

Schedule

BASEBALL: Saturday at Lane, 1 p.m.

SOFTBALL: Thursday vs. MHCC,
@ Delta Park p.m.

TRACK: Saturday, Mt. Hood Dual



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Sophomore first baseman Kirsten Richards charges towards home plate as a Southwestern Oregon batter looks to bunt the ball. Richards and the Cougars went 8-1 last week and are in second place in the Southwestern region standings.

Same old song and dance

JOHN THORBURN
Editor-in-Chief

The #3-ranked Cougar softball team had the day off on Monday.

Most of the team took the time to watch the best softball team in the nation play as they watched the #1 Washington Huskies defeated the Portland State Vikings, 6-0 and 8-3.

Yesterday, it was back to work for the steady Cougars.

Clackamas, which sits behind top-ranked Lower Columbia in the Southwestern Division standings with a 12-2 league record and a 15-3 overall mark, went 7-1 last week.

It remains unbeaten at home this spring.

"Any time you can go 7-1 in one week," noted Head Coach Paul Fiskum. "you have to be pretty happy."

In the past eight games, Fiskum's Cougars outscored opponents 73-27.

The victories, however, may have come at a high price. In the second inning of the second half of a double header against Centralia last Friday, the Cougars #2 pitcher Darby Needham strained a hip flexor. When the injury was thought to be healed, she was slated to pitch against Green River on Sunday. She didn't make it past the pre-game warmups—again straining the muscle.

"We're not sure how long Darby is going to be out," said

Fiskum. "She's an excellent pitcher and it's unfortunate."

When Needham initially went down on Friday, Fiskum looked to Melanie Warthen to fill the hole in game two. Warthen had just pitched a two-hitter in the first game of the afternoon. She pitched five innings to earn the save.

On Saturday, Melissa Borde pitched in Needham's spot and while she didn't get much support in the field, Fiskum believes she pitched an excellent game.

"We lost the game 6-3," noted Fiskum, "but Melissa pitched 6+ innings and only gave up two earned runs. The other four runs were a result of fielding errors. She did a great job."

On Sunday, with the Cougars leading Green River 8-0 after the first inning, Fiskum relieved Warthen to allow Borde more experience on the mound. She pitched four shutout innings.

"Yesterday, I told the girls that we found our third pitcher," said Fiskum. "This isn't just some outfielder that's coming in to fill in for Darby. She's a legitimate threat for us and we need to play with confidence when she's throwing."

While the question of pitching was answered over the weekend, the hitting remained steady as three home runs were let loose over the past week.

Sue Johnson led the hit parade with two deep shots while Vanessa Applegate joined the party with a left field blast on

Friday afternoon.

According to Fiskum, eight players on the Cougar roster are hitting above .300.

The week started off with 12-7 and 6-5 wins over Southwestern Oregon Community College last Wednesday.

With 12-0 and 8-2 wins over Centralia, the Cougars improved their home record to a perfect 8-0.

On the road on Saturday, Clackamas split with South Puget Sound 8-6 and 3-6. The victory came after a seventh-inning comeback by the host team as it tied the game at 6-6 in its final at bat. Clackamas scored two runs in the top of the eighth to win.

On Sunday, the Cougars unloaded on the Green River Gators 9-0 and 15-1 to close out the week.

After Monday's break, the Cougars prepared to take on 19 different teams in the annual NWAACC Crossover Tournament.

The mid-season tournament, held at Delta Park in Portland, will showcase many of last year's championship tournament teams as well as other Northwest member schools.

The Cougars are slated to face the winner of the Green River vs. Bellevue matchup.

Clackamas will face that winner at 1 p.m. on Saturday.

The championship game is scheduled for 3 p.m. on Sunday.



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print

[Above] Sophomore Melanie Warthen fires the ball to freshman Julia Driggers, catcher, for a strike against SWOCC.



[Left] Sophomore Jessica Farnsworth trots back to third base after threatening to steal home.

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