

# Cougar men devour Umpqua

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After their defeat to Lane on Feb. 2, their first loss in over a month, Clackamas' men's basketball team had something to prove. The Cougars did just that Saturday, Feb. 9, overpowering Umpqua, 87-52.

Clackamas put on what was perhaps their best defensive showing in the first half, forcing the Timbermen to turn the ball over eight times. The Cougars, who rank only 13th in the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges in defense, flew to the basketball with more energy than is typically shown by Clackamas on the defensive end of the court.

Perhaps the reason behind the Cougars' increased force on defense was the lack of playing time given to guard Marvin Noble, who did not start for the second game in a row for undisclosed reasons. Noble is the engine that drives the Clackamas offense, but with the NWAACC leader in assists riding the pine, the Cougars were forced to take their defense to the next level.

Clackamas' Michael Kuebler, who failed to score in the first half, was unable to set himself up for his trademark jumper as the absence of Noble caused the shooting guard to create his own shot. Despite the lack of offensive power, the Cougars were able to outmatch Umpqua in every aspect of the game, and in the end Clackamas had made their statement to the rest of the NWAACC.

"We came back to play today. We got a loss (to Lane), but we showed them that you can't beat us," Cougar freshman Russ Schneider said after Saturday's game.

Mat Tondreau put on one of his best performances of the season, scoring 18 points and grabbing seven rebounds. Another astounding Cougar performance was put on by Evan Kieling, who finished the night with 12 points, 15 rebounds and eight blocked shots. Kuebler ended up with 13 points



SALENA DE LA CRUZ/Clackamas Print

Clackamas' Matt Tabisz drives to the basket during the Cougars' 87-52 blasting of Umpqua CC in Randall Hall last Saturday. Tabisz scored 12 points during the win as Clackamas kept pace with Southwestern Oregon CC atop the NWAACC's Southern Division standings, each school with an 8-1 division record.

and seven rebounds, as Matt Tabisz scored 12 in the Clackamas victory.

Cougar coach Clif Wegner, downplayed his team's loss to Lane, saying: "I wouldn't make too much of the loss at Lane. It was a tough situation, emotionally, for everybody. That was just a game that we had to get through, but we got through it. We didn't play well and we were distracted, and I didn't do a very good job either,

but I had to get through it too."

Wegner was speaking in reference to various issues that have influenced his team, such as the death of his father and a virus that has affected the health of the Cougars. Regardless of the adversity Clackamas has faced as of late, Coach Wegner believes his team is back on the right track.

In looking to the road ahead, Wegner is preparing his team for what could result in Clackamas hold-

ing sole possession of first place in the Southern Division. The Cougars travel to Salem to fight with Chemeketa (15-8, 4-5) and then play hosts to Southwestern Oregon (18-5, 8-1) on Feb. 16. Clackamas is currently tied with Southwestern for the division lead, but if the Cougars beat both Chemeketa and Southwestern, they would retain the league lead.

"This is a huge week for us, and we're going to be very focused," Wegner said in reference to the team's preparation.

Kuebler reiterates his coach's sentiment, stating: "You gotta take it a game at a time. Going in on Wednesday, it's probably going to be our biggest game of the year, and it's gonna be a championship game next Saturday."

With a one-sided win under their belts, the Cougars seem poised to pounce their opponents this week as a week that Clackamas hopes will end in them sitting atop the division standings all by themselves.



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The Cougars' Michael Kuebler guards the inbound pass during Clackamas' win over Umpqua CC at home on Saturday, Feb. 9.



## Hiking away the winter blues

By Nick Barron

It seems that at this time every year, nature desires to tease us with one or two weekends of gorgeous blue skies, blinding sunshine and temperate temperatures.

During these fleeting days, people emerge from their places of hibernation and enjoy numerous activities. The tennis courts are rediscovered, with handfuls of individuals scurrying about in vain attempts at finally nailing that backhand. Rollerbladers sail down sidewalks, basking in the glow of the once-forgotten sunlight, their legs fully healed from last summer's cuts and bruises.

As for myself, I took this past weekend's respite from clouds and rain in stride. Those golf clubs that were collecting dust in the garage, I grabbed them on Saturday with the zeal of Bagger Vance and headed to the Clackamas campus. I found the ground still soggy from months of endless precipitation and the grass higher than most of the roughs at any country club. But with the mild weather and no money in my wallet for a driving range, I shrugged off the conditions of my make-do course and went to work on my swing.

The last time my hands clasped a golf club was last September, so

I decided to take it easy at the start and grabbed the pitching wedge. From the wedge to the seven iron, I discovered one thing: The slice that began to haunt me at the end of last summer was still there, forcing me to realize that the weather still wasn't suitable for golf.

So on Sunday, I chose to take a nice hike in the foothills of the Cascades. Armed with candy bars (for energy, of course), Doritos (more energy boosters) and potato salad (I just like potato salad), I set off with friends in search of the perfect way to spend a Sunday afternoon. The hike began well enough with my body full of en-

ergy and the warm breeze keeping me cool. I was enjoying Mother Nature's bounty, delighting in the flowing creeks and inhaling the fresh air. I felt like Kit Carson.

On and on we trekked, our lungs losing their ability to create oxygen and our legs failing to support our torsos. Finally, a break was in order, which meant time for an energy boost via a Kit-Kat. My feet at this point could have drawn sympathy from a pincushion and my spirit more resembled Al Gore's post-election than it did a 19th century explorer's.

After the candy bar had been devoured, our crew set off with

aching feet for the ride back to civilization. The sun continued to beam down upon us as we walked and discussed the possibilities of making another hike next weekend, but despite our hopes for another hike, we all knew they were just hopes. The calendar still reads February, and we still live in Clackamas.

But for now, my feet will continue to rest and wait to be used. That pesky slice in my golf swing will remain in the dark. Sometime hopefully sooner than later, the sun will hide behind gray clouds no more and I will be forced to work off the winter fat.