

Wrestling championships near

by Frank Jordan
Staff Writer

The Clackamas wrestling team finished third as a team at the Region 18 Championships in Colorado this past weekend and will send four wrestlers to the National Junior College Athletic Association championships at the end of February.

North Idaho College defended their team championship, while Ricks College of Rexburg, Idaho, finished as the runner-up. Then came the Cougars, followed by Yakima Valley CC, just two points behind.

Blake Tompkins, wrestling in the 134-pound weight class, swept through some of the toughest competition of the tournament to win the regional championship. Because of his efforts, Tompkins was voted the outstanding wrestler of the tournament by the coaches.

"Blake had an outstanding tournament," Coach Jim Jackson commented. "The 134-pound class was hands down the toughest in the tournament."

The coaches got together the night before to figure out the seedings for all of the weight classes, and it took them an hour-and-a-half to figure the seedings out at 134. It was so tough that the eventual number-one seed did not place in the tournament.

David Evans, at 150 lbs., lost a close match to the defending national champion, but finished second overall to advance to nationals.

"David had a great tournament. He wrestled his heart out," Jackson said. "He did what he had to do. He lost the one close match to a tough, tough wrestler, but hung in there to go on (to nationals)."

Travis Bonneau will be heading to his second NJCAA tournament with his third-place

finish at 167 lbs.

"Travis lost his first-round match by a referee's decision in sudden-death overtime," commented Jackson. "But he fought back in the consolation bracket to eventually finish third. He wrestled the way he has proven in the past, and he also gets to move on."

Carl Hensley finished third in the 177-pound weight class to advance to the NJCAA tournament. Hensley also wrestled real tough after a first-round loss to get through the consolation bracket, Jackson said.

Those Cougars not going on to Bismarck, N.D., site of the national tournament, included Doug Maddux, who finished fourth at 158 lbs.; Jason Baurer, who finished fourth at 190 lbs.; and Nathan Sullivan, who also finished fourth at heavyweight. Chad Westover, wrestling at 142 lbs., did not place at regionals, but not by a lack of effort.

"Westover was wrestling in an extremely tough weight class, and he just did not quite have it," said Jackson. "But Chad had a terrific season and I hope he isn't too disappointed with his finish. He really did wrestle great for us this season."

Baurer might have moved on to Bismarck had it not been for an injury that he suffered in the third-place match. He was wrestling against a man that he had defeated earlier in the tournament, but he had to forfeit the match once he became injured.

Sullivan lost a close match for third place and lost his chance to go on to nationals. But his coach was not disappointed with his heavyweight's effort.

"The biggest problem that Nathan had to overcome was the size of his opponents. In every match, he gave up at least 60 pounds to his opponent. Sometimes, in a tournament like this, it

can be a great deal to overcome, and although Nate gave it his best, he just didn't have it in the end, and I am extremely disappointed because of it. Nathan had a super season for us, and believe me, he will be back next season."

For all of those guys who will not be wrestling in a couple of weeks, the season is over. Jackson, however, could not say enough about the effort that his whole team gave this season.

"I am very proud of all of them. They wrestled their hearts out all season. They have nothing to be ashamed of, and let us all hope that they continue to improve for action next year."

However, the season is not quite over for four wrestlers from Clackamas, who face an even bigger challenge against the best junior college wrestlers in the nation. Jackson says that he has nothing special planned to get his four wrestlers ready for Bismarck and the national championships.

"We hope to get some scrimmages set up for these guys, to break up the monotony of practice. But in the meantime, we will continue to stress focus for all four of them, and let us see what happens in Bismarck. All four could place at nationals or at the very least, become All-Americans. That would be quite an accomplishment."

The NJCAA National Championship Tournament will take place in Bismarck on Feb. 26 and 27. Jackson believes that North Idaho, Lassen College of Susanville, Calif., and Garden City CC of Kansas are the contenders for the team championships, but hopes that his four wrestlers will help Clackamas compete for the title.

Kiser optimistic about playoffs

by Jason Eck
Staff Writer

The Clackamas men's basketball team can clinch the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges Southern Division title if they win one of their final two games against Chemeketa or Southwestern Community Colleges.

The Cougars improved their record to 24-2 last week with wins against Mt. Hood and Umpqua Community Colleges.

In the game against Mt. Hood, Feb. 10, Dan Conover and Tyrone Miles were ineligible to play because of the fighting incident that occurred in the Feb. 6 game against Lane. The loss of these two players did not hurt the team, however, as the rest of the players picked up the scoring slack.

The Cougars scored the first five points of the game and took a 32-16 lead midway through the first half. Mt. Hood played enough defense to keep the game within reach, but the Cougars still led 46-33 at halftime. In the second half the Cougars were able to maintain the lead and go on to win the game with contributions from many players in the absence of Conover and Miles.

The Cougars got a balanced scoring attack. Brian Peterson led the men with 17 points. Kyle Dixon added 15 points and had a team-high seven rebounds. Josh Rombach had 14 points and four assists, including two 3-pointers. Jake Petersen also had 14 points. Other performances included Jeremy Reinwald's 12 points, on 5 of 6 shooting from the floor; Jon Dahlin's 11 points and Randy Wheeler's eight points.

The Cougars returned home Saturday to face Umpqua, one of only two teams to beat Clackamas this year. The Cougars again took an early lead at 12-4 before Umpqua went on a run to come within four at 21-17. Umpqua came as close as one point on

several occasions in the first half, but were never able to take the lead. The Cougars settled for a 39-33 halftime lead.

In the second half the Cougars were able to keep Umpqua from taking the lead. With 5:58 remaining in the game the Cougars led 76-64. At this point Umpqua went on an 8-0 run to narrow the lead to four points. Head Coach Royce Kiser was not celebrating a victory just yet. After a timeout, the Cougars scored to take a six-point lead and were able to hold Umpqua off for an 86-80 win.

Rombach led the scoring attack with 21 points and Reinwald contributed 17 points. Miles scored all of his 13 points in the second half, the majority coming in a stretch when the Cougars ran a play for him several times in a row.

"The guards made some pretty nice passes (to Miles)," Kiser said in response to Miles' scoring opportunities.

"I'm real happy we won the game. I didn't think we played that well. They're (Umpqua) a tough team for us to play because they rebound well," Kiser said.

He was pleased with the win, but saw some aspects of the Cougars' game that need to improve as the playoffs near.

One of these aspects is the team's defensive game. He said that the Cougars need to play tougher defense, especially this time of the season, as the competition will not get any easier.

Kiser is hopeful that his team will enter the playoffs as the top seed in the NWAACC Southern Division. The winner of the league is guaranteed at least the second seed in the tournament. However, with a win in the first playoff game against the fourth-place finisher in the league, the league winner will enter as the number-one seed.

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