

Cougar men ranked number one in NWAACC

NICK BARRON
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Two division opponents rolled into Clackamas to try to bring the Cougars down from their perch atop the NWAACC this past week.

Mount Hood Community College arrived at Randall Gym hoping for an upset last Wednesday, the Saints owning a 6-7 record. The match was the first conference game for both Clackamas and Mount Hood this year, marking the end of the early-season tournaments and non-conference games, in which the Cougars lost just two games.

In the first half Clackamas struggled to match Mount Hood's intensity, the Saints forcing Clackamas into 10 turnovers. The Cougars lost the battle of the boards in the first half too, with Mount Hood coming down with

19 rebounds to Clackamas' 17. At the half the Saints led 38-33.

From the beginning of the last half of the match, though, it was evident that the Cougars were ready to play their game. Clackamas roared back to take the lead, 46-40, with 15:13 left in the game, as Mount Hood fell into foul trouble early. The Cougars were able to go to the charity line in the second half 15 times, missing just one of their free throws.

With just under 10 minutes to play, Clackamas' defense began to wear down once again, allowing Mount Hood to take the lead by one point at 4:32 left in the game. As the final minutes of the game ticked away, both teams exchanged the lead as they had nearly the entire first half. It was evident that whichever team had the ball last would probably be the victors in this classic game of college basketball.

As the minute mark passed and the seconds began to tick away, Mount Hood sank a shot to tie the game at 80. Clackamas inbounded the ball and drove it up the court, hoping for one last shot to win the game. Michael Kuebler offered one up and missed. But at the buzzer, Matt Tabisz grabbed the rebound and put the ball into the basket. Clackamas had won arguably its most emotional victory of the season, preserving their number-one ranking and best record in the NWAACC.

The difference in the game for the Cougars was the free throw shooting, aided by Mount Hood's foul problems in the second half. Clackamas drained 20 of 22 for the match, putting them in a position to overcome their sloppy play in the first half and win the game.



MAGGIE JIRASEK/Clackamas

The Cougars' Nick Kirkpatrick hustles for a loose ball in a match against Mt. Hood on Jan. 9. Teammates Marvin Noble and Evan Kieling look on. Clackamas defeated the Saints by a score of 82-80.



SALENA DE LA CRUZ/Clackamas Print

Lawson Struve of Clackamas prepares to play full-court defense against Mt. Hood. Struve had three steals in the game.



New Tidings for the New Year

By Nick Barron

As another year in sports has become part of the history books, and we fly straight into 2002 and all that the sports gods have in store for us, I thought it would be a worthy cause to help out some figures in sports by suggesting New Year's resolutions for some of them.

For example, due to the beer-bottle throwing incidents in Cleveland and New Orleans, it has come to my attention that the aim of those well-behaved NFL fans was subpar, to say the least. So to better enhance the ability of football fans to peg the nearest official, I thought it would be a good idea for Mike Pereira, the NFL's director of officiating, to place bull's-eyes on all NFL referees.

Now that Kansas City Chiefs' head coach, Dick Vermeil, has put another season in the NFL under his belt, he has also added more teary moments to our memories. Vermeil cried when his team, the St. Louis Rams, won Super Bowl XXXIV, then cried a month later when he resigned as the Rams' head coach. Now, in 2002,

Vermeil wept after his team defeated the Denver Broncos in overtime on Dec. 6. For a man who breaks down more than a Geo Prizm, I think it would be a good idea if he would finally spend the money and undergo a dacryocystorhinostomy, a procedure that would create new tear ducts for Vermeil and thereby provide more escape routes for his tears.

2001 should have been a great year for Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig, if it weren't for this silly contraction idea. But I trust Mr. Selig. I believe he knows the only real way to level the playing field in baseball. So my resolution for the commissioner is that he just follow his heart and contract the New York Yankees. This way, every Major League team has a chance to sign big-name free agents and possibly win the World Series.

As for another top official in professional sports, the Trail Blazers' general manager, Bob Whitsitt should finally make his career move. Whitsitt should come to the

conclusion that the money and notoriety of being a GM in the NBA is not worth keeping him from taking up his dream job, that of administering a halfway house.

In another career-changing decision, Mike Tyson must call a press conference in which he will finally announce that he is a woman trapped in a man's body. As Tyson stands to leave his press conference, he should let us all know what has really been bugging him throughout the years by whimpering in his high-pitched voice, "I never wanted to be a boxer. I alwayz' wuz' drawn to figure skating."

And in closing, I think Thomas Junta should finally consider those yoga classes, in which he will find inner peace and techniques on how to "center" himself. Junta is the 44-year-old father of a 12-year-old hockey player in Massachusetts, convicted of involuntary manslaughter after he beat to death the coach with whom he had an argument at one of his son's practices.

hitting just 19 of 52 from the field.

But in the end, the Cougars escaped from their scrape with Lane with a one-point victory, 62-61, preserving their NWAACC status and improving their divisional record to 2-0. The bench for Clackamas in this game hardly made an impact, scoring just five points, while the Titans' bench poured in 20. Again, the free throw shooting for Clackamas gave the Cougars the win, as they shot 62.5% from the line for 20 points. Lane was only given 21 opportunities for free throws, hitting just 13.

Struve paced the Cougar attack with 23 points, followed by Noble at 13. Nick Kirkpatrick came off the bench to grab six defensive rebounds as he and Jon Rylaarsdam tied for the team lead in rebounds at six.

Both victories over Mount Hood and Lane gave Clackamas the best season record in the NWAACC, and their number-one ranking in the NWAACC/Horizon Air Coach Poll. Tacoma was ranked second in the poll, a team that the Cougars defeated in the championship game of the Clackamas Holiday Tournament on December 30. Another top ranked team, Walla Walla, fell prey to the Cougars on Dec. 15 at the Lane Tournament.

Clackamas travels to Roseburg to battle Umpqua this evening. The Timbermen are 4-11 on the year, 0-2 in league play. Saturday will find the Cougars making their way to Coos Bay to visit Southwestern Oregon, a team that possesses a 12-season record and a 2-0 division



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