

Softball team faces tough schedule

by Frank Jordan
Staff Writer

The Clackamas softball team shook off two losses to Lower Columbia CC on Monday to take seven wins without a loss later in the week, sweeping a doubleheader from South Puget Sound CC and winning five games at the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges Crossover Tourney last weekend in Wenatchee, Wash.

The Lady Cougars suffered their first losses in three weeks, losing both ends of a doubleheader to Lower Columbia by the scores of 2-1 and 6-1, April 19. Although disheartened with the results on the scoreboard, Head Coach Paul Fiskum was upbeat about his team's effort on the field.

"We were kind of shell-shocked at the whole affair. Lower Columbia is playing very well right now (They are 17-2), so you can say that they are a pretty darn good team," Fiskum said. "We just didn't get any breaks at all. They snagged a couple of line drives and we made a few mental errors. We had some outstanding pitching on our part. We didn't give up any earned runs in either game."

The next day, the Cougars traveled to South Puget Sound CC and crushed their opponent in both games of the doubleheader, winning 14-2 and 9-0.

"We scored a ton of runs, and we got good pitching and defense," Fiskum commented. "We played like I expected us to play, and the girls came through after two tough losses yesterday."

This past weekend, Clackamas played in the NWAACC Crossover in Wenatchee. Saturday, the Cougars shook off the 9 a.m. start to the tourney, scoring six runs in the

first inning on the way to an 8-4 victory over Wenatchee Valley CC.

"We got to our hotel at about midnight on Friday, and I was kind of upset that we had to start so early. But we really started out well, better than I expected," Fiskum said.

In the second game Saturday, Clackamas defeated Olympic CC 5-2. The marquee matchup of the day pitted Clackamas against Spokane Falls CC. Spokane came in with the best record in the NWAACC, but the Cougars sent them back to the hotel with a 2-1 loss pinned on them.

"This was our third game of the day, on not too much sleep," Fiskum said. "I'm so proud of what these ladies accomplished on Saturday. Their performance was as big as any day since I have coached here."

The game was a real pitcher's duel, featuring some great defensive play by both teams. The score was tied at 1 in the seventh inning. A Spokane player had just singled with nobody out, when catcher Michelle Guertin took a pitchout and gunned down the Spokane runner at first base. "A big, big play," Fiskum said. "They (Spokane) then got two more singles in the inning, but no one scored. Guertin made a huge play."

Guertin then stepped up to the plate in the bottom half of the seventh and lined a triple. She was later driven in by a sacrifice fly with the winning run.

On Sunday, the Cougars defeated Edmonds CC by the score of 5-2 and finished the Crossover Tourney by defeating Green River CC 4-2.

Big Cougar hitters during the Crossover included Bridget Jones, who went 8 for 13 with 3 RBI; Cindy Vance, 5 for 14 with



Photo by Frank Jordan

The Lady Cougars prepare to defend a bunt in a recent game. The women defeated Edmonds CC on Sunday, 5-2. They will host Green River CC on Friday. The game will begin at 3 p.m.

4 RBI; Emily Routson, 5 for 14 with one RBI and Becky Cordill, who went 6 for 10 with 3 RBI.

"Jones is playing as well as anyone right now," Fiskum said. "We have moved her to right field defensively, and her defense has been outstanding. She has shown more hustle than anyone on the team, and she is improving as the days go by. She has been a real, real spark for us."

"Cindy Vance has been pounding the softball since we moved her into the cleanup spot," Fiskum continued. "She just continues to swing a very hot bat."

"The RBI and the base hits were pretty much scattered out up and down our lineup last weekend," Fiskum said. "We

know now that we can do the things that we are supposed to

do to win ball games. All we have to do now is just do it.

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Cougars excel in Wolfpack Classic

by Paul Valencia
Staff Writer

The long and winding road got a little shorter on the way home for the Cougar track squads after they defeated their opponents in the Wolfpack Track and Field Classic in Pendleton, Saturday.

The men have now won 66 straight meets, while the women have a streak of 37 to be proud of.

The men won the seven-team classic with 211 points, beating Eastern Oregon State, 108, and Spokane, 103. The women won by even larger margins. They scored 205, with Eastern at 98 and Spokane at 59.

Prior to the meet, Head Coach Mike Hodges said he was looking for a close meet in the men's division. Spokane, he recalled, was the team that came the closest to beating the Cougars in last year's Northwest Championships.

But the Cougars showed Spokane who the defending champs were right from the beginning. In the first event, the 3,000-meter Steeplechase, the Cougars finished one-two-three.

"Going in, we expected a battle," Hodges said. "Our people were ready and they got after it." The first event set the pace. From there, Hodges described the point barrage like a snowball rolling down a hill, picking up steam.

The women jumped out to an early lead, as well, and never looked back. In their first event, the Lady Cougars finished one-two-four in the javelin.

The Classic saw 14 more Cougars qualify for the Northwest Championships. That brings the total to 77, more than most schools have on their team, Hodges explained.

Big performances came from Kris Long, who improved his personal best in the Hammer by 13 feet with a throw of 146 feet, 7 inches, which put him number one in the conference and number five on the all-time Clackamas list. Before the season, Hodges didn't even think he would have a hammer thrower, let alone the best in conference.

The pole vaulters finished one-two-four-five to give the team a boost, and the 4 by 100-meter relay team defeated

the Spokane squad by 1.4 seconds, which Hodges said is a wide margin in such a small-distance race.

On the women's side, Jill Warrington qualified in the javelin, shot a season's best in the shot put and had a personal record in the discus.

Under the busiest athletes department, Kristie Preiskorn scored 44 points, competing in six events, while teammate Vickie Robbins scored 36 in five events.

Hodges sees good things happening on his teams and not just the winning. "People are getting into the idea of being a strong team and being a winning team," Hodges said. "Some people, when they can't win themselves, they go and hide somewhere. Our people, if they can't win, bust their guts to get second or whatever they can get."

The Cougars have two non-scoring invitational meets the next two weeks before the Southern region championships. In these weeks, the team will be looking to qualify more athletes for the championships.