

Cougars blank Skagit Valley 3-0...

Clackamas wins NWAACC softball title

by Staci Beard
Staff Writer

It took only three games for the Cougar softball team to claim the NWAACC Championship in Mt. Vernon, Washington during Memorial Day weekend.

The championship game saw a rematch between the Cougars and Skagit Valley. In their last meeting, Skagit won 5-2. But this time Clackamas came to play with revenge on their mind and won the championship 3-0.

"When we played them the first time they had the breaks going

loaded and only one out the were unable to score any runs.

Some insurance runs were added in the sixth. Ann Kerr led off the inning with a single. Lisa Williamson followed it up with a single of her own. Kristi Northcutt laid down a beautiful bunt and beat it out at first while Kerr scored and Williamson moved to third. Patty Abell then laid down a sacrifice bunt that scored Williamson for the final run of the game.

"They tried around ten runs this game but our defense was just outstanding every time they tried

would have had Heather McCorkle pitch, but we had a two hour rest. I always knew the McCorkle could do the job if we needed her," explained Fiskum.

Their first round opponent was Green River who earlier in the day upset Wenatchee to stay in the winners' bracket. It was a tight game that featured strong pitching on both sides.

The fifth inning was first one to see action with Green River scoring first on two singles and a stolen base.

Clackamas answered quickly

would have to hold off until Sunday.

"We didn't have any problems keeping ourselves up and ready with the long wait. They only had one field that was playable and we got there early and when the team saw the other game going they were excited and ready to go," explained Fiskum.

The Cougars then faced Spokane in the semifinals. Spokane had been the NWAACC champions two years in a row. Earlier in the year the Cougars had split with Spokane breaking their 29 game winning streak. The rematch saw both confusion and suspense.

A scoring opportunity presented itself in the sixth inning with bases loaded and one out but confusion about a call resulted in a freak double play.

Northcutt was going from third to home when the ball caught. Northcutt dove back to third and the baseman tried for the force out.

Abell was also diving for third base. When the umpire called an out he appeared to be looking at Northcutt and she got up and left the field. But the umpire said Abell was the one out and he then called Northcutt out for leaving the field.

Instead of letting the call destroy them the team rebounded at the bottom of the seventh and

behind 1-0.

Johnson got it started with a triple. Madigan pushed in the first run with a slap single to score and a bad throw moved her to second. Kerr then bunted and was safe on first when Skagit's pitcher tried to get Tracy Wilburn (who was running for Madigan) going to third. Molly Bremmer bunted safely to load the bases with no outs. A clutch single by Williamson scored Wilburn to finish the game and move into the championship game.

"We couldn't have done it without the contributions off our bench. Wilburn didn't get to play a lot but when we needed a quick runner she was ready. More than once she scored the winning run for us. Rogers also helped a lot. She was one of our best bunters. All of the players contributed. They had their heads in the game the whole time so when they were needed they were there," stated Fiskum.

Madigan, Johnson and Kerr were noted for the play in the tournament by being named to the All Tournament team.

Others were selected for their play during the whole season. Named to the first team all conference were Johnson, Northcutt and Bremmer. Helvig and Kerr were named to the second team.



Patti Abell pours it on and heads for home.

Photo by Tim Zivney

their way. They got a lot of runs on bunts," commented Coach Paul Fiskum.

The Cougars got the ball rolling early; with two outs in the first inning LeAnna Helvig ripped a single. Merry Ferguson was next and kept the inning alive with another single. Yvonne Johnson was then walked to load the bases. Dionne Madigan came up with a clutch RBI single to score Helvig.

In the third inning Clackamas had a prime opportunity to push up the score. But with bases

in they got out. And this time the breaks were even," stated Fiskum.

Johnson pitched all three tournament games but saved her best for the championship game with a two hit shutout. For her efforts Johnson was named MVP of the tournament.

"I wanted to pitch Johnson in the Skagit game because they have not seen her. She is in good enough shape that pitching fourteen innings was not going to affect her. If we had lost to Spokane we would have had to play right away and I

in the bottom of the fifth. Kerr started off with triple. A squeeze play was called and was executed to perfection by Jill Rogers' bunt scoring Kerr. Abell then followed up with a sacrifice bunt that scored Jennifer McElroy (who was running for Rogers) to bring it to the final score of 2-1.

A unscheduled rain storm then interrupted the tournament all day Saturday. Clackamas was stuck waiting around in their hotel room dressed for the game until 3 p.m. when it was determined that they



Ann Kerr rounds the bases.

Photo by Tim Zivney



photo by Jillian Porter

Cougar catcher Merry Ferguson has played an important part in a very successful season. Her defensive and offensive play helped the Cougars to win the Northwest Championship.

Ferguson's play makes Cougars Merry

by Staci Beard
Staff Writer

A softball catcher's job is a tough one that requires a tough person to excel at it. Clackamas has one such person.

Merry Ferguson may not look the part, but when she gets behind the plate she brings both a toughness and intelligence.

"Merry is really, really intelligent and is in tune with the batters. When I call a pitch, usually she has already pick the same one for the pitchers to throw. The pitchers like to have her catching and when the pitchers are confident in their catcher they throw better," stated Coach Paul Fiskum.

Ferguson has been playing softball since the age of seven. An older brother playing baseball was

how she got interested in sports.

"I liked athletics. I liked it a lot so I have just kept on playing," explained Ferguson.

The position of catcher is a hard one and often a dirty one but Ferguson began playing it her freshman year at Madison High School and has stuck with it. Ferguson describes it as a challenge.

"You have to know what is going on at all times. Being able to communicate with the pitcher during the games is also a important aspect. You have like it a lot," commented Ferguson.

Ferguson put her skills to work last year and was a second team all-conference selection.

"Ferguson has a good arm. She makes the baserunners con-

servative because she can make a accurate throw and her teammates are confident with her," stated Fiskum.

With the season coming to a end Ferguson has found a few things that she will enjoy remembering.

"Playing against hard teams and the challenge of trying to hold the other team down. It was great being able to catch for two good pitchers and being able to call the pitches. I liked striking people out almost as much as the pitchers or more," declares Ferguson.

Ferguson has no definite plans about where she will be next year but she is looking into maybe playing softball at a four year school.

centimeters

	16 (M)	17	18 (B)	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
L*	49.25	38.62	28.86	16.19	8.29	3.44	31.41	72.46	72.95	29.37	54.91	43.96	82.74	52.79	50.87
a*	-0.16	-0.18	0.54	-0.05	-0.81	-0.23	20.98	-24.45	16.83	13.06	-38.91	52.00	3.45	50.88	-27.17
b*	0.01	-0.04	0.60	0.73	0.19	0.49	-19.43	55.93	68.80	-49.49	30.77	30.01	81.29	-12.72	-29.46

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