

Cottage Grove Girls Track & Field

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Gracie Arnold attempts to clear four-foot-10 in high jump.



Matty Ladd sprints out to a fast start in the 100.

Team Rundown:

For Cottage Grove, it is the year of the underclassmen.

Of the 29 athletes that have so far competed for the Lions, just seven are either juniors or seniors. But just because the team is young, does not mean they are not talented.

The lone returning state competitor is sophomore Matty Ladd who took fifth in state last year in the high jump as a freshman in addition to winning districts. This season, she is surrounded by a talented high jump unit with freshman Gracie Arnold and sophomore Avery Hutchins. On the young season, all three jumpers are currently in the top seven at the 4A level.

At districts last season Ladd finished fifth in both the 100 and the triple jump.

"I thought they came out strong and did amazing for only having a few practices due to the snow," said first-year

head coach Gyna Walton after the first meet of the season. "I think I just pretty much told them to do the best they could being that we have only had a few practices."

On the track, Walton is especially excited about sophomore distance runner Annah Nyburg.

"She's going to be someone fierce to be reckoned with," said Walton.

For the rest of the Lions, the team is waiting to see who will make the jump and join the top teams in a competitive Sky-Em field that now features reigning 4A state champion Marshfield in addition to a Marist team that took for fifth in 5A.

Some of the team's top finishers so far in the season include Arnold in javelin, sophomore Mariah Ludkier in the 200 and sophomore Raina Herzog in both discus and shot put.

One-on-one with Matty Ladd:

After making it to state in high jump during your freshman year, what are your goals for this year?

I'm definitely aiming for the school record. Well, I've jumped five-foot-three and I think the school record is five-foot-six.

How did the snow impact the start of your season?

Well, we haven't had much practice and I haven't actually done my full jump for high jump so I was just planning on getting close to five-foot for today's meet and definitely working on it for our next week and clearing five-foot or five one.

And now you also have freshman Gracie Arnold jumping

right there with you.

In middle school it was me and her always first and second. It's good to have her back because we're so close because all the sports we play together.

As the only returning girl state qualifier on the team, what is your role in terms of leadership on the team?

The seniors and the returners definitely have to step up and lead the team.

If [the newcomers] are like messing around, because middle school is definitely a different level than high school. We just have to try and make sure everyone is on the same page and try to have fun.

Have a Starring Season,
CG Lions!



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on a great season!**

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