

Volleyball ready for playoffs after strong tournament play

Andrew S. Beck
Staff Writer

The Clackamas Community College Volleyball Team prepared for the regional playoffs next week with a fourth place finish in the Mt. Hood Halloween Classic.

The Cougars are one win away from clinching a tie for first place with Mt. Hood in the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges (NWAACC) Southern Region.

The Cougars have an overall record of 42-6, and a 10-1 record in regional play. A win against Chemeketa CC today in Salem will set up a one-game tie-breaker match between Clackamas and Mount Hood at Chemeketa Nov. 10 at 7 p.m.

"We have played very good the last two weeks," said Clackamas Head Coach Kathie Woods. "We are minimizing errors and that concept will help us in crunch time."

At the Mt. Hood tourney on Friday and Saturday, Clackamas won their first three matches of round robin pool play and advanced to bracket tournament

play. Clackamas then defeated Green River CC in the first round 15-3, 15-9.

The Cougars then lost a crucial match in the second round of matches to Mt. Hood, who went on to win the tournament. The Saints won the first game, 15-7, and Clackamas bounced back to take the second game, 16-14. But, Mt Hood won a long, grueling third game, 19-17, to take the match.

In the consolation match for third place in the tournament, Clackamas lost in two straight games to Columbia Basin CC by scores of 15-9 and 15-12. Clackamas took a respectable fourth place in the tournament out of sixteen teams with the Cougars' Melanie Sharp taking all-tournament honors.

"In the tournament, middle hitter Misti-Kae Filley developed her middle blocking role," Woods said. "Melanie Sharp played a consistent game as did defensive specialist Christine Younglove."

Partially as a result of their performance at the Mt. Hood tournament, Misti-Kae Filley was

named Cougar Player of the Week and Christine Younglove was chosen as the NWAACC Southern Division Defensive Player of the Week.

Besides the Mt. Hood tournament, the Cougars beat Linn-Benton CC in Albany last Wednesday for their tenth league win. Clackamas defeated Linn-Benton by a wide margin in three straight games, with scores of 15-4, 15-6 and 15-4.

"We are excited about where we are sitting, and we don't think there are any obstacles in our way to get to the NWAACC championships," said Casie Ireland, a Cougar player and team co-captain. "We have a great coach."

The statistical leaders in the Linn-Benton match were Melanie Sharp, who led the team with 16 kills and 14 digs, Jennifer Walters with 3 solo blocks, and Christine Younglove with 13 digs.

"Clackamas is for real," said Walters, also a team co-captain.

Following tonight's match in Salem, Clackamas will participate in the Shoreline Crossover Tournament in Seattle this weekend.



photo by Josh Kehler

The Cougar Volleyball team practices for its regular season-ending match tonight in Salem versus Chemeketa.

Western Conference title open to team that steps up

Jesse Sowa
Sports Editor

The National Basketball Association season begins on Friday with a number of teams unsure of what their year holds in store for them. The NBA title is up for grabs this year with free agency creating mediocrity throughout the league.

A run-down of the teams in the Western Conference will present an overall preview of this year's scramble for the conference berth in the NBA Finals.

14. Vancouver could quite possibly turn out to be the worst team in league history. The Grizzlies will be lucky to win 10 games, with the only bright spots being Bryant Reeves, Gerald Wilkins, Blue Edwards, and possibly Benoit Benjamin.

13. The Los Angeles Clippers will most likely be scraping the bottom of the barrel this year for victories. The Clippers have no stars to lead the way and will have to depend on Loy Vaught

and Pooh Richardson for their scoring.

12. Minnesota has the tools to be a good team, but they haven't figured out how to use them correctly yet. The Timberwolves, with the addition of Kevin Garnett, are a better team than last year, but still not good enough to challenge for a playoff spot.

11. Denver is a team that seems to be going nowhere. The Nuggets will benefit from drafting Antonio McDyess. A limited amount of scoring inside is what's really hurting Denver.

10. Sacramento is a team on the move. The Kings could move into the playoff race if Brian Grant emerges this year as the star he will soon be. Sacramento will need more production out of their guards if they plan to be successful.

9. Portland is a team that will be very average this year. Only if the front line comes up big will the Trail Blazers make their way

to the playoffs. Rod Strickland will put up his usual 19 points and nine assists, but Chris Dudley, Arvidas Sabonis and Cliff Robinson have to be productive to keep Portland above .500.

8. Utah can seem to do no better than the second round of the playoffs each year. The Jazz made no moves to improve their team, which means you won't see Utah make any kind of run for the Finals in the near future.

7. Phoenix is projected by many to make their move this year and make it to the Finals, but it seems as though this happens every year. The loss of Dan Majerle will hurt the Suns more than they expected. Danny Manning should step up big after a year off, but Charles Barkley and Kevin Johnson won't be able to hold up the offense by themselves.

6. Golden State has its best team in a long time and will surprise a lot of people with a good year. Latrell Sprewell and Tim Hardaway will put up big num-

bers, while Chris Mullin and Joe Smith should make the Warriors a very tough team to beat.

5. Seattle is another team that looks to be going nowhere after making no acquisitions in order to get past the first round. The Sonics will still be better than most, but experience and depth will hurt Seattle when May rolls around.

4. The Los Angeles Lakers will have their best year since the years of Showtime and Magic Johnson. Nick Van Exel is only getting better, while Vlade Divac has become one of the best shooting centers in the league. Cedric Ceballos and Tony Smith have made this team a top contender in the Western Conference. The Lakers are back and could make a run for the finals with a good season.

3. Dallas, with Jimmy Jackson and Jamal Mashburn both healthy, will challenge Houston in the Midwest Division. Cherokee Parks brings a lot of skills and

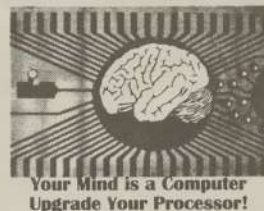
enthusiasm to a team that is already bursting at the seams with talent. Jason Kidd is spectacular with the ball and could take this team to the Finals if everyone stays healthy.

2. San Antonio has all the reasons to be an excellent team. David Robinson has risen to great heights as of late. Avery Johnson has developed into a very capable point guard in the past few years. The loss of Dennis Rodman will not hurt this team. Sean Elliott and Chuck Person fill the void of Rodman inside. Doc Rivers and Vinny Del Negro give the Spurs a decent guard rotation.

1. No team in the Western Conference has the skills to match up with the guns of the Houston Rockets. Clyde Drexler made this team even better than they were. Hakeem Olajuwon is the league's best center, while Sam Cassel has become an excellent shooter and a good passer. When June comes around, Houston will likely be the only team left standing.



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