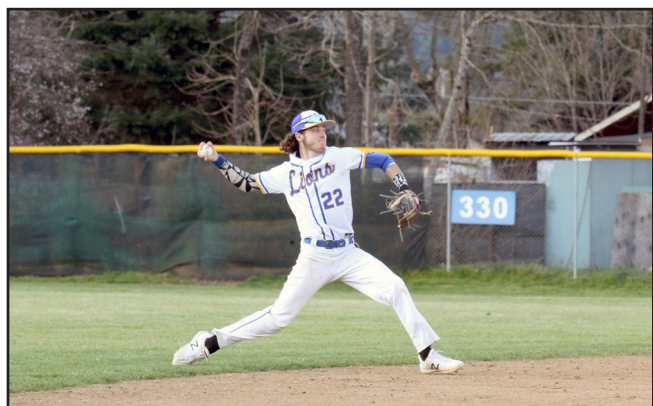


# From spring break to start of the season



From left to right: Cottage Grove's Wyatt Sayles, a softball pitcher for the Lions and North Douglas' Riley Black.

**By Zach Silva**  
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### Cottage Grove Baseball

Playing the Hidden Valley Tournament over spring break, the Cottage Grove baseball team recorded a pair of wins as they get closer to the start of the regular season.

The Lions (3-6) began the tournament with an 18-6 victory against 3A South Umpqua (0-7-1). The Lions were active on the bats recording seven hits as a team. Gavin Sowa and Wyatt Sayles each had a pair of hits to go with five RBIs for Cottage Grove. On the mound, Cottage Grove's Noah Spink struck out three batters.

In the first of two games last Tuesday, the Lions defeated Sutherlin (3-5) 3-2 before falling to fifth-ranked Hidden Valley (7-0-1) 12-6.

Cottage Grove closed out their non-league schedule on April 2 (after *The Sentinel's* print deadline) and will begin league play next Tuesday on the road at Marshfield (3-4).

### Cottage Grove Softball

The Lions played no games during the spring break. After a pair of games were rained-out on April 23, Cottage Grove looked to get back on the field yesterday (April 2) against Creswell. The team has non-league games scheduled against Blanchet on Thursday and a home double-header against Mazama on Saturday. League play for the Lions begins next Tuesday against Marshfield.

### Cottage Grove Track and Field

While the Lions had no meets during spring break, the top competitors on the team are back in action this Saturday at the Marist Track Classic. There are 10 teams competing at the meet including league competitors in the Spartans, Siuslaw and Marshfield. Additionally, 6A-powerhouse Jesuit will also be at the meet.

It is the opening of Marist's new track and there will be a dedication at 11:45 a.m. Throwing events begin at 10 a.m. while running events start at 12:05 p.m. Spectators will be

charged a \$5 entry fee while kids 10 and younger will get in free.

### North Douglas Softball

It was a successful spring break for the Warriors. To get the games started last Wednesday, North Douglas rolled through Reedsport 9-1 before beating Waldport 10-0. The one loss of the week came against fourth-ranked Union/Cove in a 4-3 game on Friday at the Union Spring Bash. At the rest of the Bash the team defeated Colton 10-0, Bonanza 9-0 and last year's state runner-ups Pilot Rock/Nixyaawii 7-1.

The Warriors begin league play on Wednesday against Monroe, a team that finished 11th in the coaches' poll last week.

### Elkton/Yoncalla Baseball

While the Elks had no games during spring break, the team dives right into the heart of their schedule as they have a three-game series against second-ranked Umpqua Valley Christian this week. The series began Tuesday on the road and will conclude on Saturday at home in a double-header.

## Late snow creates tough big-game hunting conditions

SALEM, Ore.—In January, deer and elk in Oregon were in good body condition, and it looked like another mild winter for the state. Then came February.

"We got two feet of snow in 24 hours here in central Oregon, and then another foot over the next 36 hours," said Rob Tanner, co-founder and president of Oregon Shed Hunters, a group created to preserve the sport and promote ethical shed hunting. "It's as much snow as I've seen in the 20 years I've lived here.

The local animals that I have been seeing are struggling," he added.

At this time of year, deer and elk are in taking in little nutrition, relying on their body reserves and what forage they can get to under the snow and outer crust of ice. Being forced to make extra movements in response to dog, vehicle or human disturbance weakens them further, using up what little energy they have left. Even in years with more

typical winter weather patterns, most winter mortality of deer and elk occurs in March and April—or as wildlife biologists put it, "Winter weakens, spring kills."

ODFW is conducting its annual herd composition surveys the next few weeks and will know more about over-winter survival of big game later this spring. But already it's clear that deer and elk will be especially vulnerable to stress during early spring this year—making responsible shed hunting even more critical.

ODFW wildlife biologists are encouraging shed hunters to be considerate of big game and even delay their search this year. "Our winter ranges are still covered in snow and deer are having a difficult time, so I encourage shed hunters to wait until after snow melts and even after green-up has started," said Deschutes District Wildlife biologist Corey Heath. "Most antlers are buried now anyway." Oregon Shed Hunters agrees. "Our recommen-

ation is that given the late storm and late pressure on animals, to hold off on shed hunting until the snow melts and give the animals time to disperse and access feeding areas," said Tanner.

More about shed antlers and rules for hunting them in Oregon

Oregon's buck deer shed their antlers from late December through March. Elk started shedding in late February and will continue into April. Shed hunters collecting these antlers, especially in early spring when deer and elk are at their most vulnerable, need to follow these rules:

- Avoid disturbing big game animals: Don't approach animals.
- Respect winter range and road closures: Several wildlife areas (Elkhorn, Ladd Marsh, P.W. Schneider, Wenaha, White River) are closed until early to mid-April, and other winter range areas in central and northeast Oregon are closed or have travel restrictions.

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