

Gut-check time for streaking Cougar squad

JOHN THORBURN
Sports Editor

Not very many people around the Northwest knew what to expect with the Clackamas men's basketball team.

The only thing they knew was that it would be good.

They were right.

The Cougars [2-0, 12-4] are running over competition as of late and are only getting better.

On Saturday, Clackamas, led by new Head Coach Clif Wegner, played one of its best games of the year—defeating Linn-Benton 84-68.

The Cougars' winning formula is a simple one: one of the top coaches in the Northwest directing the best shooting squad in the Northwest equals wins.

Last Wednesday, the Cougars' put their precision shooting on display against the Portland Panthers—winning 106-83.

Sophomores Billy Bright and Cody Eckman led Clackamas with 22 and 18 points, respectively. Abe Smith knocked down 16 points, David Cohen dropped in 15 points while Jared Price and Tony Edgerton each scored 12. Edgerton, Bright and Cohen each recorded rebound numbers in double figures.

In all, the Clackamas offense is averaging a blistering 91.3 points per game while holding opponents under 80 points on defense.

"We played good defense on Saturday," said Coach Wegner. "We needed it

because we had an off night shooting.

"We had some players step up and have some huge games for us."

Tonight marks the first matchup between Coach Wegner's new team and his former team.

Wegner coached the Mt. Hood Saints to the playoffs last season before accepting the head coaching role at Clackamas.

Who's Next?

Tonight:
Mt. Hood

Time:
8 p.m.

Saturday:

Lane

Time:
8 p.m.

"I know all of the players on that team," said Wegner. "They haven't been playing great basketball lately but they told me they wanted to win this game more than any other game. They'll be pumped up so it's going to be a dogfight."

Mt. Hood [1-1, 6-10] is one game behind the Cougars in the Southern Region standings.

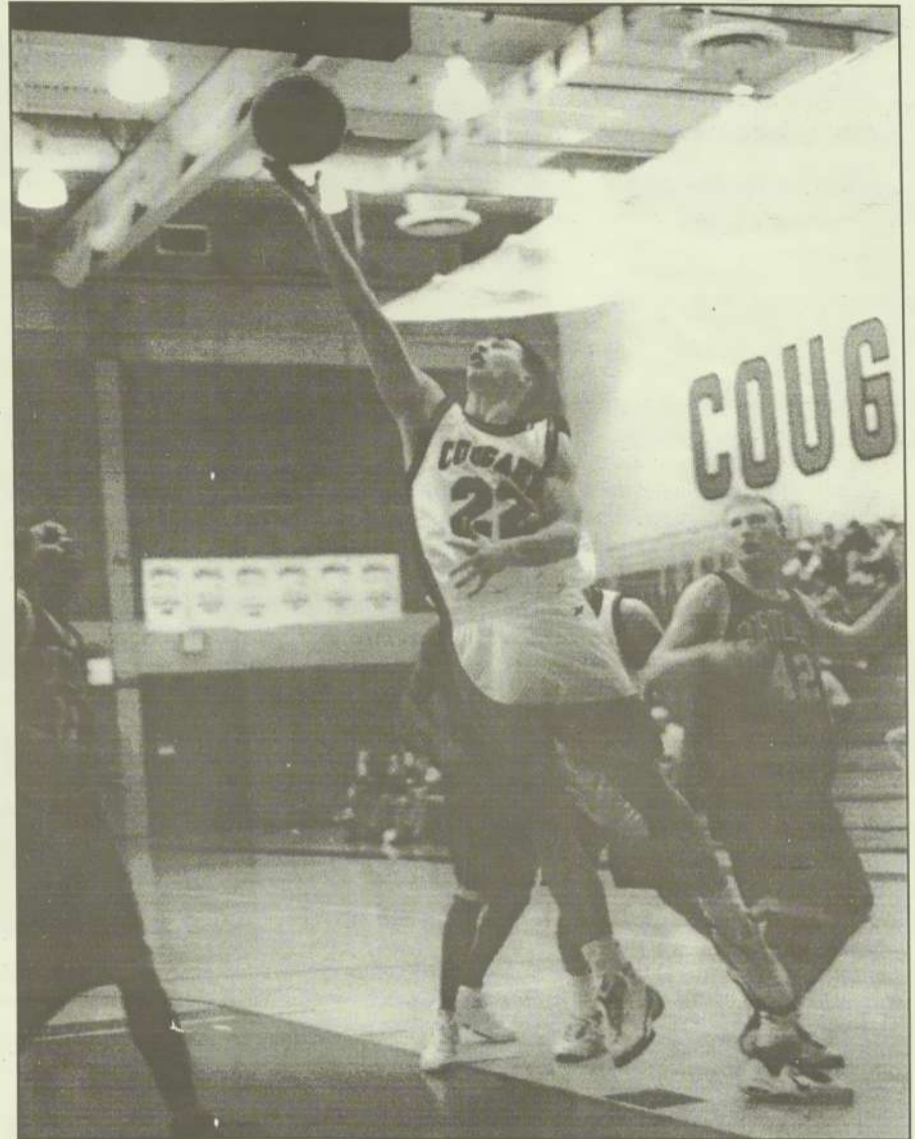
This Saturday is gut-check time for Clackamas.

Lane visits Randall Gymnasium for a game, the top-ranked Titans, don't plan on losing.

"I don't like to think ahead too much," noted Wegner. "If we beat Mt. Hood, though, it should set up quite a showdown. It could really determine who's the top team in the Southern Region."

The defending Southern Region Champions have been flawless with a 15-0 record this season.

In the year's first Horizon Air Coaches' Poll, Clackamas was ranked #8 in the Northwest.



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print
Clackamas guard Cody Eckman stretches towards the rim against Portland Community College in the Cougars' 106-83 victory.

Cougars win and win and win ...

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The Clackamas women's basketball program doesn't know how to lose.

Heading into its 1998-99 campaign, the Cougars didn't get much respect. The defending Southern Region Champions weren't picked to repeat, they weren't even picked to finish #2.

The Cougars are earning respect, however, and they're doing it the old-fashioned way.

Clackamas [2-0, 12-5] sits atop the Southern Region standings along with the Umpqua Timberwomen [2-0, 16-0].

For the Cougars to win their second-straight title, a near perfect season is almost necessary.

Clackamas got a big scare this past weekend, escaping Albany with a 63-62 victory over Linn-Benton.

"Linn-Benton has got a pretty good team this year," said first-year Head Coach Jim Martineau. "They haven't been too successful in recent years, but they're going to win some games this winter."

Clackamas has relied on a suffocating defense and a well-balanced offensive attack. Four Cougars are averaging in double figures with Sophomore Nichole Hayden leading the team with a 16.1 average.

When Hayden had a difficult night on Saturday, her teammates stepped up.

"We've had some players really stepping up their games these last few weeks," said Martineau. "We'll need play like that from this team all season to contend for the title."

"Noelle Johnson had a good night for us. The stats don't really show it but she stepped in and really played some solid basketball for us."

One player that has given the Cougars a boost is Sophomore post, Rachel Hudson.

Hudson is averaging 13 points per game after seeing limited action as a freshman last season.

"Rachel has been a real pleasant surprise for us," noted Martineau. "She's helped us out of some tight spots. She's turned into one of the better posts in our league and that's going to help us out tremendously down the stretch of the season."

Last Wednesday, the Cougars avenged a 1998 loss to Portland Community College with a 71-46 victory.

Melinda Freeman led Clackamas with 15 points while Hayden and Hudson each recorded 12 points. Hudson also grabbed 12 rebounds to complete the double-double.

Tonight, the Cougars face off



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print
Reserve post, Katie Krupicka, pleads her case to the officials after being called for a foul in last month's Lower Columbia Red Devil Invitational. The Cougars [2-0, 12-5] finished third in the tournament.

against the Mt. Hood Saints at 6p.m.

The Saints [1-1, 5-9] upset heavily-favored Chemeketa a week ago but suffered a 25 point loss to Umpqua this past Saturday.

"Mt. Hood is a dangerous team," noted Martineau. "They're a rollercoaster team that can beat you or roll over for you. We have to play our best to avoid getting

upset."

On Saturday, the Cougars host Lane Community College at 6 p.m.

The Titans [0-2, 7-9] are still searching for their first win in the Southern Region.

Both games should be a good tune-up before traveling to Roseburg to take on the top-ranked Umpqua Timberwomen next Wednesday.



FROM
THE
BOX

Gridiron days of Clackamas football

It was the decade of disco. The grass was a little greener, the stands were lined with spectators.

It was the era of Clackamas Community College intercollegiate football.

That's right, football.

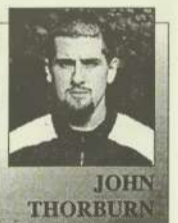
Many, if not most, students are not aware of the gridiron days of Cougar football.

It began in 1971 and last until 1977

The sport that allowed young players to extend their careers just two years longer than high school met its demise due to economic problems.

That's right, the sport of football just became too expensive.

In its days of glory, NWAACC football consisted of 11 schools—the nearest at Mt. Hood Community College.



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See *The Box*, page 7