

Pirates roll past Lions for pair of wins

Cottage Grove softball seeks small victories in most recent losses

By Zach Silva
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While Cottage Grove softball team's quest for their first win of the season will continue into next week, the Lions were focused on other versions of success last Friday against Marshfield.

"Really trying to keep our energy up and not getting down," said Cottage Grove head softball coach Cheryl Frieze after the team's double-header loss. "And then focus more on the little things and the individual things like win that at-bat. In the field, make the play. Or if you mess up, make the next play. Just really overcome those downfalls so that way they can pick it up and recover and keep moving through."

Against Marshfield at home last Friday, it was the Pirates (7-10, 4-5) taking victories of 25-12 and 21-3* against the Lions (0-15, 0-9). In the first game, it was the Lions refusing to be 10-runned as they were able to string enough runs together each inning to stay within striking distance before Marshfield poured on seven runs in the seventh inning to cement their victory.

In game two, Cottage Grove hung around early and trailed 1-0 after the first inning of play. But in the second inning, the flood gates opened and Marshfield put 13 runs on the board as 17 batters batted in the inning. While Cottage Grove was unable to match the same offensive production, their bats stayed active.

"If we're putting the ball in play and they're making the plays, great. But you're putting the ball in play and you can't do anything unless you do that. That was kind of the goal and I think we were really successful as far as that goes," said Frieze. "We put the ball in play a lot and they made plays. Or we hit it right to them. But that's part of building that confidence, hey, you're making good contact so let's keep rolling with that and roll into the next games."

For the Pirates, the key to a double-header in which they twice score at least 20 runs was staying locked in.

"Just trying to keep the focus when the game gets a little slow because we do play Marist on Tuesday. It's like, ok, we've got to get refocused for Tuesday," said Marshfield head coach Brooke Toy.

Throughout the season, the Pirates have been a team stuck in the middle of the Sky-Em league. Marshfield has been 10-runned by Marist, Elmira and Junction City while promptly defeating Siuslaw and Cottage Grove.

"We've been like a half a

*OSAA's website has the score as 20-4, but the Cottage Grove official scorebook, which The Sentinel trusts, has the score listed as 21-3.

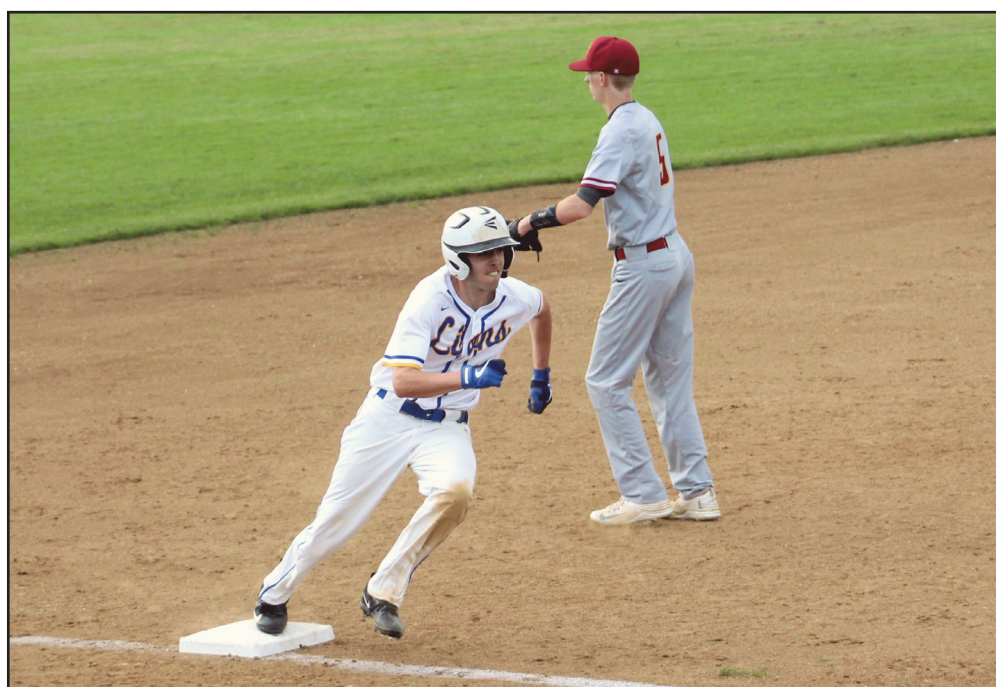
LIONS see B3

Ready, set, race: Speedway starts season



IMCA Modifieds race at the Cottage Grove Speedway on Friday night. After five weeks of cancelled races, the weather held up and allowed fans to flock to the Speedway over the weekend to watch the Spring Fling. To read more about the races, turn to B2. PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

Cottage Grove prepares for playoff push



Cottage Grove's Jaxon Simmons rounds third and heads home during a loss against Junction City last week. Simmons recorded three hits against the Tigers. PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

Lions get pair of 'must-win' games as they enter the final two weeks of the

By Zach Silva
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With two weeks to go in the regular season, Cottage Grove is right where they

want to be. But not where they expected to be.

"If at the beginning of the year if we would have said, 'Hey, with seven games left we're going to be right in the mix.' I would have said, yeah, I'll take it right now," said head coach Dan Geiszler earlier this week. While the Lions stumbled out of the gate with a 1-5 start, the team

has since rebounded and are right in the mix near the top of the Sky-Em standings.

Junction City and Marist (not factoring in games played on Tuesday April 30 which come after *The Sentinel's* print deadline) are currently at the top of the league standings at 7-2 while Elmira and Cottage Grove are a game and a half back at 5-3.

"We haven't really talked about a league championship, it's definitely in the cards because we play Marist and we play Junction City two more times. And we play Elmira. The three teams we're tied with or ahead of us so it's really in our hands," said Geiszler. "But that being said, I don't know if we have the firepower to go out and win five games against those three teams. That would be incredibly difficult. Doable, but incredibly difficult."

The top two teams out of the Sky-Em league receive automatic spots in the state playoff while the next eight teams receive at-large bids. The Lions are currently ranked 20th but Geiszler would like to see his team move into the 17 to 18 range by the final rankings to ensure a spot in the postseason.

The Lions (8-9, 5-3 Sky-Em) began last week with an 11-8 home loss to Junction City (13-4, 7-2).

Through the first five innings, the game was lining up for Cottage Grove to pull off an upset of the sixth ranked Tigers. Ace Wyatt Sayles

was on the mound and the team began finding runs in the second inning. Cottage Grove got on the board after drawing four consecutive walks setting up senior Jaxon Simmons for a hit down the right field line that scored three.

Simmons' work wasn't done on the day as he brought in another in the fifth inning with a single to right that gave the Lions an 8-3 advantage. Simmons recorded a team-high three hits.

While the Lions carried a five-run lead into the sixth inning, the Tigers then sprang to life.

"I think we needed something to spark us and you know, baseball is funny and when you get a hit it's contagious and that's kind of what happened for us," said Junction City head coach Tony Stavros. "Sometimes you can't explain things, you just try to go up and have good at bats and put good swings on it. That's pretty much what happened. We were able to get some big knocks and battle."

COTTAGE GROVE see B3

Oakers top Elks, Elkton searching for wins

After falling to Oakland, the Elkton baseball team is looking to turn things around in final weeks of season

By Zach Silva
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Multiple weather delays from Mother Nature – including a snow storm and flooding – paired with a new league that features top teams and an inexperienced team has created a tough start to the league season for the Elkton baseball team.

After diving into league play with

back-to-back series' against number one ranked Umpqua Valley Christian (19-1, 12-0 Special District 4) and 12th ranked Glide (10-6, 9-3), the Elks (2-9, 0-9) faced off with Oakland (5-11-1, 3-9) last week. Just as it was against UVC and Glide, Elkton lost all three games.

"Well, you know, we recognize that we are in a different league this year. And so, boy, in this league every team is tough," said Elkton head coach Bill Shaw. "I hear stories about Riddle and young players that are really good and I even here that Gledale is much improved. So, I don't know – this is a tough league sched-

ule." The Oakers – a team that entered the series on a nine-game losing streak of their own (with losses to Glide, UVC and 15th-ranked North Douglas) – were able to win by a score of 11-4 on Tuesday and 9-3 and 17-0 in a double-header on Friday.

In the first game on Friday, it was an early outpouring of Oakland runs, picking up four in the first and two in the second, getting things started.

"It allows you to take a deep breath but, unfortunately, I think our kids weren't mature enough and they

ELKS see B2

Athletes of the Week



This week's athletes of the week are the members of the Cottage Grove varsity girls' bowling team. Last week the team was honored at a City Council meeting for their successful season.



The CGHS bowling team with Cottage Grove mayor Jeff Gowing.

PHOTO C/O NATALIE CARDOZA