

Women's team falls short of NWAACC Title

The Cougars take fifth after losing to rival Umpqua CC for third place

Jesse Sowa
Sports Editor

The Clackamas Women's Basketball team came up short of their season-long goal of winning the regional title last weekend.

The Cougars entered the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges (NWAACC) Tournament as the number-one ranked team in the Northwest, but ended up with fifth place following a 91-87 overtime loss to Southern Region rival Umpqua Community College on Saturday. Umpqua defeated Clackamas for third place in the tournament.

Clackamas finished 28-6 overall.

Skagit Valley defeated Yakima Valley, 73-58, for the NWAACC Title. Skagit Valley also won the title in 1994. Columbia Basin beat Olympic, 63-52, to take fourth place.

The Cougars fell to eventual runner-up Yakima Valley CC, 67-58, in the semifinals on Friday after a 74-69 win against Centralia CC in a first round game on Thursday.

Umpqua avenged an earlier loss to Clackamas in the seeding game for the regional tournament on Feb. 24 in Oregon City. Against Umpqua, the Cougars led by six with less than three minutes to go in regulation, but the Timberwomen came back to force the extra period.

In the five-minute overtime, the two teams traded baskets for the first three minutes before Umpqua took control of the game and never looked back. Clackamas missed some easy shots in the key while the Timberwomen hit

their shots at the other end. The Cougars made just 7 of 12 free throws during overtime.

Clackamas trailed most of the first half, but Leslie Knudsen and Chelsea Becher came off the bench to spark the Cougars to a 36-33 halftime advantage. The Cougars also looked to their bench because of foul trouble for their posts.

"We needed to give people a rest, plus the foul trouble and I think everybody went in there and totally stepped it up," Twain said.

Clackamas fell victim to some calls by the referees late in regulation that allowed Umpqua to get back into the game.

"I felt there were some controversial calls that didn't go our way," Clackamas Head Coach Karen Twain said.

First team all-tournament selection Lisa Tamamasui of Umpqua finished with 32 points and 17 rebounds. Angela Burgess, a 6-4 post, added 16 points and 12 rebounds.

On Friday, Clackamas lost 106-101 in the semifinals to Wenatchee Valley CC.

"We had trouble stopping their big girls," Twain said. The Cougars shot just 34 of 76 from the field and 13 of 27 at the free throw line. Clackamas did not help its cause with 24 turnovers.

Against Yakima Valley, the Cougars started the game with their worst half of play for the season. Clackamas shot just 6-36 from the field in the first half and trailed 30-16 at halftime. The Cougars played evenly with the Indians in the second half, but the final margin of nine was as close as they would get.

Clackamas led 6-2 after two minutes of play, but Yakima Valley outscored the Cougars 18-2 over the next 11 minutes to build an insurmountable lead.

Clackamas trailed by as many as 20 during the second half.

"During the second half I

thought we came back and hustled right along with them, but it was a little too late. We kept trying to come back at them, but then something would break our back," Twain said. "For one thing, they made a lot of free throws."

The Cougars got beat on rebounds, 58-43. Yakima Valley finished 20-28 at the line compared to 13-23 for Clackamas.

Lisa Sorenson led Clackamas in scoring with 13 points. Sharp had 10 points and 12 rebounds, while Clair Cox added 10 points and nine rebounds.

Against Centralia, the Cougars struggled early, but put together a solid second half to defeat the Trail Blazers.

Clackamas was unable to get the ball to their post players and fell behind 17-8 after nine minutes of play, but outscored Centralia 14-4 to take a 22-21 lead on a steal and lay-in by Lindsey Hatch with 4:15 left in the half. The Trail Blazers closed out the half on a 14-6 run to lead 35-28 at the break.

The Cougars trailed by 10 (40-30) at the 19-minute mark and then scored 15 straight points to steal the momentum and the lead as well.

Clackamas never led by less than four after that point as the Cougars were able to control the flow of the game and feed the ball to Cox, Sharp and Robin Barchus inside.

Centralia pulled to within four (68-64) with two minutes remaining as Cox fouled out, but Clackamas was able to hold off the Trail Blazers by making their foul shots down the stretch.

The Cougars ran into trouble when Sharp fouled out with four minutes to go and Cox exited soon after. Brachus also fouled out, but with only 13 seconds remaining.

Cox had just two points at halftime and finished with 22 points and nine rebounds for Clackamas. Barchus added 21 points, while Haselwood scored eight points and dished out 12 assists.

"We did not have a good first half. That was not us at all," Twain said. "In the second half we decided it would be hustle and heart. I told them that we have to swing some momentum, things where we would have to go on a streak," Twain said of her halftime talk with her team.

Clackamas definitely swung the momentum in collecting their final win of the season.

Barchus was named to the all-tournament second team.

Haselwood broke the tournament record for most total assists for the tournament with 31. The previous record was held by Kelly Lyons of Highline CC, who set the record in 1982. Haselwood also tied the record for most assists in a single tournament with 13. Laura Graham of Umpqua CC owned the record since 1988.

Last week, Sharp was named to the Southern Region first team and Twain was selected as the Coach of the Year for the Region. Cox and Hatch were voted to the second team and Haselwood to the honorable mention list.



photo by Jesse Sowa

Lindsay Hatch takes a shot in the key against Umpqua during the third-place game on Saturday in Longview.

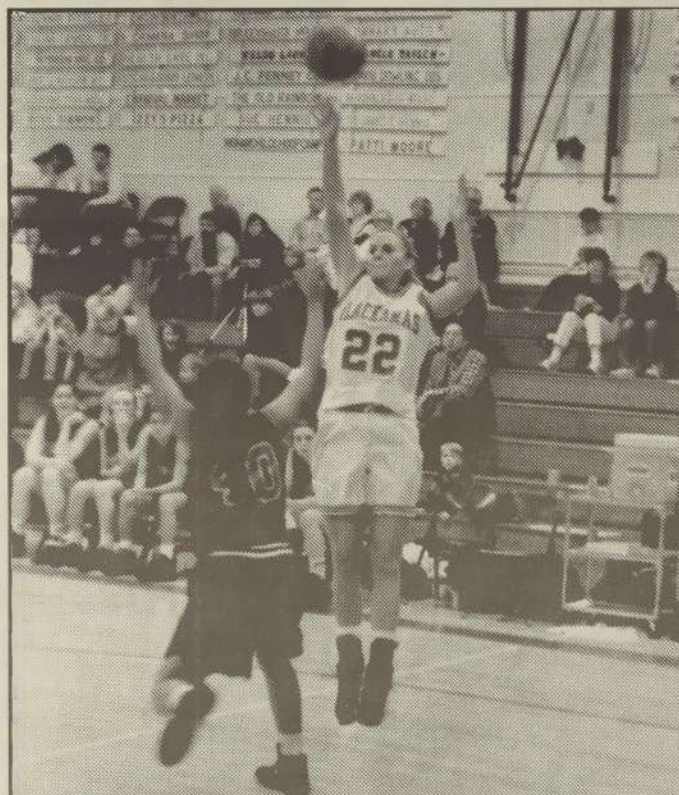


photo by Jesse Sowa

Clackamas point guard Lindsay Hatch shoots for two from the baseline last weekend at the regional tournament. Clackamas reached the tournament for the first time since 1990.

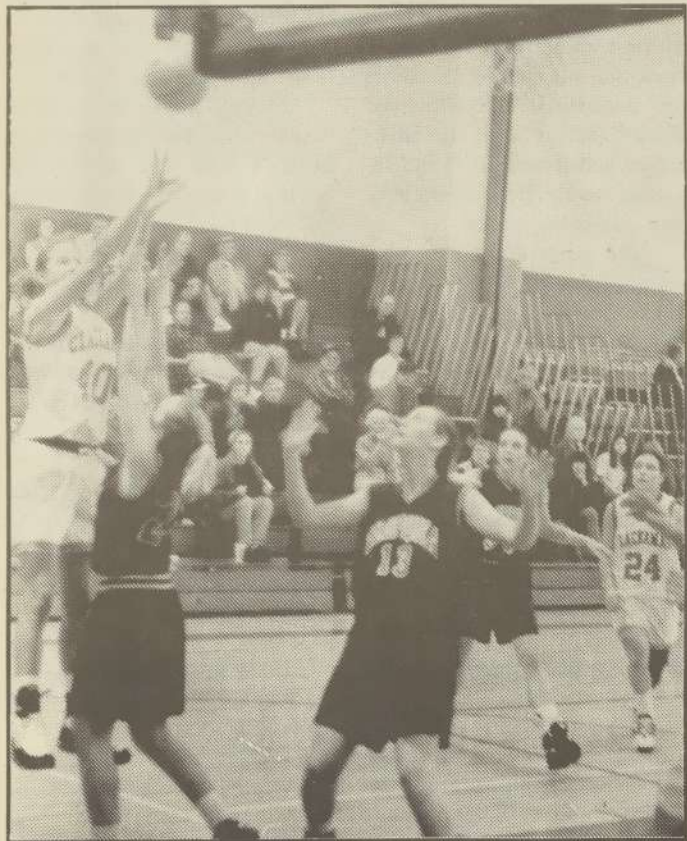


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Robin Barchus takes a baseline jumper against Umpqua. Clackamas lost to Umpqua and finished fifth at the NWAACC Tournament.

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