhythm of shooting. I thought that was going to change as the game went on and as we continued they just didn't get hot, they didn't get going," said Hutchison. "And that happens in high school basketball. I mean, teams get hot, team's don't shoot very well. But that's the nature of the beast. I thought team defense we played really well tonight. Together as a team."

Tied at 10 after one quarter of play, Cottage Grove survived scoring just four points in the second quarter by allowing just seven. The team hung around and tied the game going into the fourth quarter, as they got consistent play from seniors Creed Lufkin and Dylan Graves who both finished with 10 points.

"Impressive game for (Cottage Grove). That says a lot about them and the character of those kids and their coaches to stay with it," said Marist head coach, and former CGHS coach and star-player, Bart Pollard. "There was a lot of struggle with them, I think, just looking at their record. Just good job, I want to commend them for that."

In the fourth quarter, the Spartans looked to start running away with it before Cottage Grove freshman Landon Colburn hit a three to cut the team's deficit to two with just over three minutes to play. Lay-ups from Shambay Trapp and Lufkin gave the Lions the lead with two minutes to play.

After a Cottage Grove free throw and a three-pointer from Marist, the Lions were down one in the final minute

CGHS see B3

Warriors take title, Elks finish third



North Douglas junior Sofia Alcantar, draws a host of Days Creek defenders as she gets to the basket during Saturday's league championship. Alcantar finished with seven points to help guide the Warriors to the team title.

North Douglas and Elkton are headed to state after a successful league tournament over the weekend

By Zach Silva
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As the dust settles after a busy weekend of games, North Douglas and Elkton are headed to state.

Last weekend, the Skyline League District Tournament took place at Marshfield High School where the Warriors (22-4, 11-1 Skyline) cemented their stand-out season by winning the league title. With the top three teams from league advancing to state, the Elks (15-11, 8-4) also punched their ticket by winning Saturday's third place game.

The following is a look at how the Warriors and Elks did in each game over the tournament weekend.

Friday: North Douglas vs. Elkton, semifinal

To start the league playoffs, Elkton defeated Camas Valley 47-25 last Tuesday to advance to the semifinals. Then, the Elks were faced with the task of playing North Douglas for the third time this season and the second time in less than a week. In the first two meetings, it was North Douglas winning on the road by a margin of 43-19 and at home 36-24.

And in the third meeting of the year, this time on a neutral court, it was North Douglas overpowering the Elks 35-18 for another win.

"It's going to be a who executes better in what they do. Sometimes who works harder," said North Douglas coach Jeff Davis on another matchup with Elkton. "And in our case, we just tell the kids, 'We may score 60 but what makes us good is how

we defend. We've got to play defense.' So I was proud of the fact that we kept them under 20. That's a team that can win a state game."

It was a slog of a first quarter that saw North Douglas ahead 4-2 after the opening eight minutes. Both teams were stymied by the other's defensive full-court press as they struggled to operate offensively.

With a couple of passes to free up space, the Warriors unlocked the Elkton press in the second quarter as they were able to get lay-ups. Taking advantage of the open shots was North Douglas' Natalie Thompson who finished the game with 10 points on five-of-five shooting. The Warriors outscored the Elks 10-2 in the quarter to take a 14-4 halftime lead.

"We talked about that at halftime that we just needed to relax. We're putting too much pressure on ourselves. Just go



Elkton junior Aspy Luzier drives to the line in the third place game against Pacific on Saturday.

out and relax and play our game and whatever happens, happens. Don't worry about it," said Elkton head coach Rob Parker.

The Elks responded early in the second half and cut their

deficit to as few as six points but, as has been the case in each matchup against North Douglas, the team's offensive weapons were limited by the defense.

SKYLINE see B2

Lions continue to fight for second place



Cottage Grove freshman Gracie Arnold looks to create space against Marist last Thursday night at home.

By Zach Silva
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The battle for second place in the Sky-Em league continues to rage on.

In an eight-day stretch that includes the end of the regular season and the league playoffs, Cottage Grove will have faced both Junction City and Marist twice as the teams fight to determine the final league standings.

"Everybody's got to get a ribbon, or trophy," said Cottage Grove head coach Steve Eastburn sarcastically after Thursday night's loss against Marist. "It's crazy, it's crazy."

In the final week of the regular season last week, the Lions fell to Junction City and Marist at home. But a win against Junction City on Saturday in a league playoff game now sets Cottage Grove up for a game against Marist on Tuesday Feb. 19 (after

The Sentinel's print deadline) to determine which team will get the Sky-Em two-seed heading into the state playoffs. Marshfield finished first in league.

"So exhausting. It's so stupid," said Marist head coach Britton Reeser of the system after the Spartans defeated the Lions last week.

At the end of the regular season, the Spartans were alone in second in the standings with the Tigers in third and Lions in fourth. Because of their high rankings in 4A (Marshfield #1, Marist #9, Junction City #10 and Cottage Grove #13) all four teams will qualify for the state playoffs.

But instead of going into the playoffs based strictly on the 10 regular season games that were played over the past six weeks, the Sky-Em has a league playoff to further validate the place-

ment of the teams heading into the playoffs. This meant Cottage Grove traveling to Junction City on Saturday night in a game to determine the fourth place team with the winner getting another league playoff game. The Lions defeated the Tigers for the first time this season with a 47-45 win. Cottage Grove sophomore Alexia Riggs hit a three-pointer in the final seconds of play to put the team ahead for good. Riggs finished with 10 points while freshman Gracie Arnold added 14 points to go with 13 rebounds.

Last Thursday against Marist, the Lions lost 44-33. Arnold had 13 points for Cottage Grove, with nine in the second quarter, while Matty Ladd had 12 points.

"They are the second place team for a reason. They can score the basketball, so they are

LIONS see B2

Athletes of the Week



This week's athletes of the week are the participants of last Saturday's basketball jamboree. The jamboree brought together Special Olympic athletes to Riverside Church where they got to compete in the game they love.



The individuals that competed in Saturday's event. PHOTO BY SNAP SAVAGE PHOTOGRAPHY