

NWAACC: Cougars show true self against Spokane

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couldn't get around. We only had three total team blocks out of four games. If we had won that second game, the outcome would have probably been different but instead it killed us."

Against the Chiefs, Amy Kraljev, Michelle McKinney and Christy Ekberg each had seven kills; Amy Felando had 29 assists; Mattye Walsworth recorded 29 digs while Jen Johnson had 13 digs and Maren Maggio had 12 digs.

"I was really impressed how Jen Johnson came in off the bench and played defense the way she did," said Woods. "She came in and picked the team up and had a terrific tournament."

On Friday night, the Cougars faced a familiar opponent in the Spokane Sasquatch. Clackamas faced the Eastern Division champion in last year's NWAACC championship.

Clackamas outlasted Spokane in the tournament's only contest that stretched to five games 8-15, 15-9, 14-16, 15-6, 15-10.

"This was the first time that any of the players on the team had been in a five-game match that actually went to five games," said Woods. "That game was so intense and exciting that it felt like the championship."

Amy Felando

Amy Kraljev led a balanced attack on the Clackamas offense with 20 kills and five blocks; Michelle McKinney had 13 kills and four blocks; Corinne Lawrence had 11



Clackamas players [from left to right] Corinne Lawrence, Maren Maggio, Mattye Walsworth, Amy Kraljev, Amy Felando and Judi Arbuckle line up to face off against the Spokane Sasquatch on Friday.

kills and 24 digs; Mattye Walsworth had 28 digs and five ace serves while Amy Felando turned in one of her best performances of the year with 53 assists, 24 digs, four blocks and three ace serves.

"Corinne really stepped up," said Woods. "She played really hard, stepped up her defense and kept the ball in play. I was really happy with her play."

"We finally showed our heart again," added Woods. "We showed our dedication and desire. We were all over the place, saving so many unsavable balls and cranking the ball down. We worked together as a team and you could just see the fire in their eyes."

In the Cougars' first match of the tournament, Clark College made for a tough opponent as Clackamas needed to overcome nervousness and some first game jitters.

Clark jumped out early to take a small lead but Clackamas quickly rebounded to win the first game 15-10. In the second game, the Cougars found themselves down 11-7 when two Clark players collided, leaving one on the floor with a frightening neck injury. The match was halted for nearly half an hour while paramedics were called to the scene. After the injured player was taken to the nearby ambulance, play resumed.

"We talked about having the first-game jitters," said Woods. "But until you actually experience it you don't know how to deal with it. I think we came out really tight and we weren't having as much fun as we needed to. The injury helped us because we got a chance to just relax and refocus. When we came back we could just play so it was to our advantage."

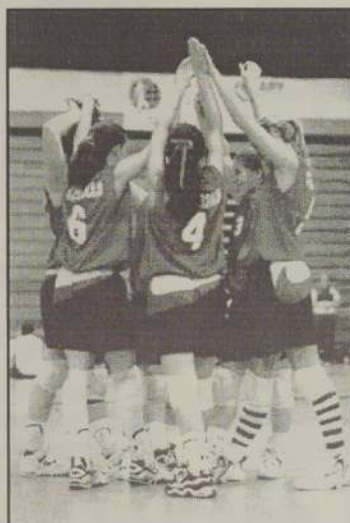
The Cougars went on to win the second game 15-12 and 15-4 in the third.

Test results showed that the Clark player suffered no serious injuries.

Amy Kraljev had 10 kills, Amy Felando had 31 assists, Mattye Walsworth recorded 17 digs while Michelle McKinney made five ace



Michelle McKinney, shown above in a game against Clark, had a strong performance in the NWAACC tournament finishing with 27 kills.



serves.

Kraljev and Felando were both given Second Team All-Tournament awards.

Walsworth, Felando, and Jodi Stirmlinger completed their volleyball careers at Clackamas with the close of the tournament. The three sophomore captains went undefeated in league games as freshmen and suffered only one league loss this season.

"We had a tough reputation to live up to," said Felando. "Last year we won the

title. This year we had 10 freshmen and nobody expected us to do as well as we did. We lost to Mt. Hood and Chemeketa in the tournament, but we beat them during the season when it counts and won the Southern Division."

"We had an awesome season," added Walsworth. "We played like Clackamas Cougars."

PHOTOS AND STORY BY JOHN THORBURN

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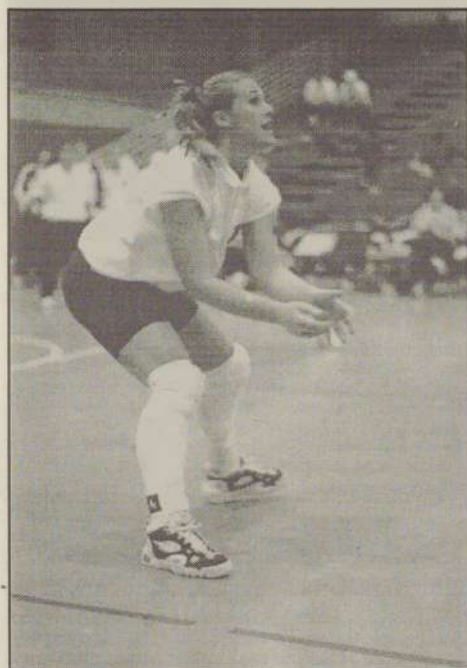
**Mattye
Walsworth**
Tri-captain



Clackamas Head Coach Kathie Woods has 10 players scheduled to return to the team next fall in hopes of improving on its third place finish in this year's NWAACC tournament. Woods just completed her 15th season as coach of the Cougars.



Amy Felando



Corinne Lawrence