

Men's Basketball

It's show time in Cougar Country

MANDY GOOD

Sports Editor

Tonight the men's basketball team will play at Randall Gym against Chemeketa.

Tonight is quite possibly the most important and biggest night of the season, explained Head Coach Cliff Wegner.

"Wednesday is going to be a big ball game, we'd like to see all of our fans come out in all of their crazy glory and splendor, and be as loud as they can," said Wegner smiling. "I feel like it is going to be an advantage playing at home, we've had great crowds and they really get the kids going. Hopefully we will be able to feed off their energy."

A win will secure his squad in a second place position, which will give them a home playoff spot.

If the team loses, they will be tied for second again and they will have to play SWOCC in Coos Bay and win just to stay in second.

Coach Wegner encourages all Cougar fans to come to the gym tonight to support the team as it rallies to stay in second.

Wegner's team had a hot couple of games last week and if they keep the energy and skill at the same level this week, the team will be in good shape. The squad played at home against Mt. Hood last Wednesday and played Umpqua in Roseburg on Saturday and played very well although the team was flu-ridden and injured.

The Cougars beat the Saints 120-92 in a game that they thought was going to make for a tough night, with a couple ill and injured guys. Nate Block and Dallas Husak were both playing on some pretty badly sprained ankles; the team was a little banged up and it was enough to concern Wegner.

"We got up by about 20 in the first half, it was 57-39 and we were really out-rebounding them, we were shooting really well, we shot 59%, 6-9 threes, we were just pretty dominant in the first half," said Wegner. "I thought we played very well offensively, in the second half we got way up, we were up by thirty-something, then they kind of cut it down a little bit, it wound up being a point spread of twenty eight."

According to Wegner he was pleased with the outcome and the point total that the team tallied. He is confident that if the team's performance stays consistent the team will have a good chance tonight against Chemeketa.

"120 points against a quality team, Mt. Hood has a lot of good athletes, so I thought that it was a really ex-

cellent effort," explained Wegner. "It was the kind of game where I watched us and it was kind of scary how well we were playing. You watch and you say God, why can't we save this for a night like Wednesday when we have Chemeketa here, or a playoff game or something like that, hopefully we can play that well again this week and give ourselves a shot to beat Chemeketa."

Wegner pointed out that Chris Lohrey seemed to score every time that he touched the ball, and that down the stretch he was unstoppable. He finished with 14 points, 7-11 from the field, 9 rebounds, 3 assists and 2 steals. Although Kyle Bracy was banged up with a hurt knee, and didn't get to play that much, he still contributed to the game with 16 points and 7 assists. Wegner noted that Mike Padron came off of the bench and had 16 points, 8 rebounds and he was all over the place.

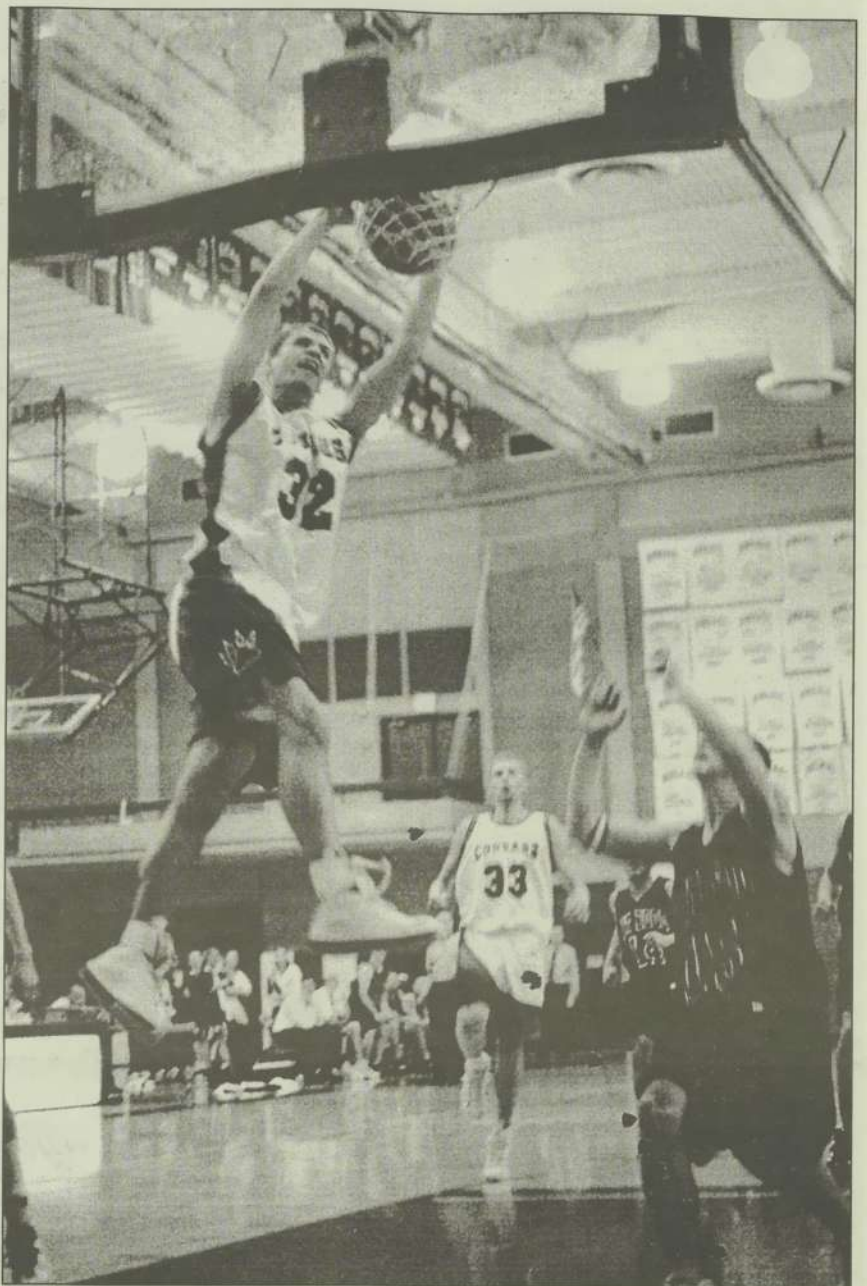
The Cougar squad played Umpqua on Saturday, and beat the determined UCC team with a score of 89-79. They fought for this win—at halftime the score was tied 41-41.

"That was a game that was an important game for us. Coaches have a saying that it is impossible to beat the same team three times in a season. It is really very, very difficult because the more that you beat somebody the more motivated they get," explained Wegner. "We beat Mt. Hood twice and we beat Umpqua twice already, so I was a little concerned about our kids' attitudes on both games. Thankfully we came out ready to play because Roseburg was very much in depth and they played far better than I have seen them play all season."

Kyle Bracy had a great game on both ends of the floor: 21 points, 7 assists, 4 steals. He really got the team going in the press. It seems like every time that he got the ball he either scored or got the ball to someone who scored. That means that he was involved in over 1/3 of the points."

According to Wegner Mike Padron came off the bench and really did a nice job with 11 points, 5-6 from the field, and Chris Lohrey again took over the offense in the second half. He finished with 5 points, 6 rebounds, 2 assists and 3 steals.

"I feel like we are a much better team right now than the first half of the league and we are much better than pre-season. Our freshmen are not freshmen anymore, they are pretty much sophomores. They have played 26 college games, you know they have played a season now," explained Wegner.



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print

Mike Padron, a sophomore post, slams the ball down with authority against Mt. Hood last week in the Cougars' 120-92 pounding of the visiting Saints. Padron and the Cougars face Chemeketa in the final regular season home game of the year—a game in which the Cougars could secure a second place finish in the Southern Region and a chance to challenge for the league title against Southwestern Oregon this Saturday in Coos Bay.

The Rundown

Men's Hoops

If the Cougars lose tonight... they must win on Saturday to secure second place, a loss on Saturday could drop the team to fourth.

If the Cougars win tonight... they'll capture second place and play SWOCC for #1 if it loses to Umpqua tonight.

Women's Hoops

If the Cougars lose tonight... they'll have to defeat SWOCC on Saturday to play the #2 team in the playoffs; a loss on Saturday would set up Clackamas against the region champion.

If the Cougars win tonight... and win on Saturday, then they'll play Chemeketa next Thursday in playoff action; a loss on Saturday and the Cougars would face Umpqua.

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