



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print

Clackamas squared off against the Lane Titans yesterday. Game information was not available at press time.

Cougars struggle towards playoffs

JOHN THORBURN
Assistant Sports Editor

The Clackamas baseball team is in a tight race for playoff spots.

In a virtual deadlock for playoff spots with Linn-Benton and Mt. Hood, all the games remaining count.

"We're in a tight spot right now," said Head Coach Robin Robinson. "We pretty much have to win everything now. If we lose one or two games, we'll be out of the playoff picture."

On Monday, the Cougars faced off against Linn-Benton in a single nine inning make-up game.

Right-hander Dylan Givens started against the Albany community college. Givens pitched four and one-third innings, striking out four.

In the top of the fifth inning, Clackamas held a 2-0 lead behind Seth McCracken's two run home run to left field. Linn-Benton loaded the bases, however, and began to dig into the Cougars' lead. Givens gave up a leadoff

single to the Runners and then walked the next two batters before getting the first out of the inning.

Linn-Benton managed to score one run on their next hitter's single into left field. On the next play, the Linn-Benton batter lined a hit back up the middle, hitting Givens on the shin. The ball bounced off of the 6'3" pitcher and into right field allowing two runs to score. Givens then limped off of the field and Donal McGavran replaced him.

Clackamas escaped the inning soon after but found itself down 3-2.

In the bottom of the fifth inning, the Cougars took advantage of two Linn-Benton errors to score four runs and reclaim the lead 6-3.

Clackamas went on to win the game 13-7.

On Thursday, the Mt. Hood Saints found themselves down 2-0 against Clackamas before scoring six runs in the fifth inning. Mt. Hood won the game 8-6.

"That's the way it has been all year for us," said Coach Robinson. "We start off good, get a few runs, and then we give

up one big inning where opponents score a bunch."

Catcher Jeremy Hubbard, playing with a sore left hand, hit three for four while Brad Taylor batted two for three. Left-handed Ryan Mann [2-2] took the loss for Clackamas.

On Sunday, the Cougars traveled to Albany to face Linn-Benton in a double-header.

In the opening game of the afternoon, Linn-Benton shut down Clackamas -- only allowing the Cougars to five hits. The Runners won the game 3-0. Jeremy Mann went two for four at the plate while Erick Johnson took the loss on the mound.

In the second game, Clackamas took advantage of three Roadrunner errors and scored five runs on five hits to claim a 5-1 victory. Corey Rooper scored the bulk of the Cougars' runs by hitting one for two and walking twice. Rooper scored three runs. Right-handed pitcher Chris Bentley [4-2] shut down the Linn-Benton offense --allowing one run on six hits.

Playing for another title

BRENDON NEAL
Sports Editor

The Cougars are 19-6 and are in first place in the Southern Division.

One of the Cougars' strengths and weaknesses this year is streak hitting. Last week Clackamas had three innings of five or more runs, but only scored eight runs in four games against Southwestern Oregon Community College.

"We haven't always been that kind of team [in past years]," said Head Coach Paul Fiskum.

"We don't turn it on until one player starts going off," said Second Baseman Kriss Demos on why the team scores runs in bunches.

Clackamas' bats struggled in four games against Southwestern Oregon Community College, but the Cougars were only outscored 8-5 overall.

On Tuesday, SWOCC beat Clackamas 4-3 and 1-0.

In the first game, Clackamas had no errors and gave up only five hits. Robin Viol went 2-4 and had a run in the first inning. Laurie Nielson added a run on a single.

Kelly Comstock pitched a near shut-out giving up only three hits in 16 at bats.

"It was a well-played game. Both teams had good pitching, and they [SWOCC] didn't hit the ball hard at all," said Fiskum.

The bats heated up on Thursday as Clackamas blew by South Puget Sound 11-1 in five innings.

"We had a good, long hitting practice on Wednesday. We knew we needed to get our bats going again," said Fiskum.

Three Cougars had two more runs and five had RBIs.

"Making out the line up card is harder than it has ever been since I have been here. We don't have a set starting unit," said Fiskum. "We have good sticks on the bench if we need a pinch hit."

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Danielle Soldani was the only Cougar with multiple hits in a 4-0 victory over Green River. Soldani went two for three and had a run to get Clackamas going in the second inning.



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