

Volleyball *from B1*

each other and building that positivity into our everyday lives.”

Coach Ladd led the Lions to an overall 8-4 record and had only two losses in league play. At one point in the season the Lions had a seven-game winning streak where they dominated the competition and were only pushed to five sets once.

“As a team we talked about the win streak a lot because we didn’t want to get too cocky and let our guard down against our opponent. And you could see it sometimes in individual games during that winning stretch when we would get too confident then the opponent would start to come back,” she said. “We talked about not getting too confident but also not getting too down on ourselves when we would make mistakes and finding a balance between playing confident but not underestimating our opponent.”

Ladd led the Lions to their best finish in the Sky-Em league since 2018, taking second behind Junc-

tion City. Cottage Grove lost three key seniors from last year but will look for the continued development of some younger players along with seven returning juniors.

“Last year we graduated three seniors and two of them were over six feet tall. It’s tough to lose that height especially in the middle because it helps at the net with blocking,” Ladd explained. “This year we’re going to have to shift our focus and re-strategize how we’re going to play at the net and how we’re going to defend against hitters just because we don’t have that big wall in the middle like we had a season ago.”

Ladd emphasized the importance of building both mental and physical toughness on and off the court.

“I think a successful season to me never has to do with the scores or win or loss record. It has to do with whether the girls are getting better and improving and becoming better people by the end of each season,” she said. “So, when we work on things, we work on skill building,

we work on attitude, we work on mental toughness, and we find the wins instead of focusing on how we’re going to win.”

With Ladd returning for her second year as head coach, the Lions are also returning with 75 percent of the varsity roster from last year.

Ladd hopes that the experience her team brings back and the success they had last year will propel them into this new season with a higher set of expectations as they aim for their first league title since 2018 and a return to the state tournament.

“Our goals for the season are to have good ball control and to out-serve and receive our opponents. That’s how we will win,” she said. “We don’t have the big, tall power hitters like we have had in the past and so being able to put pressure on the other side by serving tough is important for us. Being able to receive the other team’s serves is important, too, and putting the pressure on them to make the errors and reducing ours is key for the upcoming season.”

Football *from B1*

approved, but it still didn’t hit the same as a full fall season. In that spring season, the Lions went 0-2.

Now, with a full slate of games on the horizon, Polamalu and the rest of the Cottage Grove players are looking to flush the last few years of both football — and life in general — and go play the game that they all love.

“Being competitive right now is what I’m looking for,” Polamalu said. “Trying to get this foundation laid

back down because they (CG) have had a history of being competitive, so we got some work to do to get our reputation back up.”

With practices finally beginning on Aug. 16, high school football is officially back in the Grove, and no one is more excited than those taking the field themselves.

“We got a great facility, great area, great kids, great administration, a new athletic director,” Polamalu said. “I see good things happening behind that need to carry over to the field.”

With just a few days until their first game, the pressure of winning for the first time in nearly two years doesn’t hang on any of the players’ shoulders.

“That doesn’t linger in my mind,” Freeman said. “Not even close. We have the heart and potential to be better this year, that’s what matters.”

The Lions will host games against Marist and North Bend on Aug. 27 to kick off the Jamboree tournament held at Cottage Grove. The game is set to start at 5:30 p.m.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JRP RACING PHOTOS

Springfield’s Dustin Comer emerged victorious, totaling five wins at Cottage Grove in 2021 and amassing eight KMJ Performance triumphs.

Dwarf cars thrill Cottage Grove Speedway

The Western Dwarf Car Association was back in action on Saturday, Aug. 14, for the second night of the 2021 CGS Dwarf Car Nationals as the night previous, there were three divisions on hand: Sportsman, Veteran, and Pro.

Joining the Dwarf Cars were the Royalty Core IMCA Northern Sport Mods.

El Cajon, California, standout Darren Brown won the final night of racing in the Pro class.

Galt, California’s Ryan Winter, placed second over third, finishing Josh King, from Medford.

Nick Velasquez of Camarillo, California, and Medford motorist Kalvin Morton were fourth and fifth.

Darren Brown clawed his way out of the consolation feature earlier in the

program when he picked up the win there.

Eric Weisler, from Campbell, California, bested the field in the Veteran category.

Californians Mike Reeder of Placerville, and Pleasanton’s Kevin Miraglio, were second and third at the wire.

To make it an all-California top five finishing order, Orangevale pilot Brian Quilty and Tony Margott of Simi Valley were fourth and fifth.

For the Sportsman division, Central Point motorist Trevor Davis was first to the start-finish line.

Teagan Fischer, of St. Helens, ended the race second while Bay Point, California traveler Ellie Russo managed to finish third.

Adam Walker, from Mt. Angel, was fourth with fifth going to Philip Row-

land, of Vancouver, Washington.

The Royalty Core IMCA Northern Sport Mods ventured to the historic quarter-mile clay oval for their third race of the entire week at CGS.

Springfield’s Dustin Comer was the one to emerge victorious at the drop of the final flag. He now has five wins at Cottage Grove in 2021 and has amassed eight KMJ Performance triumphs.

Winston driver Aaron Bloom got second over third finishing Chuck Carlson from Springfield. Fellow Springfield chauffeurs Daniel Ray and Ray Comer Jr. were fourth and fifth.

For information on racing on Tuesday, Aug. 17, for the ISCS Week of Speed, visit the CG Speedway online at www.cottagegrovespeedway.com.

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