

NDHS downs Mohawk, defeated by Damascus Christian

Warriors fall in second round of playoffs

By Zach Silva
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After defeating Mohawk in the first round of the playoffs, the North Douglas boys fell to Damascus Christian on the road on Saturday in a game to determine a spot at Baker City for the 1A quarterfinals.

Against second-ranked Eagles, the 15th ranked Warriors held a seven-point lead with just over 1:30 to play in the game. Getting hot at the right time was Damascus Christian as they matched North Douglas missed free throws with made three-pointers on the way to a 44-41 victory. Caleb Parks led North Douglas with 13 points in the game.

Last Tuesady, it was North Douglas surviving poor free throw shooting as they recorded a victory over Mohawk.

“Oh gosh, I just – we won. We escaped with the win,” said North Douglas head coach Tyler Vancil after the team’s 45-34 playoff win over Mohawk on Tuesday night. The Warriors held on to a victory as the team struggled mightily from the free throw line going two-for-15 in the final four minutes of the game, including 11 consecutive misses during that stretch. The team finished 11-of-35 from the line.

“Wow. Geez. That’s terrible,” said Vancil. “Honestly, I think a lot of it is mental at that point. Once you miss a couple then everyone is just, ‘We can’t hit free throws tonight.’ We work on them in practice and we’ll be shooting them tomorrow.”

While North Douglas continuously came away with empty offensive possessions, it was the team’s defense that carried them to the final whistle. After starting the fourth quarter with a lay-up to cut their deficit to eight, Mohawk scored three points in the final 5:50 of the game.

“We won tonight because of our defense. I mean, 100 percent. The boys have been playing great the last few games on defense,” said Vancil as the Warriors held the Mustangs to 20 points in the final three quarters of play and their fewest amount of points scored since Dec. 13. Throughout the game North Douglas hounded the Mohawk guards in the corners as they forced 18 turnovers in the game. Despite the defense, Mustangs guard Tyler Black found ways to score as he finished with 22 points.

Mohawk’s offensive woes were not apparent in the first quarter as the Mustangs charged out to a 10-1 lead and the game’s first eight points. In front of a vocal Mohawk crowd, North Douglas was able to get back into the game with the help of senior Justin Smith – who almost missed the game because of a sinus infection – coming off the bench.

“I was sick this morning and I was late to school and I talked to my principal and was like, ‘Is there a chance I can play today?’ And he was

NDHS *see B2*

Valiants bounce Lions from playoffs



Valley Catholic senior Callie Kawaguchi drives the lane against Cottage Grove on Saturday. Kawaguchi finished with 31 points.

PHOTOS BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

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31 points from Valley Catholic’s Callie Kawaguchi sends team past Cottage Grove

With just over two minutes to play in the first quarter, Cottage Grove and Valley Catholic were tied at 10 apiece.

And then Valley Catholic senior Callie Kawaguchi took off.

Kawaguchi proceeded to hit three three-pointers – including a four-point play – in the final minutes of the quarter as she recorded 18 of her team’s 20 first quarter points. She finished the game with 31 points as the visiting Valiants (13-13) never looked back on their way to a 57-37 victory over the Lions (14-13) in a state play-in game on Saturday night.

“She had four threes in the first quarter. That was the ballgame right there,” said Cottage Grove head coach Steve Eastburn of Kawaguchi’s standout game. “That kid was just unbelievable. She was the real deal. She was fun to watch play.”

With quick shots and a stin-

gy full-court press, the Valiants pushed the pace of the game from the first possession – a Kawaguchi made three – and successfully kept the Lions from getting in any sort of rhythm. As Valley Catholic began to knock down early shots, Cottage Grove was further thrown off as sophomore Matty Ladd was called for three fouls in the first 3:09 of the game. Joining Reilly Kelly on the bench, who was sidelined with an injury earlier this month, the Lions were without their usual post presences.

“They sped us up and Matty got in foul trouble and... I don’t think playing that fast is our game,” said Eastburn. “We were coming down and just shooting the shots that they were but the only thing was, we weren’t making them and then they got another possession right away.”

As Kawaguchi cooled off from her scorching-hot start, the threes kept coming as Valley Catholic’s Katelyn Snook hit three in the second quarter on the way to outscoring the Lions 17-4 in the quarter. All nine of Valley Catholic’s made threes during the game came in the first half; the team was nine-

of-21 from three in the first half.

“Katelyn Snook has a saying, ‘When I’m on, I’m on.’ And that’s just literally the motto of our team this year,” said Kawaguchi on the team’s shooting success. “When we’re on, we’re on and we just keep going. It doesn’t happen all the time but it has happened a couple times this year and we know how to work with it and vibe with it.”

The Valley Catholic press continued to vex Cottage Grove in the second-half as the team jumped out to an 8-2 run to push their lead to 27.

“That’s like our bread and butter,” said Kawaguchi of the team’s defensive press. “We’re not the most talented team but I do think we’re one of the most hard-working teams. The press always works for us and just having people fly around on defense, pressing everyone, making people uncomfortable.”

The game slowed down in the fourth quarter with just one basket being scored in the first five minutes of play before the Lions outscored the Valiants 9-2 in the quarter. Junior Ema Gardner finished the game with 11 points for Cottage Grove while



Mikaela Blomquist pushes the ball up the floor for CGHS.

freshman Gracie Arnold had nine.

While the season ended for the Lions, Eastburn sees that this loss can be a starting point going forward for the team that brings back 10 of the 12 players on the roster.

“I always stress with these kids that every experience is a learning lesson if you allow it to be. Especially negative ones like we had tonight. Either we move forward and we work on our weaknesses and we get better from this experience or you kind of stay the same and don’t learn anything or you might even get worse,” said Eastburn.

“I just tell them it’s an opportunity, really. We want to be better so the kids have got to put the work in and I think we have some kids that are willing to do that. So I’m kind of excited about the future for them.”

Valley Catholic will now face Marshfield on Saturday in the round of 16.

“That’s going to be a challenge. But survive and advance. Play another week, get another game plan, get another trip and have a blast somewhere,” said Valley Catholic head coach Pat Thomas. “Shoot it like that and who knows. We’ll stay in games with anybody if that’s the case.”

Johnson named head football coach

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Former defensive coordinator Jordan Johnson named head football coach at CGHS

A new era of Cottage Grove football has begun.

On Thursday, Cottage Grove High School announced that Jordan Johnson, 26, will be taking over in the role as head football coach for the Lions. Johnson, a math teacher at CGHS, has been involved with the program for the past three years, including serving as defensive coordinator the last two seasons, and will be filling a vacancy left by Gary Roberts’ departure. Roberts, who serves in the role as athletic director and vice

principal at CGHS, coached the team for 11 seasons and is the winningest coach in school history.

“I think it will be a fun challenge for me and give me an opportunity to see how I do in that role opposed to just being a defensive coordinator,” Johnson said in a phone interview on Friday. Adding, “It feels good for sure. It’s awesome that Gary and (principal) Mike (Ingman) believed in me enough to give me the chance.”

Johnson has been around coaching his entire life. His dad Marty Johnson, who has been a fixture on the CGHS football staff during their recent success, was head coach at Willamette High School and Sheldon High School (where he won four titles) while his uncle and grandpa have also been football coaches. But for

the youngest Johnson, coaching was not inevitable.

“I always, obviously, loved the game of football. I didn’t really know that I wanted to coach until I was in college and once I was done playing,” said Johnson. “The following fall, I helped coach a middle school team just because I knew a couple of the kids on the team and knew some parents. That’s when I knew that was something that I really wanted to do.”

Learning lessons from Roberts and all the coaches in his life, Johnson views coaching as going beyond just the x’s and o’s on Friday night.

“The biggest thing I’ve learned from them is it’s more than just about the game of football. It’s about getting these kids to become young men,” said Johnson. “To

be able to go out after the four years and be productive and be good husbands and good dads one day and be able to pass those lessons along to their kids.”

After graduating from Sheldon in 2010, where he was named 6A player of the year in football after leading the Irish to titles in 2007 and 2009, Johnson attended the University of Montana where he played in 45 games and threw for 78 touchdowns over the course of his career.

Johnson did not play in the 2012 season after he was accused of rape in a high-profile case that ushered in a national conversation about sexual assault in college athletics. Johnson’s trial ended with a verdict of not guilty.

The Lions will begin the 2019 season on September 6 at Cascade.

Athlete of the Week



This week’s athlete of the week is Cottage Grove wrestler Raina Herzog. Herzog claimed an individual wrestling state title over the weekend. To read more about CGHS wrestling at state, turn to B3.



Raina Herzog stands at the top of the awards podium after winning a wrestling state title on Saturday.
PHOTO C/O CGHS ATHLETICS