

Cottage Grove continues to get big wins

Cottage Grove baseball team goes 3-1 on week as they look for a playoff spot

By Zach Silva

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After starting Tuesday with a home loss to Elmira, Dan Geiszler had a message for the Cottage Grove baseball team.

“Our season is on the line. We’ve got to win this second game. I’m not going to fill you full of anything that’s false information because we have to,” he recalled telling his team between games during a double-header at home.

It was the second week in a row the team has been in a must-win situation and, yet again, the Lions responded. After falling to the Falcons (12-6, 6-4 Sky-Em) in the first game of the day 4-3, it was Cottage Grove (11-10, 8-4) storming back for a 6-3 win to end the day. This key victory added to a pair of wins against Siuslaw on Friday, keeps Cottage Grove’s postseason hopes alive.

“If you would have told me in the beginning of the season we were in this position, I wouldn’t have bought it,” Geiszler said of his team that is now tied for second in league entering a pivotal final week of the season. “We keep getting better every day. We really have gotten better every single day and every game. It’s exciting.”

Relying on three underclassmen pitchers, it was the Falcons squeaking out a one-run game one victory. Elmira took an early lead and the Lions were unable to get timely hits as they left nine runners on base throughout the game. Cottage Grove senior Wyatt Sayles got the start but came off the mound with an injury during the third inning. Ezra Centers pitched the rest of the game for the Lions.

In the second game of the day, the Lions were, again, looking for a timely hit. The team had bases loaded in the second inning with one out and runners on third in both the third and fourth but had no runs to show for it. Instead, a fifth inning that saw three Elmira batters hit by pitches helped the visiting side build-up a 3-0 lead.

“It felt like, geez, we’re going to break through. It’s never for a lack of effort,” said Geiszler. “But I know our kids, they’re going to battle and they’re not going to give in, that’s for sure.”

And in the sixth inning, the Lions finally broke through. It began with senior Koltin Britton getting walked to start the inning followed by an Elmira error that turned what could have been a routine double play into runners on first and second. A single from Kellen Bennett loaded the bases for Noah Spink who blasted a grounder through the left side of the infield to score a pair of runs.

After senior Jayden
LIONS see B2

North Douglas dominant in pair of wins



North Douglas junior Nicki Derrick delivers a pitch against Central Linn on Friday. Derrick threw a no-hitter in game one and struck out a total of 27 batters on the day. PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

The Warriors 10-run Central Linn twice in matchup between top 1A teams

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On paper, it looked like it was an evenly matched game.

It was Central Linn, the highest scoring team in 1A that averages 17 runs per game, against North Douglas, a team that has given up 21 runs all season. The two top-five ranked teams met in Drain for a double-header on Friday looking to make a statement.

The games were anything but close on Friday as the Warriors (22-1, 15-0 SD3) dominated – including a no-hitter in game one and walk-off homer in game two – on the way to a pair of 10-0 wins over the visiting Cobras

(21-4, 14-3).

“Man, the girls hit really, really well. And Nicki was just really on her game today. Man, she pitched well,” said North Douglas head coach Jesse Rice.

As it has all season, North Douglas’ success started in the pitching circle with junior Nicki Derrick. Derrick, who threw a perfect game last Tuesday against a struggling Yoncalla (2-18, 0-15) side, showed she can also take on the best offense in 1A as she struck out 16 of 18 batters on the way to a no-hitter in game one.

“She is such a competitor and the more the competition, the better she gets. In fact, against some of these teams in our league, kind of hard to keep her focused but boy you put her in a big game situation like today and she

knuckles down and throws everything she has,” said Rice of his junior ace who missed last season with a torn ACL.

Despite having scored 78 runs in the four games they had played throughout the week, the Cobras were not ready for Derrick.

“My frustration in the first game was we had kids swinging for the fences and (we were) telling them every single inning, ‘We’re not going to do that. We scored 24 runs yesterday, it’s not going to happen today,’” said Central Linn head coach Marcus Campbell. “We couldn’t get bunts down. We wanted to make them do something besides Nicki terrorizing us.”

And while the North Douglas defense was holding back Central Linn, then it was time for the bats to get going. A run in the second

and third innings gave the Warriors a small advantage but then in the sixth inning the team went to work scoring eight runs on their way to 10-running the Cobras.

A single from Derrick started off the inning and she scored off of a grounder from junior Natalie Draeger. After fielding errors and some made plays by the infield, it was bases loaded with two outs. And then the Warriors capitalized.

Riley Black was walked to bring in a run, Halli Vaughn’s hit to right dropped in out of reach to score two. Derrick singled again which set up a Hope Ward single that scored two. Then it was Draeger with another hit in the inning to bring in the 10th run of the game and fifth with two outs to finish the contest.

“One of the things that we

focused on was if you hit it hard on the ground, punch it through that infield, we’re going to start scoring runs. And they did it. They did real well. Kept it on the ground,” said Rice.

Game two picked up where the first game ended as North Douglas tallied four runs in the first inning with hits, again, from, Black, Vaughn, Derrick, Ward and Draeger. Two more runs in the second and the Warriors held a 6-0 lead.

Derrick stayed dominant in the pitching circle as she gave up two hits and struck out 11.

The Warriors were slowed on the bats in the middle innings as Central Linn tried to hold off anymore big innings.

“Honestly, if this one would have ended 6-0, I would have ended 6-0, I
WARRIORS see B3



Elkton’s Margaret Byle (top) and Sadie Olson (bottom) compete at last year’s state track meet. The duo are looking to make it back to state this season. PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

Strength in (small) numbers

Elkton track and field team gets big results from small team

By Zach Silva

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As the school bell ushers in the end of the day, there is a flurry of activity in the parking lot at Elkton High School. Newly minted drivers hop into their trucks and whip through the lot while half-full busses journey out to their next stop.

In an instant, the parking lot is once again calm and, more importantly, empty. A group of four students – Sadie Olson, Margaret Byle, Kassie Yeane and Lance Corvinus – who had been waiting at a table under the awning, head to the center of the parking lot to begin practice. The cars are cleared out and the group begins their warmups, complete their drills and work on

being state-caliber track and field athletes.

“These streets and hills are our track,” said head coach Ken Maxwell as his team of four athletes begin going through their routine. With the closest track facilities about 30 miles away (north-east in Cottage Grove, west in Reedsport and south in Oakland), the Elks use what they have.

And what they have is working. For the second year in a row, Elkton has two athletes, sophomore Margaret Byle in sprints and junior Sadie Olson in throws, among the top competitors in their events in all of 1A. Not bad for a team of four people.

“When these guys go out, they dazzle people,” said Maxwell. “Training and sheer determination. I think it all boils down to that. I’ve got some tough cookies.”

In the spring, there are two options for sports at

Elkton: softball or track and field (or, for boys, baseball or track and field). Since softball would mean having to get in a van and go to Yoncalla every day since the teams co-opt, in her freshman year Sadie Olson decided she would do track and field. That season Olson was one of three people on the team.

“People like to do softball and baseball because it’s a team sport. But track is kind of a team sport, like I still get to hang out with the team, I just compete as an individual,” said Olson theorizing on why track and field isn’t popular at Elkton. “I think they might like to do those other spring sports and maybe, I don’t know, since it’s starting to get warmer maybe they want to do their own thing and have their own fun instead of go to practice and run all the time.”

In that first season, Olson
ELKS see B4

Athlete of the Week



This week’s athlete of the week is Cottage Grove distance runner Jimmy Talley. Talley recorded the second fastest 4A 3000 time in a second-place finish at Friday’s Wally Ciochetti Invitational. To read more about Talley and Cottage Grove track as the team prepares for this weekend’s district meet, turn to B3.



Cottage Grove junior Jimmy Talley races out to a fast start earlier this season.

PHOTO BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL