

Lions face slow start to season

Facing some of the top teams in 4A, Cottage Grove baseball out to 2-5 start

By Zach Silva

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In the first week of the season it was Cottage Grove baseball (2-5) facing both the second and eighth ranked teams in state. In the second week of the season, the task at hand was not easier as the Lions faced a 4-1 Mazama team and number five-ranked Phoenix.

"We've played good teams in this preseason, we've played a lot of good teams," said Cottage Grove head coach Dan Geiszler after last Thursday's 11-2 loss against Phoenix. "[The team] just has to understand that this is a process and we're working towards the league and getting better."

It was the visiting Pirates (4-2) jumping out to an early lead – capitalizing on walks and miscues – with three runs in the first inning and a pair in the second to give the team an early advantage last week.

"We have so many kids that are so nervous. We get so uptight and nervous over things and we've just got to relax and play," said Geiszler. Geiszler noted that in addition to playing some of the top teams in 4A, the Lions were also dealing with an injury and some issues with grades that meant adjustments throughout the lineup. "The kids are working hard, they're trying. We've just got to keep getting better and improving."

Phoenix continued to put the pressure on Cottage Grove in the fifth inning as it batted around its lineup and scored four runs.

"Just putting the ball in play and play hard. That's what our focus was today, just make good contact," said Phoenix head coach Bill Hutchinson. "We got 15 guys in today and all 15 guys contributed in some way. You don't see that very often. I'm happy for them."

Cottage Grove's pitching trio of Noah Spink – who got the start and pitched three innings – Hunter Sharkey and Jaxon Simmons gave up 11 hits on the day and recorded three strike outs. Offensively, Sharkey recorded two of the team's six hits on the day and scored a run.

Earlier in the week the Lions split a double-header with Mazama winning the first game of the day 8-7. In the victory, Wyatt Sayles pitched six innings and recorded seven strikeouts. Cottage Grove finished the game with six hits as a team including two from Simmons. Sayles had a hit on the day to along with three RBIs. In the second game of the day, Cottage Grove lost 9-4.

"After last game, I think my message was you better get better or this is going to be a long season. You better figure it out," Geiszler said of the loss to Mazama. "Today was kind of on the other end of, 'Hey, we're just going to keep working.' As

BASEBALL see B3

Pool remodel moving right along



Renovation to facility on pace to be open in September

By Zach Silva

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The Warren H. Daugherty Aquatic Center remodel is coming along, well, swimmingly.

"It's a far cry from what it used to look like," said South Lane School District Maintenance and Facilities supervisor Matt Allen on a tour of the facility last week. While Allen was directly talking about the new women's locker room that features six toilets opposed to the two that occupied the space before, his comment seemed to apply to the area as a whole.

The current construction is barely recognizable from the pool that occupied the space since 1955. Where the one pool sat previously now sits the new tank that is 25 yards long and will have eight lanes that will allow competitions to take place. Next to the pool sits the warm water recreational and therapy pool.

"We like to call it that because,

yes, we want it to be available for therapy but we also know that there is going to be young families and pre-school and kindergartners that are going to learn to swim in this pool," said SLSD Communications Director Garrett Bridgens.

While \$6.2 million from 2016 bond funds was allocated for the pool, the additional therapy pool pushed the project about \$524,000 over budget. Between donations both received and committed, the district has so far raised over \$450,000 with the goal of raising \$550,000.

In addition to the new tanks, work is being done across the building to update the locker rooms, electrical work, outside paneling and entrance area.

"One of my favorite things that got included in this pool with this remodel, they're putting these windows back in. We're standing here, you can see the light that's coming in right now," said Bridgens of windows that illuminate the building from the side. "Natural light is coming in. I'm so excited about the fact that we were able to include the windows."



Top: A look from the back corner of the aquatic center shows the pool in its current state of the remodel process. The pool is 25 yards long, will have eight lanes and be able to host swimming competitions. Bottom: The warm water recreational and therapy pool, complete with easy access steps, sits next to the larger pool at the facility.

In addition to the windows, the remodeled facility will also feature up-facing lights. The lights face up to ensure there is no glare on the water and will be bouncing off a white ceiling to provide as much light as possible to the previously dim and dank building.

Another addition that the district was excited for was the newly added family bathroom that includes a bench area and an ADA compliant shower.

"In terms of the design process, this was one of those things that the committee felt and everyone wanted and it was like

were we going to be able to get it in the building," said Bridgens.

Construction on the remodel began last October. The recent snow storm moved the timetable on the remodel from ahead of schedule to on schedule which means the pool is still planned to open in September.



Cottage Grove eight-year-old Keegan Bounds takes home a trophy from the West Coast Nationals earlier this month.

Local racer soars in California

By Ben Deatherage

Eight-year-old Kage Kart sensation Keegan Bounds made the trip south to Red Bluff, California for the prestigious West Coast Nationals and would claim the coveted eagle trophy in the Box Stock division. The event draws Kage Karts from all over the country and is one of the toughest races to win. The third-generation Cottage Grove chauffeur had spent the previous three weekends to get some important

track experience underneath his belt. Despite a rough start to the weekend the reward in the end would make it that much sweeter.

"We've struggled when we've come down here because our car has been too tight," commented Josh Bounds, Keegan's father and crew chief, "but this weekend with so many cars running the track finally came to us."

Friday, March 15th, witnessed Bounds post 16th in qualifying which set him up for his heat races the next day

Running two sets of heat races the results didn't reflect the speed the team showed. Keegan was sixth in heat one and fourth in heat two. Unfortunately, he didn't manage to tabulate enough points to get locked into the main event so he would have to come out of the consolation feature that Sunday.

"Keegan was really fast in his heats and our car was hooked up with the setup we put in it. But every time we'd get up towards

RACER see B3

Athletes of the Week



This week's athletes of the week are those competing in spring sports this season. Between the four local high schools there are over 250 athletes participating in baseball, softball, golf and track and field. To read about the players, teams and coaches, make sure to check out this week's Spring 2019 Sports Preview in this week's paper. To see additional pictures, see B2.



Cottage Grove's Wyatt Sayles on the cover of this year's spring sports preview.

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