

Cougars claim road victories, #1 rank in Northwest

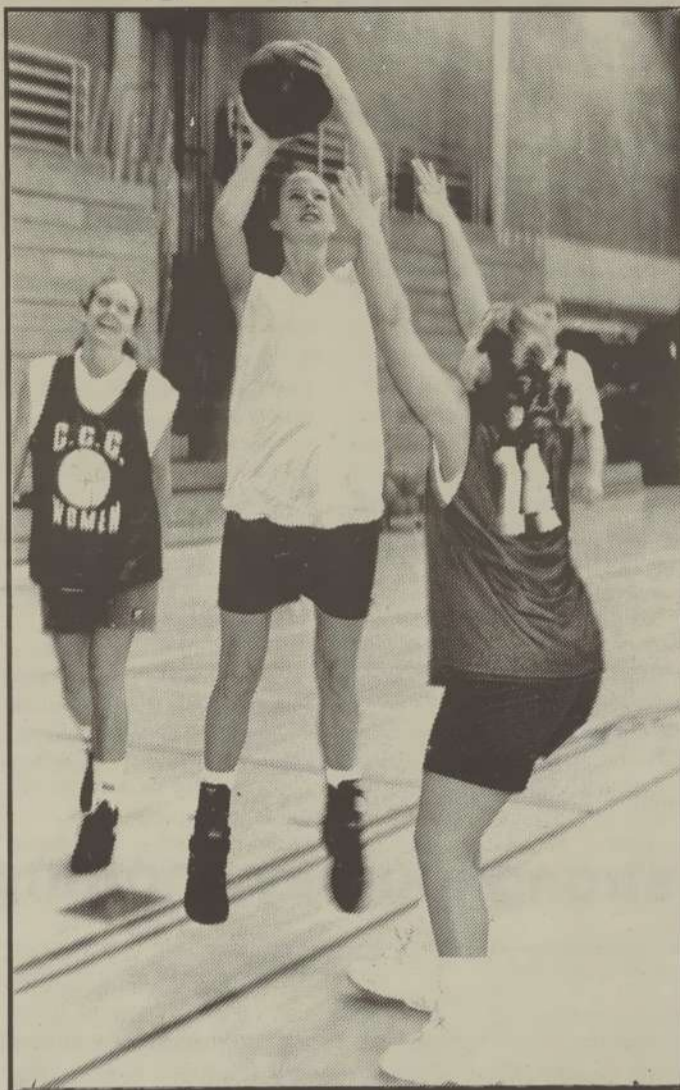


photo by Lora Wahrgren

Clackamas post Robin Barchus shoots for two during practice. Barchus led the Cougars in two road victories last week against Portland and Lane.

Freshman post Robin Barchus scores 20 points in the Cougars' win against Lane.

Jesse Sowa
Sports Editor

The Clackamas Women's Basketball team continued to roll through the competition in the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges (NWAACC) Southern Region with two more convincing wins. Clackamas claimed the number-one spot in the NWAACC Poll on Monday after previously top-ranked Chemeketa fell to Umpqua on Saturday and to the Cougars several weeks ago.

The Cougars improved to 8-0 in Southern Region play with wins on the road against Portland Community College on Jan. 24 and Lane CC in Eugene on Monday.

Clackamas defeated Lane 81-65 on Monday in a make-up game rescheduled from Saturday night because of the weather.

The Cougars led big at half-time (46-22), but had to hold off the host Titans, who attempted a comeback with about five minutes remaining. The comeback fell short as the Cougars made their free throws.

"We played a great first half," Clackamas Head Coach Karen Twain said. "We got it up the floor and got some great shots.

Twain credited freshman re-

serve post Robin Barchus with a strong game against Lane. "She came in and had a solid game," Twain said.

The Cougars were led by Barchus, who scored 20 points and grabbed eight rebounds. Lisa Sorenson scored 18, Clair Cox 11, and Lindsay Hatch 9. Melanie Sharp added 11 rebounds

Clackamas easily defeated Portland, 96-49.

Twain emphasized that her team use the Portland game to work on their offense and defense

as well.

"We wanted to execute and work on our plays," Twain said.

Twain praised sophomore guard Leslie Knudsen for a good effort over the past few weeks. "She's really picked up her intensity and is playing great 'd' (defense)".

Clackamas travels to Gresham tonight to play Mt. Hood. The Cougars host Umpqua, the number three ranked team in the Northwest, on Saturday. Both games begin at 6 p.m.



photo by Lora Wahrgren

Lisa Sorenson drives to the hoop on teammate Leslie Knudsen last week on practice.

Sports Opinion

Johnson's return after short retirement should be Magical

Jesse Sowa
Sports Editor

He left the National Basketball Association four years ago on someone else's terms, twice. Now he wants a chance to compete and then leave on his own.

On November 7, 1991, Earvin "Magic" Johnson retired from the NBA after announcing that he had tested positive for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. His news conference shocked the league and the world.

Johnson returned for the NBA All-Star Game in February, 1992. He scored 25 points and was named the game's most valuable player.

Johnson attempted a comeback on Sept. 29, 1992 that ended on Nov. 2 of the same year. Magic left because many in the league were against Johnson competing.

Magic returned several weeks ago to begin practice with the Los Angeles Lakers, the team he led to five NBA Championships in the 1980's, to show that he still has what it takes to be a superstar.

Johnson returned to the court last night at The Great Western Forum in Los Angeles for a game against the Golden State Warriors.

Some will say it's an ego trip, but I would call it the comeback of a legend.

Those opposing Johnson's

return will point to Magic's disease and the fact that he could spread HIV to another player. It's not often that an NBA player gets a cut, and even more rare that Johnson would get a cut and not take care of it right away. The NBA would not allow Johnson to return if they didn't think that everything would be safe.

Others will say that Magic could cause turmoil on the Lakers squad and disrupt the chemistry. If there was ever a player in the history of the league that brought chemistry to a team, Johnson would be that player.

When Magic entered the NBA in 1979, he carried a good Lakers team to the Finals and helped them to the NBA title.

With Los Angeles center and future hall of fame player Kareem Abdul-Jabbar sidelined with an injury, Johnson moved from his regular point guard spot to the post position in Game 6 of the Finals with the Lakers leading three games to two in the best-of-seven series. Magic scored 40 points as the Lakers won the title. Johnson was named the most valuable player for the series.

Johnson has averaged 19.7 points during his career and was the all-time assists leader with 9921 when he retired before John Stockton later passed him.

During his 12-year career, the 6-foot-9 Johnson won the NBA Finals MVP three times in

the nine years that he led the Lakers to the Finals.

Some critics will say that Johnson doesn't have the strength, skills and stamina to compete in the NBA. Magic has played off and on over the past four years and most recently played with a group of former NBA players in Europe. Some NBA experts say that Johnson is as good as he ever was.

Johnson has put on nearly 30 pounds since he first retired and will likely play the power forward position. This will allow Magic to show some of his other skills that rarely used at point guard.

Johnson has related to the Lakers and to the media that he feels physically able to compete at the level that it takes in the rough and tumble NBA.

The Lakers will pay Johnson \$2.5 million for the remainder of the season, but it's not the money Magic is after.

Magic's return will spark fan interest that has lacked in Los Angeles since he left. There is also no doubt that his return will help to fill seats in arenas throughout the league.

The comeback of one of the game's best players should be a positive one. A new version of "Showtime" will bring people out of their seats and prove to them that anything can be overcome.

The Clackamas Men's and Women's Basketball teams travel to Gresham tonight to take on Mt. Hood Community College. The Cougars play host to Umpqua CC on Saturday night. Both women's games begin at 6 p.m., and the men at 8 p.m.

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