

'Average Joe' squad at pivotal point in year

JOHN THORBURN
Sports Editor

Robin Robinson said at the beginning of the 1999 season that his Clackamas baseball team would rely on its stellar pitching staff.

The head coach has gotten nothing more than mediocre play from many of his pitchers.

The result is a mediocre start. "Right now, we're just a middle of the road team," said Robinson. "We're playing 'average joe' baseball. The only good part of that is that pretty much every other team in our region is in the same boat we are."

Clackamas is 2-2 in Southern Region play and is 5-13 overall. Lane, the current region leader, is 3-1 in league play with a 15-6 overall record.

"We're getting some great pitching from Glenn Boss and Greg Palmer," noted Robinson. "The rest of our pitchers aren't doing as well as we liked."

The Cougars had a rollercoaster week—recording two wins and three losses.

Among the losses was a 24-3 loss to the Mt. Hood Saints [3-2, 6-8] last Tuesday in Gresham.

Clackamas made 11 errors in the nine inning game. 12 of the runs scored by the Saints were unearned.

"That's one of those games, you would just as soon forget. It wasn't a good day for us," said Robinson.

The Cougars rebounded by splitting a doubleheader with Chemeketa on Saturday.

In the first game, Boss [1-2] struck out five Storm batters



Robert McCoy steps into the batter's box as a Clackamas baserunner leads off of first base. McCoy is one of four Cougar hitters averaging over .300 at the plate. JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print

while allowing eight hits and one walk in a 4-1 victory. The right-hander from Beaverton has a 1.8 earned run average.

In the second game of the afternoon, Palmer [2-1] struck out six while allowing five hits and no walks. The Cougars lost 1-0 on an unearned run.

"The second game was a real battle," said Robinson. "We had some key hitting and some great defense."

At the plate, Jeff Wright led the

Cougars with a three for five performance on the afternoon. He recorded two runs batted in. Ryan Loren went three for seven with an RBI.

On Sunday, Clackamas traveled to McMinnville to take on the Linfield College JV squad.

In the first game of a doubleheader, the Wildcats rolled over the Cougars 10-5 on 10 hits.

Ryan Swearingen was credited with the loss.

In the second game, Alvin Ellis earned a 12-8 victory for the Cougars.

Clackamas took on Mt. Hood in a doubleheader yesterday afternoon. No scores were available at press time.

"We're very young and we lack

some maturity," noted Robinson. "We're missing some key players in key spots."

"Right now, we're only getting mediocre play at the short stop and catcher positions. Both of those spots are places that we need to have real leadership."

This season, the league implemented a change from the use of aluminum bats to wooden bats.

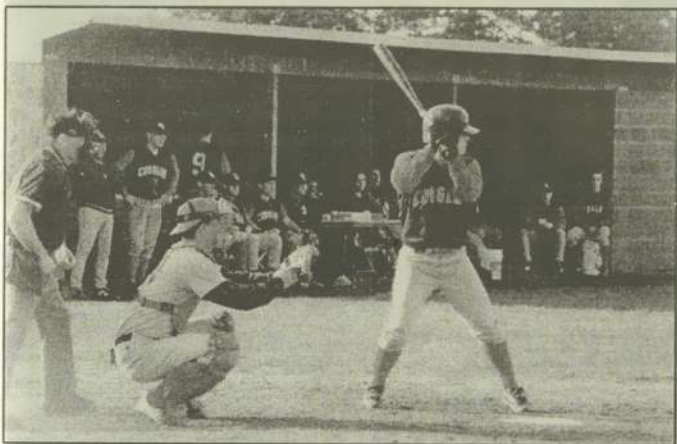
"Every team is complaining about it," noted Robinson. "Hitters aren't hitting as well as they have been with the metal bats but ultimately it's better for the game from a coaching standpoint."

Before yesterday's games, Coach Robinson commented on

the team's position in the league.

"This is a real important point in our season," said Robinson. "If we sweep Mt. Hood, it could really snowball into something bigger for us that will carry the team through the next few weeks. If they sweep us, it could really bring this team down because of the maturity level on this team. If we split, it'll be the same for us as it's been so far. Just a middle of the road team."

Leading Clackamas in hitting are four Cougars with a .300+ batting average. Ryan Loren, Robert McCoy, Jeremy Barnett and Rian Alden are the four sluggers off to strong starts for Coach Robinson.



The Cougars were winless at home heading into yesterday's doubleheader with Mt. Hood. Scores of the games were not available at press time. JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print

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