

## Former Pilot kicks off soccer program

**NICK BARRON**  
Staff Writer

The first piece of the puzzle is in place for the Clackamas women's soccer program: Tracy Nelson has been named the inaugural coach for the team.

Out of the seven applicants that interviewed for the position, Nelson was "the best fit for what we are trying to do for this program," Athletic Director Jim Jackson said. "She was the best person qualified."

Nelson brings 11 years of coaching experience to Clackamas. Her experience as a coach reaches back to her days as a University of Portland midfielder in the early 1990s. The Everett, Wash., native has coached high school and club teams, and Olympic Development Program teams, which are part of the United States Youth Soccer Association's attempt at developing young soccer players.

At Clackamas, Nelson hopes to establish the program as one of the best junior college squads in the Northwest. While dreaming big, Nelson knows that it is not easy to start a team from scratch.

"It would be nice to make it (to the playoffs) this year, but more realistically, probably next year when the program is more established and more people know about it," she said.

The new coach has no set timeline for success, but feels strongly that within five years the Cougars should win the playoffs and be known as one of the top teams in the Northwest Ath-

letic Association of Community Colleges.

She does believe in challenging her athletes to play better and in making a better team by being very interactive in practices. But once the game is underway, Nelson says she tends to step back and let the players put what they learned in practice to work.

"I'm not a screamer, not a yellor," Nelson said.

During her four years at the University of Portland, the Pilots won the West Coast Conference twice and placed in the Final Four her senior year.

For the first two years, the

Clackamas High Schools, both of which have fielded competitive teams in the past.

Nelson has contacted club teams, area high schools and indoor soccer centers to spread the word about the new program. Since Nelson is still a club coach, she attends tournaments featuring club teams and can recruit there as well.

The first tryouts are on April 19 from 2-4 p.m. Nelson will be looking for athleticism, speed and ball skill.

Students who are interested in trying out for the team can contact Tracy Nelson via e-mail at [tracyn@clackamas.cc.or.us](mailto:tracyn@clackamas.cc.or.us).



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Above: Tracy Nelson played for the University of Portland for four years as a center-midfielder. Since leaving competitive soccer two years ago, Nelson has concentrated on coaching youth and club teams and now the new Cougars team.

Left: Nelson is preparing Clackamas for its first season. Nelson's squad will compete in the Southwest Division of the NWAACC, along with such teams as Tacoma and Southwestern Oregon.

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