

The attitude of a true champion

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Despite the fact he leads his team in scoring, the Cougars' 6'7" sophomore forward believes that team comes before individual.

J.J. Pilgreen knows that in order to make the playoffs, the Cougars must play together as a team.

"At times, we've lacked team chemistry. Some days we're clicking and some days we're not," said Pilgreen.

"Everyone's friends and everything and it's fun to play, but we sometimes have problems playing together. Now we're starting to gel. We're playing together and moving the ball well," added Pilgreen.

Pilgreen, a graduate of Thurston High School in 1996, leads the team in scoring at 15.8 points per game and is second in rebounding with 7.8 rebounds per game.

Despite being one of the taller players on the team, J.J. is also among the team's best perimeter shooters. He is currently shooting .385 from three-point range and .704 from the line, both in the top three for the team.

Pilgreen attended Montana State-Billings last year as a freshman, but transferred to Clackamas

for his sophomore year.

He was given a full ride scholarship to Montana State-Billings but decided not to sign for his sophomore year. In order for him to play at a Division II school, which Billings is, his coach had to sign a release form allowing him to be eligible as a sophomore.

But his coach would not sign the form, giving Pilgreen a couple of options.

He could sit out a year and then come back to play for a Division II school as a junior, or he could transfer to a junior college and be eligible as a sophomore.

"I wanted to transfer to one of the schools in the same league, but I would have lost a year of eligibility," said Pilgreen. "I decided it was better to go to school and play, rather than sit out a year."

Pilgreen is unsure where he wants to go to school next year, but a few of the schools he has in mind are Central Washington, Western Washington and Fort Hayes State in Kansas.

Although he is only one of two sophomores on the team, Pilgreen does not think of himself as the team leader.

"I think it's tough at the junior college level to assume leadership," said Pilgreen, speaking of himself and sophomore teammate Oscar Rodriguez. "[The freshmen] look up to us because we're sophomores, but it's more of a team thing than just one leader. Oscar is the only returner, so in a way, I look up to him."

Freshman Billy Bright recognizes the leadership Pilgreen and Rodriguez provide, and believes they're the ones that get the team fired up.

"As team captains, J.J. and Oscar get us pumped up and ready to play. When that happens, we always seem to play better," said Bright.

Pilgreen knows that the Cougars have the potential to be a very good team, but understands that in order for that to happen, each player must step up their game to another level.

"This team's real young. We have two sophomores on the team but for the rest of the guys, everything is relatively new," said Pilgreen. "But [the freshmen] are all all-stars. Ev-



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print

J.J. Pilgreen goes up for dunk in the Cougars' first meeting against Linn-Benton. Pilgreen and his teammates host the Roadrunners on Saturday in what could be the last home game of the season.



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print

Pilgreen is averaging 15.8 points and 7.8 rebounds per game. The sophomore forward is also shooting .385 from three-point range and .704 from the line.

ery guy on the team is real good. There are no weak players on this team. That allows us to go 11 guys deep," added an optimistic Pilgreen.

Pilgreen and the Cougars are currently two games behind Linn-Benton for the fourth and final playoff spot in the Southern Division.

"We have four games left and I think if we win them all, we can still make the playoffs."

The Cougars are two games behind Linn-Benton, meaning they either need to win all four games and hope the Roadrunners lose twice, win three and have Linn-

Benton lose three, or win two and have the Lakers lose all four.

"It's not a very good situation to be in. I'd rather be in the situation where we just have to win the games outright and not worry about [Linn-Benton], but hopefully we can pull out of it," said Pilgreen. "We should. We're a good enough team to and we have enough experience now. We've played a lot of games this season," added Pilgreen.

As the saying goes, "There's no 'I' in 'Team.'" That's what J.J. Pilgreen believes in and that's what will make him successful in the present and the years to come.

“Now we're starting to gel. We're playing together and moving the ball well.”

J.J. Pilgreen
Sophomore
Forward

Women's Southern Division Standings

School	League	Season
Clackamas	8-2	18-5
Chemeketa	7-3	18-7
Umpqua	7-3	21-3
Mt. Hood	6-4	11-11
Lane	5-5	13-10
SW Oregon	4-6	13-11
Portland	3-7	6-17
Linn-Benton	0-10	3-18



Men's Southern Division Standings

School	League	Season
Lane	8-2	19-6
Mt. Hood	8-2	17-7
Chemeketa	7-3	19-5
Linn-Benton	6-4	13-9
Clackamas	4-6	13-12
Umpqua	4-6	13-11
SW Oregon	2-8	8-15
Portland	1-9	7-17