

Cougar squad bears down for tough competition

Clackamas opens league on the road 2-0 but big games loom ahead

JOHN THORBURN
Editor-in-Chief

The Clackamas women's basketball team hasn't missed a step in returning to greatness during this 2000 season.

After graduating three players that went on to play at four-year universities, the Cougars could have tagged this season as a building year for its freshmen.

Instead, the squad is ranked #8 in Washington and Oregon and is 2-0 in the Southern Region, 11-5 overall.

"Right now, we're in the same position that we were in last year at this time," noted second-year Head Coach Jim Martineau. "We've been playing good, but I think we can play a lot better."

"We're pretty young—a lot of the girls getting playing time are freshmen—they're learning; they're getting better."

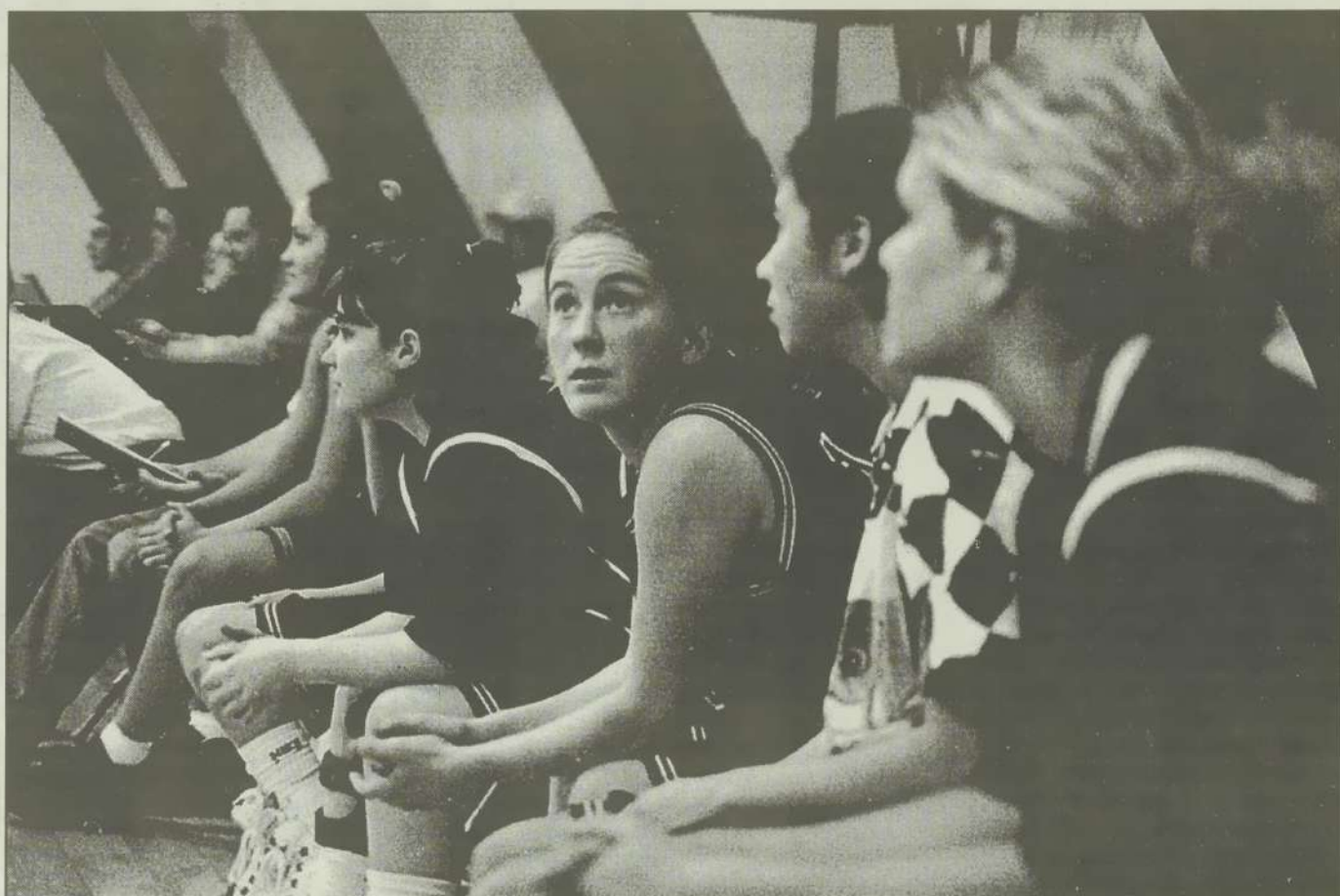
Clackamas opened up league play with two wins over Portland and Linn-Benton last week.

Against the Panthers of PCC, the Cougars had no trouble in a 79-40 victory.

"I couldn't be more pleased with our defense this game," noted Martineau. "Offensively, we took some shots that we probably shouldn't have. They gave us a lot of looks at the basket and we rushed some things. If we would have been a little more patient, there probably would have been a lot more points."

For the night, Amanda Lee led all scorers with 27 points and 11 rebounds while Mercedes Juarez shot 100% from the floor to nab 20 points.

"Amanda has made tremen-



TIMOTHY A. BELL / Clackamas Print

Sophomore guard Trina Rogers looks up at the scoreboard at Portland Community College during the Cougars' 79-40 victory.

dous improvements since the start of the season," noted Martineau. "She's averaging 12 or 13 points a night and shooting close to 60% from the floor."

In Albany on Saturday, Martineau's team had an impressive showing with a 69-54 win over the LBCC Roadrunners.

"We played great defense against Linn-Benton but again, we struggled offensively," said Martineau.

"We were only up by four at the half and it wasn't until about six or seven minutes into the second half that we were up by 13 or 14 points."

Juarez and Lee led Clackamas with 14 and 12 points respectively, while Michelle Thueson scored 13 with seven assists.

On paper, the Cougars look like a strong three-point shooting squad with Trina

Rogers, last year's conference leader in three-point percentage. With the season more than a month old, however, Rogers and her teammates have been off the mark.

"Michelle (Thueson) is our best shooter, right now," noted Martineau. "Our shooting from the outside isn't quite there yet but it's improving. We started a little but we're getting that touch back."

Around the rest of the league, the defending conference champion and fourth-ranked Chemeketa Storm (15-1) and top-ranked Umpqua Timberwomen (15-0) along with seventh-ranked Southwestern Oregon (9-8) look to be the stiffest competition the

Cougars may face all year.

In two weeks, Clackamas will face all three of those teams in a row. Wins in those games could give the Cougars the inside track to the region championship.

"I'd have to be disappointed if we don't get at least second in league this year," noted Martineau. "I think we have the mental capability this year to not slip up against the teams that we should beat. We haven't really played down to the level of some of the teams that aren't as good like we've done in the past."

"If we get through the first half (of the season)," added Martineau, "we have five of our last seven games at home. We've been pretty tough at home this year."

If we get through the first half (of the season) ... We've been pretty tough at home this year.

Jim Martineau
Head Coach

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2. Spokane	15-1
3. Wenatchee Val.	17-1
4. Chemeketa	15-1
5. Skagit Valley	12-1
6. Clark	12-4
7. SW Oregon	9-8
8. Clackamas	11-5

MEN

1. Highline	14-1
2. Wenatchee Val.	14-3
3. Tacoma	14-2
4. Peninsula	13-3
5. Clark	12-5
6. Lower Colum.	10-4
7. Lane	9-4
8. Clackamas	11-5

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