

Cougar cagers face personnel changes

By Tracy M. Sumner
Of The Print

When the '82-'83 men's basketball season begins next month, the Clackamas Community College squad will take the floor a radically changed team from last season, and according to Head Coach Royce Kiser, the changes are all for the better.

"I'm not going to predict that we'll win a certain number of games," Kiser said, "but I think we're going to be much better than last year.

"For the first time since I've been here, I have point guards who are true point guards, wings who are true wings, and forwards who are true forwards," he said.

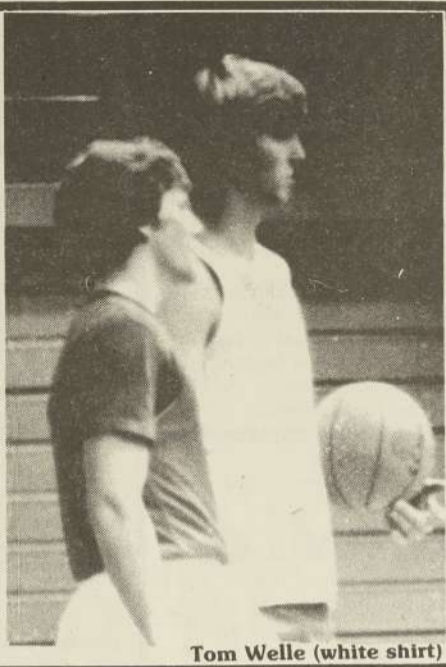
"This year, we'll be more of a finesse team," the Cougar mentor said. "Last year, we had to go to a power game because that's the kind of players we had. It appears we'll have a controlled fast-break. We might run more than we did last year."

Center

One position that Kiser feels his team lacks is a "true" prospect for is the all-important position of center. However, the coach doesn't see the Cougars as having any problems in the post position.



No. 34 - Jim Hill



Tom Welle (white shirt)

and he might be our best rebounder. He also works very hard in practice."

Welle returns after an outstanding freshman campaign in which he led the team in scoring, averaging a shade under 15 ppg, and rebounding at a 10.4 caroms per-game pace.

The Molalla Union High

best defenders," said Kiser. "He works hard on defense. He's also a good rebounder."

Hill led the team in scoring over the last eight games of last season including a 30 point outburst against Chemeketa.

The contribution of Hill and Welle to the young Cougar squad will go far beyond points, rebounds, and assists this year as the pair have been chosen co-captains of the team.

"These (Hill and Welle) are the guys we'll be looking to for leadership this year," Kiser said. "Hill and Welle are tough guys. They don't act like it, but they're both mentally tough."

Nippert comes to the Cougars bearing an impressive list of basketball credentials. He was the Most Valuable Player of the Timber Valley league his senior season while playing for Sandy High School. He also was a member of the triple-A All State Team and played in the annual AAA all-star game.

"Bob is young, but he has an instinct for the ball and the basket. As the season progresses, he'll get nothing but better," Kiser said.

Guard

One of the Cougars' biggest weaknesses last season, according to Kiser, was the lack of a true "point" or "lead" guard to direct the team's offense. This season, however, the team has a trio of competent if not spectacular floor leaders.

Kelly Burk, a 6-0 McMinnville product joins the team after an All-Conference, All-State senior season. Kiser is high on Burk's ability and potential.

"Kelly's a very good point guard," Kiser said. "I like his intelligence, I like his ability, and I like the way he moves the team. He's probably our best passer of the group and a good shooter and defender."

Another lead guard prospect is 6-0 Matt Stevenson

Gardner, a first year man out of McMinnville High School.

"Tim may not be as talented as the others," noted Kiser, "but he plays good defense and is a good shooter. A very intelligent player."

Forward

Joining front-line players Hill and Welle at the forward position are first year players Jim Imper, Mike Imper, Mark Bergstrom, and John Hurst. Mark McGlaughlin also joins the group, but may redshirt due to injuries.

Jim Imper, who earned All-State honors at LaSalle High School, is a player Kiser is high on.

"I'd rate him with Welle as the season progresses," Kiser stated. "He has size, he's a good shooter, a good rebounder, plays adequate defense and is a good passer."

Jim's brother, Mike Imper is what Kiser calls "very intelligent, a good shooter and a fairly good rebounder. His only drawback may be a lack of quickness on defense, but I feel Mike is one of our best team players."

Bergstrom, a McMinnville grad, made the team through "hustle, hard work and intelligence."

Bergstrom's biggest drawback is that he is what basketball coaches often refer to as a "tweener." At 6-3 he is somewhat small for the forward position, but lacks the skills that are essential for backcourt play.

Hurst, a 6-5 LaSalle grad possesses the talent and skill to play on this level, but with a Cougar frontcourt as loaded at it, he may have trouble finding playing time. It is for this reason, Kiser said, that Hurst may redshirt.

"If he's not in the top eight players this year, we'll redshirt him to save his eligibility," Kiser explained.

The team begins its season November 13 with a contest with a College alumni team. The game begins at 8 pm.



Coach Royce Kiser

"I don't think we'll be weak in the post," Kiser stated, "because we have forwards that can take up the slack."

Filling in at center for Clackamas are returnees Tom Elkins, Tom Welle, Jim Hill, and 6-5 first year player Bob Nippert.

The muscular Elkins, a 6-6 Newberg High School graduate, returns after a freshman season for Clackamas in which he averaged 6.3 points per game while shooting close to 53 percent from the floor. He also added 5.1 rebounds a contest as a part-time starter.

"I look at Elkins as a power player," Kiser noted. "He plays pretty good defense

School grad was also second on the team in field goal percentage shooting at a sizzling 56 percent clip.

Even considering Welle's fine output of last year, Kiser is confident that the 6-8 center-forward will be even better this season.

"He's taller, stronger and smarter than last year," Kiser explained. "He's big, coordinated, and most important, he's intelligent."

Hill, a 6-6 forward-center, was second to Welle in scoring (10.9) and rebounding (6.4) and earned Kiser's recognition as one of the team's best defenders.

"Jim's probably one of our



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