

THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

Ringling in a new year

David Lemen makes a bid for the Olympic Trials and leads a steady, talented team to victory



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print

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Editor-in-Chief

The Clackamas track and field squad is off and running this spring.

It's doing a little more than that. With a team that boasts equal success on both men's and women's squads, the Cougars are etching their names in the history books and challenging regional and national marks in what could be one of the school's most successful spring seasons.

On the men's side of events, no other athlete could be more prolific this season than sophomore David Lemen. The lean, 6'2", bleached blond looks like he was born on a California beach but actually hails from a high school north of Seattle.

A Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges [NWAACC] champion in the decathlon in 1998, Lemen is well on his way to claiming a second title as he recorded personal bests in the javelin, high jump, long jump and hurdles events at meets over spring break.

"The national junior college record for the decathlon is 7499," noted Head Coach Jack Kegg. "Lemen scored 7212. He won that decathlon against a lot of four-year schools by more than 1000

points. That's a pretty significant mark. He's made a big push and we're hoping to get that national record at the NWAACC Championships in Spokane. 7600 is the minimum to go to the Olympic Trials. So, if he gets the national record, there's kind of this pecking order, we'll see if he has a shot at qualifying [for the Olympic Trials]. We think he has chance at both of them. Before this past weekend, he was leading the NWAACC in five events.

"I think the NWAACC record for points scored by an individual is 68—that was Dan O'Brien when he was at Spokane. We're looking at Lemen probably try and go for 70. He's going to compete in a lot of events."

"Qualifying for the Olympic Trials would be a great experience for my future at a four-year university next year," said Lemen.

While Lemen is pushing towards his goals, the rest of the squad is bumping athletes from the famed Track & Field All-time list at the college to make room for their own.

"We had some pretty incredible things happen over the break," said Kegg. "As a team, we had some outstanding marks."

Paul Kezes, the defending Southern Region champion in the 1500m race, moved up to #3 on the

David Lemen and his Olympic ring tattoo on his left shoulder have raised the level of competition in the Northwest. The sophomore athlete from Washington could qualify for the Olympic Trials this spring.

list in the grueling 5K event.

At Stanford, Trina Rogers, the defending NWAACC champion and junior college record holder in the javelin, threw 148' for 8th place in the national invitational meet.

"That was 18' farther than she threw at Stanford last year at this time," noted Kegg. "She's started out with a strong spring after joining a few weeks late from basketball."

The women's 4x400 relay team moved up to #3 on the all-time list.

Both the men's and women's short relay teams are conference leaders.

"We were very competitive with the California junior colleges, which is a good indicator because they tend to run a lot faster," said Kegg. "Our men's mile relay team ran and beat most of the California junior colleges. They were laughing at us before the meet started in the training room saying 'You guys are running the mile relay with four white guys? What is that about?' Then we just smoked them."

At the Southern Region Preview last Saturday in Vancouver, WA, the Cougars were the "kings of second," according to Coach Kegg.

In the men's events, the top

finisher for Clackamas in the individual short races was second in the 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m and 1500m races. Clackamas athletes won the 5K race, Intermediate Hurdles, Long and Short Relays, High Jump and Pole Vault events.

Shawn Trimble recorded a personal best in the pole vault, winning the event over the weekend with a mark of 15'6".

For the women's team, three freshmen stood out last weekend.

Rachel Austin became the conference leader in the 200m race with her time of 26.1 seconds over the weekend.

Krystal Schneider won the discus and shot put and placed fifth in the hammer throw. Her marks moved her to the #4 spot in the discus and the hammer throw.

Mary Murphy moved to #9 on the all-time list with a 5'2" leap on the Clark College campus to become the team's leading high jumper.

While the meet was not officially scored, if it were, both Clackamas men's and women's teams would have prevailed with Chemeketa and Clark finishing second in the men's and women's events, respectively.

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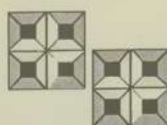
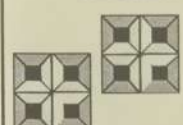
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