

# Clackamas stakes title claim early

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Karen Twain  
Head Coach

JOHN THORBURN  
Sports Editor

The Clackamas women's basketball team is off to their best start in history.

After struggling towards the end of preseason play, the Cougars have lived up to their number one ranking in December.

Clackamas cruised to its fourth consecutive victory over Linn-Benton on Saturday, 76-55, running its record to a perfect 4-0 league record, 13-3 overall.

In a game that saw Clackamas reserve players seeing more game time than the starters, the Cougars blazed out to a 40-24 halftime lead on only 42.9% shooting.

Sophomore Michelle McKinney scored the game's first six points en route to leading the team with 17 points. Nichole Hayden recorded 10 points, while three Cougars collected 9 points each.

"We've had great performances by everybody the team lately," said Head Coach Karen Twain. "We're playing real well together right now."

The Cougars are coming off of tremendous wins over some of the toughest teams in the Northwest.

Last Wednesday, Clackamas traveled to Salem to face off against the seventh-ranked Chiefs of Chemeketa Community College.

The Cougars' last encounter with their rivals from the south was in last year's Southern Region playoff game that sent Clackamas to the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges [NWAACC] Tournament.

The undersized Chiefs couldn't match the towering Cougars as Clackamas rolled to an 83-59 victory.

Sophomore Robbie Nix led the team with 13 points on 6-10 shooting from the field and 1-2 from the line.

Sophomore reserve player Denise Best performed in the best performance of her career with 12 points and five rebounds while sophomore Jenny Hansen added 10 points.

Clackamas led 38-



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print  
Jamie Davidson and the third-ranked Cougars had the second-ranked Umpqua Timberwomen on their heels in their 66-63 upset of the defending NWAACC champions.

23 at the half while shooting 55.6% for the game.

"Chemeketa is always a tough place to play," said Twain. "The girls just played awesome and it was just a total team effort. I know it sounds like a cliché but there wasn't one individual that can be singled out. Everybody is gelling really well."

On Saturday, Jan. 10, the Cougars traveled to the rowdy gym of Southwestern Oregon Community College [SWOCC] in Coos Bay.

In a game that saw one Clackamas player come home with 12 stitches under her eye, the Cougars battled to a 79-68 victory.

"SWOCC is always a tough place to play," added Coach Twain. "It's a pretty crazy place to watch a game."

Nix led all scorers with 21 points on 9-18 shooting while going 3-4 from the line.

McKinney finished with 13 while defensive specialist Melinda Freeman recorded 10 points despite needing stitches under her eye.

"I always can expect Robbie to give us an awesome game and she always does," said Twain. "Michelle's really come back to top form this year and has become a real leader on the court and Melinda is out there sacrificing her body for the team."

On Wednesday, Jan. 7, the Cougars opened up league play against a familiar foe.

Last March, Clackamas lost the NWAACC Championship to the Umpqua Timberwomen.

The defending champions came into the game undefeated behind the incredible play of sophomore Sarah Coleman.

Coleman and the Timberwomen [3-1, 17-1] soon found themselves far away from the safe confines of their home in Roseburg as they were locked into a see-saw battle with the explosive Cougars.

With Clackamas leading by a small margin heading into the second half, the Timberwomen went on a tear, jumping out to an 11 point lead.

Clackamas regrouped quickly, however, and escaped with an electrifying 66-63 victory.

The Cougars received stellar performances from Robbie Nix [19 points] and Nichole Hayden.

The win over the second-ranked Timberwomen shook the Southern Division and the Cougars have been on top since.

Clackamas shared first place with Mt. Hood before the Saints were defeated by Umpqua on Saturday.

"The first half of the season is just about over," said Twain. "We've already played the tougher part of our schedule and we have the next three games at home. After that, we start the second half and play everybody again so a lot of things are going to happen in the next few weeks. We're playing real well though."

Clackamas faces the Panthers of Portland Community College [1-3, 4-13] tonight at 6 p.m. The Lane Titans [1-3, 9-8] come to town Saturday while the rival Mt. Hood Saints [3-1, 8-8] visit Randall Gym next Wednesday.

"Even though we've played the tougher part of our schedule," added Coach Twain, "we can't sit back in these next few weeks and expect to win."

• Portland State-bound Robbie Nix was given the Southern Region Player of the Week award for her performances against SWOCC and Umpqua



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print  
Sophomore Jenny Hansen has provided the offensive spark that has pushed the Cougars' record to a perfect 4-0 league

## NWAACC/Horizon Air TOP 8 COACHES POLL

### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

SCHOOL	WL	VOTES	PVS
1. Skagit Valley	14-0	82 (7)	-
2. Umpqua	15-1	58 (1)	-
3. Clackamas	11-3	49	-
4. Spokane	14-4	45 (1)	-
5. Lower Columbia	12-4	21	-
6. Wenas Valley	16-2	17	-
7. Chemeketa	12-5	5	-
8. Olympic	13-3	2	-

Please vote in parentheses.

Rankings and records as of January 11.



## Women's Southern Division Standings

School	League	Season
Clackamas	4-0	13-3
Umpqua	3-1	17-1
Mt. Hood	3-1	8-8
SW Oregon	2-2	11-7
Chemeketa	2-2	13-6
Portland	1-3	4-13
Lane	1-3	9-8
Linn-Benton	0-4	3-12