

Once upon a time ... Cougars have tough road ahead

MANDY GOOD

JOHN THORBURN

The Clackamas basketball players might want to look at swapping their court shoes for a few sets of glass slippers.

The teams are going to have to make a Cinderella-like waltz through this weekend's playoff game if they hope to have any chance at qualifying for the conference tournament in two weeks.

Women's Hoops

Heading into last week's games, the Cougars had an opportunity to finish as high as third place in region standings and help determine their opponents in the playoffs.

In both opportunities, Clackamas failed to capitalize and finished in fourth place with a game against the toughest team in the Northwest on Thursday.

If Clackamas loses when it travels to Roseburg to take on second-ranked Umpqua tomorrow night, its season is over. If it wins, it must defeat the winner of the Chemeketa vs. Southwestern Oregon game on Saturday to qualify for a berth in the tournament.

A team that looked to peak at the perfect time of the year, the Cougars fell apart in the final week of league play, starting with last week's home game finale against top-ranked Chemeketa.

Amanda Lee led a Clackamas offense that shot only 29% from the field with 17 points. Trina Rogers added 12 while Nikki Tilton scored 10.

Only down by three at half time, the Cougars stumbled in the second half to fall 66-56.

The Storm only shot 36% in what turned into being a typical Clackamas-Chemeketa-face off—a defensive battle.

On Saturday, the offense only managed a 34% shooting performance in a 69-63 victory for the Lakers.

The win secured the third-place finish for the squad from Coos Bay.

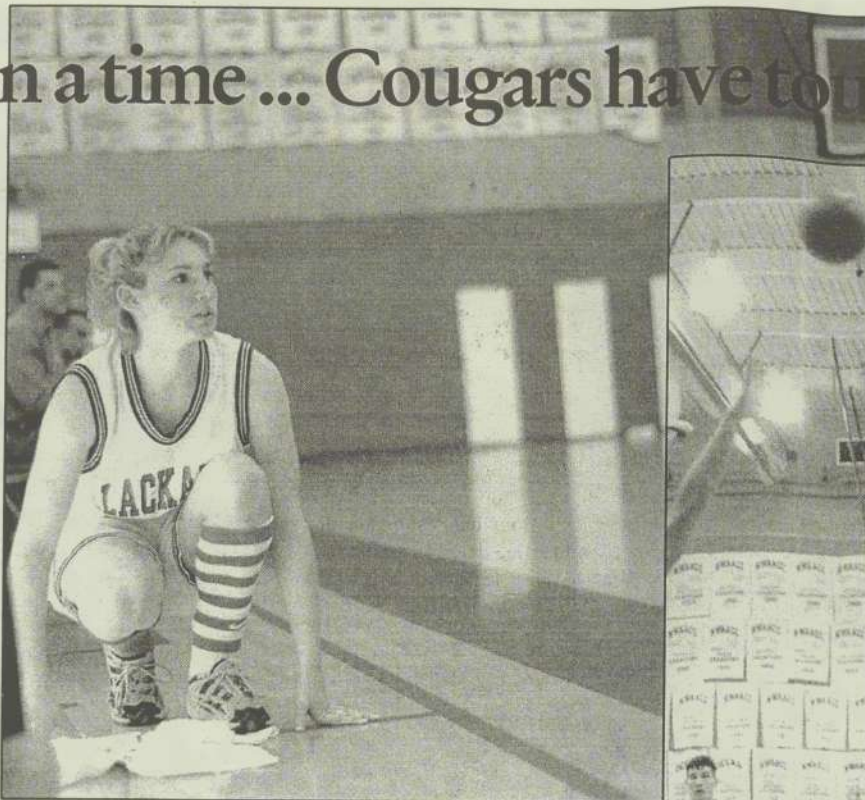
Mary Murphy [16 points] and Mercedes Juarez [11 points] were the only Cougars to reach double figures in scoring. Kathryn Kettles pulled down nine offensive rebounds for a total of 11 for the game. Tilton fouled out in the game which saw Clackamas get outscored by 10 at the free throw line.

"Mary had an excellent game for us," noted Martineau. "We didn't shoot the ball very well again. It wasn't as close as it looked by the final score. We were down by about nine or 10 the whole game."

On Monday night, Umpqua defeated Chemeketa in Salem in a tiebreaker game that determined playoff seeding. Clackamas, sitting in the fourth spot, must face the #1 team while #2 faces #3. Umpqua is already guaranteed a berth in the tournament as the region's top finisher.

Men's Hoops

The Cougars suffered a tough couple of losses this last week. The squad went into the weekend



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print

Nikki Tilton anticipates entrance into the game.

in second place, and at the end of Saturday night they dropped to being tied for third with Chemeketa.

On both occasions Wegner's squad took the game against Chemeketa on Wednesday and SWOCC on Saturday into overtime and lost two tight games.

The final score of the game against Chemeketa was 96-92. The outcome of the SWOCC game ending in a Cougar loss was 91-94.

"We came within a whisker of beating SWOCC last Saturday and we were missing our point guard for half of the game," explained Wegner.

Thursday night the Cougars will face SWOCC in a playoff game on SWOCC's turf. If the team wins on Thursday, they will move on to play a game on Saturday that if

won will give Wegner's squad first seed in NWACC. If the team loses on Thursday, that season will come to a close for the Cougars.

"This is not the playoff spot that would have been our first choice; we have the unenviable job of playing the best team in the league on their floor, they have not lost on their floor; in two-years," said Wegner. "We are going to give it our best shot again and see what happens. We feel like we can win, and if we didn't we wouldn't waste gas going down there."

So, when the Cougars pack up their gear and climb into their magical stagecoaches, err, team vans, let's all hope that there's some fairy dust left to knock down those evil stepsisters, err, Timberwomen and Lakers.



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AIR BRACY: Kyle Bracy does his best Jordan impression airwalking towards the basket against Chemeketa last week. the sophomore point guard will take his squad to Coos Bay tomorrow night in loser-out playoff action.

Check out: <http://cnug.clackesd.k12.or.us/menbxb/index.htm>

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