

Lemen: Next goal is to qualify for Olympic Trials

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coach," noted Kegg. "I haven't been able to find another one like him. He's going to be a tough act to follow."

"I didn't really put up huge marks like a lot of the kids out of Texas and California," said Lemen. "So, I was kind of heading nowhere fast. I was recruited for football and volleyball but what colleges do is offer more money than they actually have. When it came time to sign, there was no money available so there was really nowhere to go."

That was when Jackson High Head Coach Eric Hrushka, a former coach and athlete at Clackamas, introduced Lemen to Kegg. The rest, as they say, is history.

Months before his first season as a Cougar in 1997, Lemen broke a vertebrae in his back after crashing hard to the worn pads during an indoor pole vaulting practice in Randall Gymnasium.

"It was kind of hectic for a while," said Lemen. "I didn't realize it was as serious as it was. I thought it was just a minor injury. Then when I found out that I had actually broken a vertebrae, I thought I was done."

Lemen wasn't done by any means. Later that spring, he won the NWAACC title in the pole vault as well as the decathlon.

In his second year at Clackamas, he redshirted after having surgery done to repair scar tissue from the ankle he broke in high school.

"I ended up taking last season off because of that surgery," added Lemen. "It wound up being a good choice for me because it opened up a lot more opportunities for me to develop and get better with another year of training. It opened up a lot of scholarship offers."

Coach Kegg feels that the only thing that will stop Lemen is another injury.

"[If you ask me] what are his limits?" said Kegg. "I haven't seen any yet. I don't think that David Lemen has any limits."

Winning his third title and second decathlon has opened countless doors for the future.

Lemen not only toppled Pappas' national junior college record and O'Brien's NWAACC Championship.

Tim Bright, a three-time Olympian in the 60s, was the Southern Region record holder. Lemen now holds that record as well.

As for scholarships, he has already signed his letter-of-intent to compete for the University of Georgia next year.

"[Georgia] has offered me an 80% scholarship," noted Lemen.

"After they see that I've broken those records, I'm hoping that they'll bump that up to a full scholarship so I don't have to work this summer to pay for school."

Breaking records, receiving scholarships and national recognition, Lemen has not strayed from his humble demeanor.

"If it wasn't for the other athletes and coaches on the team," said Lemen, "I wouldn't have been able to reach these goals. If it weren't for people around me pushing me, doing the hard workouts with me, making me become that much better, I wouldn't have had as much success. Everyone who has been a part, ever since high school, my parents, people at the church, has been a big part of what has gone on as far as my success. Without any of them, I don't think it would have all been possible."

In the Olympics, the gold medalist in the decathlon is said to be the greatest athlete in the world.

Keeping with that thinking, Lemen could be considered to be the greatest junior college athlete in history.

"I've heard people call me that," said Lemen. "For me, it's kind of like a stepping stone. It's one rung on the ladder. For me, the ultimate goal since I started doing the decathlon was to be the first decathlete to score over 9000 points. The world record is around 8900. To be the first person to set 9000 and to do that in Athens, Greece in four years, where the original Olympics took place, would be the ultimate goal and the ultimate closure to the greatest track career imaginable."

Lemen doesn't have any plans to rest in the near future. Competing against relatively weak competition at the NWAACC Championships, he plans to attend a meet in the early summer against some of the top college athletes to try and qualify for the Olympic Trials. Scoring 7532 against a weak crowd, Lemen hopes to score 7700-7800 points when pushed by competitors.

"We're going to try and find a meet where there's more competition to where I can score 7700, possibly 7800," added Lemen. "If I can do that, I'll be right up there in the top ten to go to Trials. If I make the Trials, I'll go compete with the mindset of watching the top athletes in the nation compete and see how they strategize and what they do during the competition that will make them peak and perform to the best of their ability. I'd be there right next to Pappas, O'Brien—all those boys."



JOHN THORBURN / Clackamas Print

Softball squad takes one from LCC

Vanessa Applegate, one of the smallest players on the team, is wielding a big bat with a .362 average and .466 slugging percentage.

JOHN THORBURN
Editor-in-Chief

The Clackamas softball team has earned itself a two-week break before traveling to Spokane to compete in this year's conference championship tournament.

It did so winning five of six games, including a win over top-ranked Lower Columbia, last week.

Last Tuesday, the Cougars swept Grays Harbor at home in 6-2 and 8-0 victories.

In the first game, Sophomore Melanie Warthen picked up her 16th win of the season, tying her for the lead in career wins at Clackamas with 33.

Sophomore Jessica Farnsworth, who jumped into the team lead in hitting last week, laid down two bunts that led to two hits in a 2-for-4 performance. She is hitting .386 on the season.

In the second game, Melissa Borde pitched a three-hitter and Julia Driggers hit a bases loaded double off the fence to lead Clackamas.

On Friday, Misty Velke and the Red Devils traveled from Lower Columbia as the #1 team in the Northwest and the #4 Cougars went head to head.

In the first game, Velke pitched a no-hitter as the Devils won 5-0 in eight innings.

"She's an amazing pitcher," said Clackamas Head Coach Paul Fiskum. "I didn't realize that she had thrown a no-hitter until I looked at the scoresheets after the game. It didn't feel like she dominated as much as she has in the past. We were taking a lot of good cuts at the plate."

Velke was one walk off of a perfect game.

Warthen, on the mound for the Cougars, pitched seven shutout in-

nings before faltering in the extra frame.

At the start of the game, Clackamas had a scare as a Red Devil batter unleashed a shot that hit Warthen on the inside of her left knee. The veteran right-hander crumpled to the dirt in pain.

"As soon as we saw it happen," noted Fiskum, "we thought she was done for the day. We started having Borde warm up but Mel walked [the

pain] off. It was a bad bruise but she toughed it out and pitched an incredible game."

In the second game, Borde took the reins as the converted pitcher, who was recruited as an outfielder, pitched her

squad to a 5-4 victory. With the score tied 4-4 heading into the bottom of the seventh inning, Jessica Rowley stepped to the plate. She led off the inning with a shot back at Velke that the defense had no chance to rebound from and Rowley was aboard with no out.

Driggers then sacrificed Rowley to second. Farnsworth then earned a walk to put two on for the Cougars.

Next, Kirsten Richards hit a slow roller to the shortstop that then flipped to third to try and tag out an advancing Rowley from second.

"Jessica made a really aggressive move," said Fiskum. "She just took off and slid under the tag."

With runners at each corner with only one out, the Devils called a timeout, then decided to intentionally walk Jessica Farnsworth.

Melissa Cedillo then stepped to the plate.

On the first pitch, Cedillo laid down a bunt that rolled to the pitcher.

"Melissa did exactly what we needed her to do," said Fiskum.

When the ball went off of Cedillo's

bat, Rowley took off for home.

Velke picked up the ball and fired it home.

Rowley and LCC's catcher collided and the game was over.

The Red Devil dropped the ball allowing Rowley to score the winning run.

"It was a huge collision," added Fiskum. "I'm glad that it wasn't a play that was left up to the umpire to call. She dropped the ball, we won the game."

The end of the game marked the end of the Cougars' home schedule.

"It's a pretty nice way to close out a career playing at Clackamas," noted Fiskum, referring to Rowley's scramble to home.

On Saturday, Clackamas drove three hours to Des Moines, Wash. to take on Highline.

The Thunderbirds, who knocked Clackamas out of last year's NWAACC tournament, were already out of playoff contention.

"Any time you have to play a team that doesn't have anything to lose," said Fiskum, "it's always going to be a battle."

In the first game, Warthen broke the career win record with her 34th victory as a Cougar and 17th this spring as she paced her squad to a 5-3 win.

Farnsworth continued her hot performance at the plate as she went 3-for-4 and scored twice with one RBI.

Borde retired 21 of 27 batters as Clackamas won the nightcap 8-2. Her ERA is now at 1.94.

Sue Johnson led a balanced offensive attack going 4-for-4 with an RBI.

The Cougars, who captured the second spot in the Southwestern Region, are guaranteed a berth into the May 20-21 championship tournament in Spokane.

While Fiskum's squad is idle over the next week and a half, the third through sixth place squads will play-off for the final two berths into the tournament.

The last time the Cougars played a tournament in Spokane, they won an NWAACC title.

It's a pretty nice way to close out a career playing at Clackamas.

Paul Fiskum
Head Coach