

Cougar men #1 despite loss

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DARREL HOBSON / Clackamas Print
Michael Kuebler (22), Chris Lohrey (right), and Nate Block (in front of Kuebler) battle down low for a rebound at Chemeketa.

It was a game the Cougars could have won. The running, pressing, shooting Clackamas Men's team met the strong, inside scoring Chemeketa Storm on their home court in Salem, last Wednesday.

As usual, Clackamas came out scoring gaining an 11-5 point advantage in the first five minutes. They looked unstoppable early in the first period. All the Cougar starters were able to contribute to the scoreboard creating a balanced attack, for what seemed, Chemeketa would have no answer for.

After the Cougars opened their lead to nine, they went ice cold and the Storm took full advantage. Two Clackamas turnovers let the home team back in the game, coming within two points with 7:44 left in the period. The Cougars tried to maintain the lead but couldn't as Chemeketa got to the line and made four straight free throws to tie the game with 4:30 left in the half. Then CCC went on a three minute scoring drought until Finis Bussey closed

the gap. On the following play, Rashaad Powell of Chemeketa scored and was fouled. He connected on the free throw and put his team up six with less than a minute to go. Tom Lenox quieted the crowd with a three-pointer, allowing the Cougars a chance to tie the game going into half time. However, Mike Fisher's shot at the buzzer missed and Clackamas went down 42-39 at the half.

Michael Kuebler came out of the locker room and swished a three-pointer to tie the game. Chemeketa continued to find ways to score inside baskets and get to the line on Clackamas' normally impenetrable defense. A seven-point advantage was all the cougars could muster before the Storm started hitting three pointers and getting fouled almost every time they drove to the basket. With only five minutes remaining, Chemeketa had the seven-point edge. In the last 42 seconds, Chris Lohrey grabbed one of his 17 rebounds and Kuebler got the ball and scored in transition. The Cougars were only down by three, but Clackamas couldn't stop the Storm

from scoring on the next play. The final score, Clackamas 80 and Chemeketa 86.

"On Wednesday, we got beat by a good team that was well prepared and played hard," said Coach Cliff Wagner. "On Saturday, we just out classed a young team."

Saturday night had more fireworks than the fourth of July, when the Cougars traveled to Albany to face Linn Benton Community College. A player from the home team was ejected for throwing a punch at one of Clackamas' players. Then the home team coach received a technical foul for arguing with the referee for making such a call. There were four technical fouls in all. The men from Clackamas kept their composure and poise to embarrass the home team and get another win. The final score Clackamas 122 and Linn Benton 95.

Come see the cougars at home when they tip-off against Portland Community College tonight at 8 p.m. You can also see the Cougars at home vs. Lane CC Saturday, Feb. 3.

PGE vs. Casey Martin, walk or ride?

For the occasional golfer, the golf cart is a sacred and necessary piece of equipment when hitting the links on any given weekend. The golf cart is more than a vehicle that gets you from green to tee. It provides storage for your golf bag for you and your foursome. There are drink holders where you can place your beer before you tee up. The steering wheel, when used properly, makes for a great flat surface so you can record your score legibly. Using the dashboard to place your "longest ball" bet eliminates any confusion as to which one of your buddies has not chipped in.

However, in the world of professional golf, the PGA does not allow their players to use golf carts. A reality that Oregon native Casey Martin will

have to realize. Martin is an established golfer who scores well enough to play in the pros. Unfortunately, he has a rare condition in his leg that makes walking painful, and he will eventually lose the use of his leg. The PGA argues that walking the course challenges the golfer's endurance and stamina and using the cart gives Martin an unfair advantage.

This case, now in the US Supreme Court, brings up many controversial issues surrounding the game of golf. Should Martin be able to use a cart, despite the rules? How much does fatigue affect a golfer? How much of an advantage is someone gaining by using a cart?

It would take too much time to debate all these issues so let's get one

thing straight; the game of golf is 50 percent mental and 50 percent technique, or in other words, the way you swing the club. Some people would go as far as to say golf is 65 or 70 percent mental. Notice I didn't say anything about endurance, fatigue or anything close to it.

Any of you that have ever tried to hit a golf ball well on a consistent basis know it is not as easy as it looks. I have been golfing for at least six years, and every summer when I hit the driving range I'm lucky if I can hit a straight 200 yard shot more than two times in a row. Heck, I'm lucky if I can make the same 12-foot putt twice. Unless you spend eight hours a day on the course and another two hours at the driving range you'll never learn the proper technique that Martin and other pros have spent so much time perfecting.

Playing smart and playing your best under pressure is the mental aspect of

golf. It may seem insignificant, but if your brain and body cannot reproduce the proper swing during a tournament, well that's what separates the weekend warriors from the pros. One bad shot can shake a golfer's confidence not only for the rest of the tournament, but for the rest of their career. Only the mentally strong can remain on the PGA tour and Casey Martin is one of them.

The PGA argues that being tired can cost you one or two strokes on your final score. Now, the only situation where I think fatigue can become a factor is if it's 90 degrees outside and 100 percent humidity. But the heat is part of playing an outdoor sport. The water and sand traps could cost you a stroke or two. Greens and fairways can be wet or dry causing your ball to travel differently than you expected. That may affect your final score.

Should the PGA allow Martin to ride in a cart while all the other players walk, despite what the rules say? My answer is no. If using the golf cart gives Martin even a one-stroke advantage, that would make the playing field uneven, making it an unfair competition. But what is Martin going to do? Go join the Special Olympics? Sell golf balls at the local country club? This guy spent most of his life preparing and training to play pro golf. He made the PGA Tour and has been competitive on the tour.

There is no easy answer to this question and The Supreme Court is expected to rule in favor of the PGA, and Martin and his golf cart will no longer be on the tour. An interesting thing to think about came up on the Jim Rome sports radio talk show concerning this issue. A caller brought up the question, what if it were Tiger Woods not Casey Martin. For example, if Woods hurt his leg in a car accident and was not able to walk without a cane for the rest his life, would the PGA allow him to use a golf cart? Rome's response was

"Hell, yes they would let him ride. They would probably show up at his door with a fleet of golf carts."



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