

THURSDAY | JUNE 17, 2021

Boys hoops seeks to finish strong

BY JERRY THOMPSON
FOR THE SENTINEL

Last week the Cottage Grove boys beat Elmira for the second time this spring, earning their second win of the season. Then the 2-7 Lions had to face the 10-1 Junction City Tigers in the Lions' Den at CGHS last Thursday night.

In their previous meeting, the Tigers' stifling defense and potent offense dominated the Lions from the start in a 53-42 victory. It was much the same in their rematch.

Senior Ben Heitz (21 points) and junior Chris Ohman (18 points) scored half of the Tigers' points in the 78-54 win.

"You look back on the beginning of that game, and the keys that we pointed out coming into this game that was going to make us successful were rebounding the basketball and taking care of the basketball," said Cottage Grove head coach Seth Hutchison.

son. "They started out 10-2, and they had two or three shots every possession. We didn't execute our keys of rebounding and getting stops so we could run in transition."

The poor start on the boards wasn't for a lack of height with the Lions' starting lineup of 6-0 guard Jayden Cameron, 6-3 guard Ty Kishen, 6-4 forwards Brennen Murphy and Evan Snauer, and 6-5 center Carter Bascue being almost exactly the same size as the Tigers.

"They (Junction City) have good senior leadership that really likes to be aggressive, be physical, and they did that tonight coming out early," Hutchison said.

Despite falling behind 17 to 5 after the first quarter, the Lions played as well as they have played all year in the second quarter, almost playing even with the Tigers.

The Lions scored 22 points with Kishen hitting

two three-pointers, Snauer scoring twice in the paint, and Isaac Steer, playing for the varsity for the first time this season, sparking the Grovers with a conventional three-point play as well as one beyond the arc.

"We started hitting some shots from the outside, and when you can do that it covers up a lot of other flaws," said Hutchison. "When we do that, we can compete with the Junction Cities, Marists, and Marshfields. Until we learn to shoot the ball consistently like that, we're not going to compete with these teams yet."

The 14-point halftime deficit was about as close as the Lions could get the rest of the game. Two poor calls by the officials resulted in two questionable technical fouls on Hutchison.

The Tigers made all four free throws to extend their lead and never looked back. The leading scorers for the Grovers were Kishen with



PIERRY THOMPSON/FOR THE SENTINEL

Junior Carter Bascue drove aggressively to the hoop to score two of his eight points against Junction City last Thursday.

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Lady Lions happy to be playing again

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The Cottage Grove girls' varsity experienced an emotional roller coaster from Saturday, June 5 until Tuesday, June 7 with the possibility that their successful 5-0 Sky-Em season could come to an end.

The reason was due to a few positive COVID-19 tests by "swing" players, i.e. players who play both on the junior varsity and varsity. The situation resulted in a forfeit on Saturday to Marshfield as well as a potential forfeit of the rest of their games through June 19.

It would have dropped them out of state playoffs. It was a stark reminder of traveling to Forest Grove last year for the first round of the playoffs, and then having the playoffs canceled.

"I think that was the hardest part, remembering where we were last year, and then to possibly have that taken away again, kind of re-broke hearts again," said Lions head coach Erin Roysse. "So, it was challenging to go through that again, like a second scare, but to be given another chance has been absolutely eye-opening, and I don't think the players are taking it for granted. We speak every day about how lucky we are to be given a second chance, and that nothing is guaranteed during the weird time. We can look at everything as a blessing."

Roysse found out the good news Tuesday morning (June 8). She recalled:

"My principal came walking into my room and he said, 'Can I speak to you for a minute in the hallway?' And I thought, oh, what did I do now? He said he had heard back from the Lane County Health Organization, and they were treating it like two different cohorts (groups which can be tracked). I think I hugged him. I probably body slammed him is more the term. I was so relieved, especially for those players who are seniors. The chance that they might not be able to walk and graduate. We were thinking, what are we going to do? Drive them in, in a truck. We'll bring a zip line in, and all different kinds of alternatives."

Even though the news came on Tuesday, the Lions' game at Elmira was postponed until Monday, June 14.

Fortunately, the regularly

scheduled game at CGHS against Junction City was played Thursday night.

Both teams got off to a slow start with the Grovers' only leading 7-5 after the first quarter. Gracie Arnold scored 10 of the Lions' 15 first half points, and the Lions held a narrow lead at the half.

In the second half the CG girls lengthened their lead and finished strong led by Arnold's eight points, Mikaela Blomquist's nine points and Matty Ladd's six points in a 41-32 victory.

The game may have proved costly as near the end of the game junior forward Halle DeGarlais suffered a left knee injury.

She was fouled, but was not even able to shoot her foul shots. It looks unlikely that she will be able to play the rest of this week.

J.C.'s Cienna Hartle led Junction City with 14 points which included four three-pointers.

In fact it was three-pointers which kept the Tigers in the game as 24 of the Tigers' total of 32 points came on their eight three-pointers.

Concerning the Junction City team, coach Roysse said, "they are a bunch of work horses. They are tireless. The came out with a great game plan. They were intense from the start until the last buzzer, and up in us defensively. I think our players felt the pressure, but there was no panic. I think our players responded really well."

Roysse said most teams are trying to double-team both Matty Ladd and/or Gracie Arnold, but the Lions have adjusted well to that.

"Fortunately for us, if they come out and stop Matty or Gracie, we have Halle (DeGarlais), we have Mikaela (Blomquist), we have Kennedy and Lex (Riggs),"

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JERRY THOMPSON/FOR THE SENTINEL

Senior Matty Ladd brought in 20 points against the Falcons on Monday for a decisive win.

Athlete of the Week



This week's athlete of the week is Ty Kishen. A 6-3 junior guard for the Lions, Kishen scored 16 points in Cottage Grove's win over Elmira and 13 in the Lions' loss against Junction City last week.



Ty Kishen lines up for a shot against Junction City in last week's game.

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