

# Softball brings home 4th place finish from tourney

by Staci Beard  
Sports Editor

With expectations of trying to capture the NWAACC (Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges) championship two years in a row, the Clackamas women's softball team, the Cougars, came away a little disappointed with their fourth place finish.

"We feel disappointed because we wanted to do better. We played well except for the last game. It says a lot for our program when we feel disappointed with the fourth place finish. Even so our team can leave the season proud about what we accomplished," stated Coach Paul Fiskum.

The tournament started out the right way with a 5-3 victory

over Skagit Valley.

That game saw a lot of strong hitting from the whole line up. But Julie Troutner carried the biggest bat, with her only trip to the plate, she pounded out a two run round tripper.

The Cougars' opponent in the next round was one of the tournament's favorites, Spokane.

Clackamas was looking at victory as Linda Gross was pitching a strong game that finished up with seven hits. With two outs in the late innings, one of those hits turned out to be a three run homerun that gave Spokane the margin of victory 3-6.

Tricia Soli was strong at the plate going 2-3 while driving in one RBI.

The loss forced the Cougars

to play another game after only a 25 minute rest. The contest against Wenatchee proved to be the team's best of the day as they shut them out for a 6-0 victory.

Kristi Northcutt went 3-4 while bringing in one RBI. Troutner was also consistent going 2-3 and Molly Bremmer drove in one run while having a 2-3 day.

Solid defense backed up Angie Baker as she spread nine hits in seven innings of work.

"We played well all day Friday, but Wenatchee was our best game. I was really happy with the way we played on Friday," stated Fiskum.

Saturday's contest against Lower Columbia did not prove to be as successful but the Cougars did not go down without a fight.

Twice, they came back from behind but was on the wrong end of the score at the end of the seven innings in the 4-6 loss.

After committing two errors that gave Lower Columbia a two run lead, Clackamas came back to lead 3-2, LC came back to tie. Clackamas went ahead 4-3 but were unable to produce anymore runs. Lower Columbia took the lead for good when Clackamas committed two more errors in the bottom of the seventh.

Lisa Williamson had a good game going 2-4. Jenny Wimberly, Jacque Romine and Soli all had 1-3 with Romine and Soli each bringing a run across the plate.

"It was a offensive game with a lot of errors. We worked hard and played hard softball. But fatigue played a part, because right

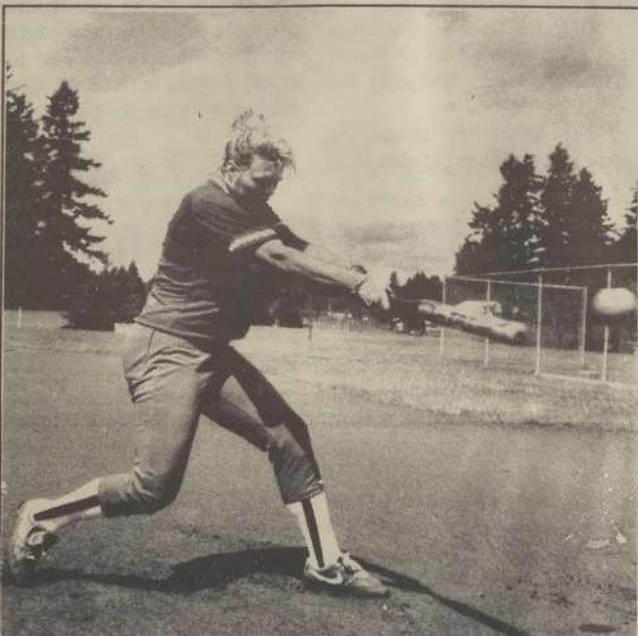
off in the first inning we committed two errors. On Friday we had been on the field from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The breaks we had between Friday's game were only about 20 minutes and didn't give us enough time to get a good meal or rest," explained Fiskum.

Six Cougars were recognized for their play during the regular season by being named to the all-league first team: Baker for pitcher; K.C. Jones as catcher; Williamson for second base; Northcutt as shortstop; Julie Stickel in outfield; and Wimberly in outfield.

Two more were named to the second team: Bremmer for infield and Troutner in the outfield.

"It was nice to have our players recognized. Out of the thirteen spots on first team six of them were us," stated Fiskum.

## Stickel carries a big bat, and strong team spirit for Cougars



by Mark A. Borrelli  
Editor-in-Chief

Success has become a common occurrence for the Clackamas softball team. Last year the Cougars won the NWAACC tournament and this year, with another strong team, the Cougars are hopeful to defend that title.

Although the Cougars are a well-balanced team, with talented players at every position, they will need big contributions from their big "stick" Julie Stickel to repeat last year's success.

Stickel, a Freshman from Madison High School has swung a hot bat for the Cougars all year. Stickel drove in a team-high 22 runs, while batting .376, also a team high. Stickel's numbers don't stop there as she hit five triples, two home runs, and stole 11 bases out of 11 attempts. Despite her great individual success, Stickel is team oriented and keeps concentrating on her team's winning.

"It feels good to win," said Stickel. "We really have some good team unity, and that's what it takes to win."

Early in the year, Clackamas had some problems among team members. This was a major factor in the Cougars' not playing as well as they were capable of, so Coach Paul Fiskum took them aside and Stickel thinks that helped.

"Coach took us aside and kind of got onto us because we had some problems and we were letting it show up in the way we played," said Stickel.

That little chat set a fire under the Cougars, as they started playing better, good enough to earn them second place and a chance to defend their title.

"Nothing surprises me about this team. I honestly think we can win every game; I have no doubt that we can repeat as champions," said Stickel

One of the problems a Cham-

pionship team faces when playing opponents is emotions. Any underdog team can judge their whole season by beating the Champions. This, according to Stickel, is what her team must face game in and game out.

"Every team rises to try and beat us. Teams definitely play their best game when they play us."

Stickel, who plays left field, keeps herself into the game, whether she is at the plate or in the field.

"I'm always really into the game, into my teammates. They are so competitive, it excites me," said Stickel. Some other things that excite her are coming up to bat with runners in scoring position.

"I love to hit with runners on base, I consider myself and anyone on our team good hitters with runners on," said Stickel.

Stickel will return to Clackamas next year to play softball and to work on a degree in business and accounting. She someday hopes to be a CPA. But, for now, the main thing on her mind is helping her team achieve their goals, and with her skills and attitude, they should be right around the corner.

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