

SPORTS

Cougars tied for fourth place, vie for playoffs

by Jerry Ulmer
Staff Writer

UMPQUA 77 CLACKAMAS 73

If Clackamas Coach Royce Kiser could get his team to finish what they start, then perhaps the Cougars would have walked away with a win Friday night when they hosted first place Umpqua.

Instead, the young Cougars fell apart like a VW bus down the stretch as they lost 77-73. The win pushed Umpqua to 9-1 in league, while Clackamas fell to 4-6 and fifth place as they continue their hunt for one of the four playoff berths in the NWAACC's Southern Division.

It's doubtful that even Mr. Goodwrench could repair the malfunction that overcame the Cougars in the final two minutes. Leading 73-71 after a Nate Pyatt hoop, the Cougars allowed an uncontested baseline drive by Chris Patoine with 1:27 left.

With a minute left, Trev Kiser missed a three-pointer from the right corner.

"I called that one," said Royce Kiser of Trev's miss. "I gambled on it. His three (point shot) is just as good as his fifteen footer."

Umpqua rebounded and called timeout. Then they worked the ball inside to 6'7" post Steve Hutchinson, who missed a short jumper, but the Cougars failed to box out, and Hutchinson tipped in his miss to make it 75-73 with :35 left.

Clackamas had a chance to tie, but a stagnant offense produced an ill-advised 15-foot turnaround jumper by Nate Pyatt that missed badly. Umpqua's Anthony Steward grabbed the rebound, was fouled, and iced the win with two free throws with :12 left.

"That game killed us," said

Coach Kiser. "We did everything right but win the game. There's something we're not doing down the stretch."

The beginning of the end for Clackamas came with 8:00 left when the Cougars, holding a 61-54 lead, began having difficulty stopping Umpqua forward Donald Bolston inside. Three consecutive times Bolston posted up Jeff Hoffman, who played with a muscle pull, for easy baskets. The last hoop cut the lead to 66-65.

Then Umpqua went ahead 67-66 when Hutchinson slammed in a missed layin by Clemon Roach

"You can't say enough about the job Royce does," said almost apologetic Umpqua Coach Rod Snook. "One of our toughest games every year is Clackamas at Clackamas. They're not out of it. They're going to mature and get better. I would say that they're our toughest opponent."

Umpqua hung in most of the game due to the shooting of 6'5" sophomore Chris Patoine, who finished with 29 points. Patoine was the prime beneficiary of the division and conquest of the Cougar 1-2-2 zone. "When we run our Arizona triangle, we're looking for Patoine," said Snook. "He's carried us. He's a mature kid who's always there when the game's on the line."

Bolston scored 17 for Umpqua, while point guard Anthony Steward (Jefferson HS) added 15. Trev Kiser's 19 paced Clackamas.

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A night later at Randall Hall, the Cougars faced a must-win situation. They responded with tenacious defense and spectacular shooting to open a huge first half lead and hold on for a 92-76 win over Southwestern Oregon.

The win moved Clackamas into a fourth-place tie with

Southwestern at 5-6 with three games left. The Cougars must play two of the remaining three on the road.

Coming into the game, Clackamas knew they had to keep both of the Lakers' postmen, David Clay and Leon Thompson, off the boards and play solid perimeter defense on Nate Richard to win.

The Cougars did just that and much more. They got an offensive explosion from sophomore Todd Harris in the first half. Harris cut, drove, and bombed his way to 18 points at halftime.

Clackamas scored the game's first eight points and never looked back. The 1-2-2 zone defense, headed by Jeff Stein, swarmed the perimeter while Nate Pyatt and Jeff Hoffman cleaned up the boards. Seven minutes into the game it was 24-9 and the offense was clicking on all cylinders.

It continued ugly for the Lakers, who were coming off a 68-67 loss at Chemeketa a night earlier. With leading scorer David Clay (15.3 ppg) unable to get free inside, the Laker offense sputtered badly. Guard Nate Richard (14.7 ppg), the second leading three-point shooter in the Northwest, could combine with Clay for only four first half points as they trailed 49-31.

With Trev Kiser hitting as usual from three-point range, Clackamas expanded its lead to 65-40 with 13:20 left in the game. That's when the Lakers began the customary comeback as Leon Thompson started hitting a few threes of his own. In the six minutes to follow, Thompson would hit four triples to go with some shoddy Cougar ballhandling to cut it to 73-62.

CCC Coach Royce Kiser explains: "They came back because I took the zone off and they started shooting three-pointers and some of them go in. When there's no pressure



photo by Roger Hancock

Clackamas forward Trev Kiser takes a jump shot over Umpqua guard Clemon Roach. The Cougars were defeated 77-73, Feb. 5 by the Timbermen.

you can hit three-pointers."

The rally even sparked an organized cheer by the Laker bench, something usually reserved for women's basketball. But Southwestern Oregon, despite being without question the funkiest team in the Southern Division, started chilling out too early and could get no closer.

"Clackamas is an up and down team, very up tonight," said a hoarse and animated Laker coach Jeffery Menday. "They ran their offense exceptionally well, and that's to their

credit. They live and die from the perimeter. I told my club that we were coming into a beehive with a bunch of hornets ready to sting, but it didn't help. We're a pound it down low team, and (CCC Coach) Royce (Kiser) knows that, and if we can't do it, we suck."

Thompson led the Lakers with 23, with Richard adding 15. Trev Kiser led the Cougars with 29, including nine triples as Clackamas shot a remarkable 74 percent from the floor. Jeff Hoffman finished with 26 and Todd Harris had 22.

Young wrestling team finishing season

by Mark Borelli
Staff Writer

The Clackamas men's wrestling season is nearing an end. The Cougars hope they can extend their season with a good showing



photo by Heidi Klein

Clackamas wrestlers hope to compete in the national tournament in Chicago.

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at the National qualifying meet Saturday, Feb. 13 at Moses Lake, Washington.

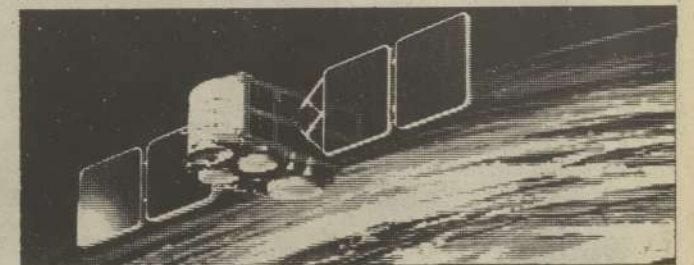
Clackamas, with a very young team, enjoyed a good year, posting a 7-6 team record. "For as young as we are, we have made a lot of progress," stressed Coach Norm Berney. Berney was also happy with his team's second half performance. "We won three of our last four matches, and we beat some tough teams."

The Cougars warmed up for the National tournament by traveling to Monmouth to take part in an open tournament at Western Oregon State College. Since it was an open tournament, there were no team scores, but had there been, Clackamas would have been an easy winner. Gary Malone at 118, his brother Tom Malone at 142, Wally Andersen at 158, Sean Brunson at 167, and Mike Prummer at 190 all walked away with first place honors. Also finishing strongly were Eddy Invernon at 134 and Steve Cox at heavy weight finishing second.

Joe Hines at 158 also turned in a strong performance, finishing third.

Coach Berney was pleased with the way his team performed at Western Oregon. "We had some really nice things happen. Sean Brunson beat two guys who had previously in the year beat him." Berney now has to turn his mind to the National qualifying meet coming up this weekend. "I feel if we get everybody down to their right weight we will be able to do our best."

Expected to do well are Ken Thompson at 126, freshman Bryan Schiller, Tom Malone at 142, and Sean Brunson at 167. Tim Jordan, perhaps Clackamas' best shot of going to the Nationals, has been bothered by a back injury and it is questionable whether or not he will wrestle in the qualifying meet. The top two individuals from each weight, as well as five wild cards chosen by the coaches will go to the National tournament in Chicago Feb. 25-27.



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