

# Hoops: Players certain season was successful

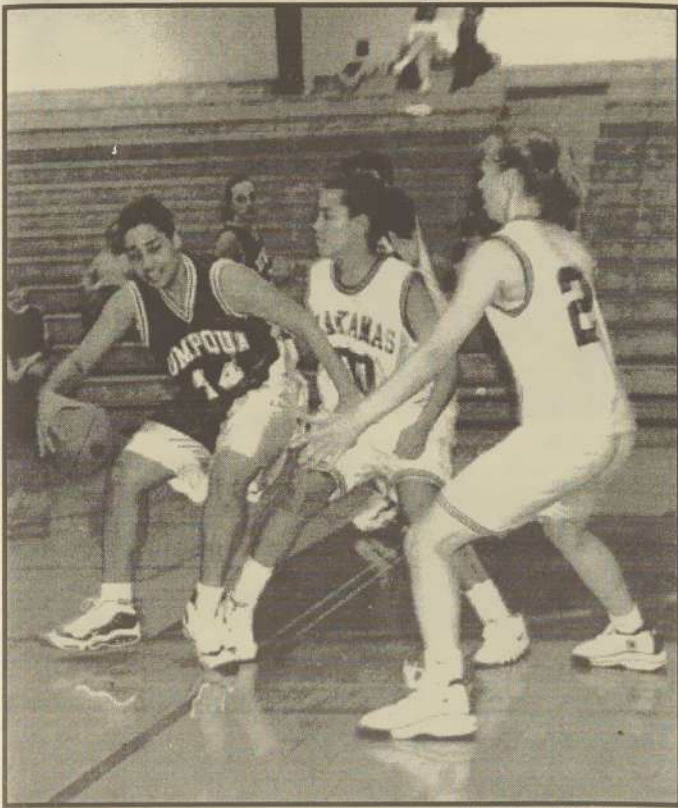


Photo by John Thorburn

Clackamas played great defense throughout the tournament, but their offense faltered at times.

Continued from Page 1

Coach Twain made a defensive adjustment by switching to a press style that smothered Columbia Basin. The Hawks gave up several of turnovers as a result, and Clackamas managed to escape the first half with a 28-27 halftime lead.

"We were so excited after beating Skagit," said Twain, "that we just came out so flat. I never was worried that we weren't going to win. I was just waiting for us to make the push. I'm glad we made it before the half; and I knew if we were at least tied at the half, then we'd be in great shape."

The offense seemed to awaken from its slumber for the Cougars in the second half, and Clackamas extended their lead quickly.

"Down in the end," said Twain, "I think they [Columbia Basin] just got tired. They couldn't go anymore, and we just kept going. I think the press kind of wore them down and also got our kids into the flow of things."

Coach Twain praised Clair Cox for her performance.

"Clair had a killer game," said Twain. "She was so tough. With Clair being a sophomore and Lisa [Sorenson] too, they both really know what it means to be here and they know what it takes. Not that the freshman don't, but I know what it means to those two. Clair was just flying for balls, diving for balls. It's just that extra little inch that makes you win."

The highlight of the game, however, was the incredible play by Denise Bean off the bench.

"She came into the game and was just a stud," said Twain. "She got in there and banged around with them, got some key boards, made some nice offensive moves. It was nice to get some fresh feet in there. I looked down on the bench and tried to figure out who was ready to play and she was. She played real well."

The 66-55 victory over the Hawks sent Clackamas into the championship game against the Umpqua Timberwomen.

"We're guaranteed at least sec-

ond place," noted Twain. "This is the highest any women's basketball team from Clackamas has finished. But we've gotten this far, and we don't want second place; we want first."

**Championship game, March 8, 7:30 p.m., versus the Umpqua Timberwomen.**

Parents and friends flocked to Skagit Valley to watch the Cougars take on Umpqua in the final game of the year.

After winning all three meetings between the two teams, including the Southern Division Championship on March 1, the Timberwomen seemed poised to claim this year's title.

The game plan for the Cougars was to shut down Umpqua's 6'4" Angela Burgess and smooth-



Photo by John Thorburn

Michelle McKinney played a key role in the Cougars' success this season.

shooting Sarah Coleman. For the most part, Clackamas was successful, only allowing Burgess eight points and Coleman, 10. Burgess hurt the Cougars at their own end, however, pulling down nine defensive rebounds, finishing with 12 for the game. Other players stepped up for the Timberwomen; and for the second straight night, the Clackamas offense started out slow and finished with a dismal 30 percent from the field.

"We really stopped who I thought to be their two main guns," said Twain. "Burgess did not score a lot or deflect a lot, and

Coleman, we really shut down. That's probably the lowest point-wise and rebounds that she's ever had. But there point-guard [Darolyn Custodio] just made some unbelievable shots. We couldn't have defended her any different; they just went in."

As the game wore on, the Cougars' offense started to perform and slowly began to reel in the Timberwomen.

"We struggled a little offensively," said Twain. "I thought our defense was decent. They're just a really good team. It doesn't take anything away from our team. It was kind of like when we played Skagit on Thursday. Whatever we came up with, they answered right back. Every time we made a run, they'd just stick it to us somehow. With the momentum going back and forth, eventually it just tipped their way."

Umpqua won the game 82-68.

Coach Twain was very proud of her players' performances.

"Lisa did a nice job on Coleman defensively," said Twain. "Clair had a great game. She's got a 6'4" person guarding her, and she just kept going at her. She put in some big shots. She was up and down the floor. I thought Michelle played well. At one point, Robbie [Nix] was down there posting everybody up and nobody could stop her. So everybody did a nice job."

The Cougars missed a big part of their offense with Melissa "Mo" Hollenbeck suffering from being sick. Coming into the tournament, Hollenbeck averaged 14.2 points per game and 7.6 rebounds. In the first two games of the tournament, she poured in 17 and 11 points respectively. Hollenbeck was held to nine points against Umpqua.

"Melissa's a fighter," said Twain. "I don't think people realized how sick she was, but we knew it in practice. Mo never says die, and she didn't. But she's out there playing with a fever and difficulty breathing. And even with all that, she was still recognized to be on the All-Tournament Second Team. So even though she was off in her own way, she still made so many contributions out there. Just hustling up and down. Lots of rebounds. Good defense."

One player who made a strong impact on the team during the season was freshman Mattye Walsworth. She joined the Cougars midway through the season when the squad suffered from injuries and played exceptional.

"I think if Mattye had been here the whole season," said Twain, "she would have just controlled the league. She's awesome. She's a great athlete. She has her head in the game whenever she's in there. She's just really good. If she returns next year, I have really high hopes for her."

As the final buzzer sounded, tears began to fall from the faces of those players that had worked so hard all season. They had made it to the championship game only to have their dreams fall short.

"After the game," said Twain, "there were a lot of teary eyes. I'm not so sure that it was because we lost, but because of the reality that the season was over. These girls

spent the last five months together. I think it was just the thought of not spending everyday with each other anymore, not hanging out as a team anymore. I told the girls before the game that no matter what happened tonight, it didn't take away from the great season they had had. It's unfortunate, but fortunate that last year we finished third, this year, second, and now we get to look forward to first next year."

Later that night, players relaxed and looked back on the tournament and season.

"My best memory of the season," said freshman Shara Bormuth, "was just getting together with a bunch of girls in college, just going places, hanging out. It's like a family."

Players also voiced their opinions on who was the most valuable to the team.

"I think Clair is, definitely," said sophomore Randi Buth. "When the job needs to be done, she gets it done no matter what. She does it, and she does it well."

"I picked Mo," said Bormuth, "because she is the most-rounded player. She could play wing, point guard or post. She was always there for rebounds. She hustled all the time, nonstop. She is courtsmart beyond anything I have ever seen in my life. It's just awesome. I think she's easily a leader. She just amazes me with all the moves she does and just how well she sees the floor. I think she'll go far."

Sophomore Michelle

McKinney also commented on the night's game.

"Our defense was there," said McKinney, "but we just couldn't convert on offense. We had some fast breaks where they should have been easy shots, but we just missed."

Although the Cougars were disappointed with the loss, many players were light-spirited.

"We came, we saw, we lost," joked Hollenbeck.

"Yea, Clackamas," laughed freshman Lauren Mohan, "we're number .... two."

Throughout the players' mixed comments and reactions to the game, one sentiment seemed to remain the same.

"We'll win it next year, man," said Mohan.

■ Clair Cox led NWAAC in scoring with a 19.5-per-game average and finished second in rebounds, averaging 11.5.

■ Melissa Hollenbeck was named to the Southern Division First Team, while Cox was given the honor of Most Valuable Player.

■ Cox also was named to the NWAAC Tournaments first team. Michelle McKinney and Hollenbeck were named to the second team.

■ Lisa Sorenson and Cox will represent Clackamas this Saturday at the All-Star game held at Chemeketa.

## A year in review

Photos by John Thorburn

"Lisa played killer defense again and had some nice shots."

-Coach Twain



"We'll win it next year, man!"

-Lauren Mohan



"It's like a family."

-Shara Bormuth