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Kari Rissmiller, center, led all other Cougar athletes at the NWAACCs with 20 points. Rissmiller earned those points by winning both the 1500 and 3000.

Track and field season ends on good, bad notes

J.J. PEARSON

Staff Writer

The good news is that many Clackamas athletes won Northwest Athletic Association of Community College individual championships. The bad news? Neither the men nor the women were able to win team titles on the track May 23-24 at Mt. Hood Community College.

Coach Jack Kegg has said it all year long...the athletes in the conference this year are very good and his presumption proved to be fatal to his teams. The men were underdogs going into the NWAACC Championships, but Clackamas thought they would have had a chance of winning. Early in the final day, the Cougar men were trailing by eight points. However, the Spokane Sasquatch squashed all hopes by putting together a string of victories to win the conference title for the second consecutive year.

Corey Swim and Paul Etter led the men's team with 14 individual points apiece. Swim had a tremendous mark in the javelin, tossing it 205 feet, 8 inches to finish second behind Lane's Jonah Friedrich. Swim took fourth in the triple jump and scored two points in the decathlon, held April 29-30 at Lane Community College, scores of which are carried over into the Regional and NWAACC Championships. Etter placed second in the discus (149-8) and third in the hammer throw (174-8).

Steve Groff scored eight points with his outstanding mark in the triple jump (46-6 1/2), which was one of his best jumps of the year. Rusty Pruden also scored eight points combined from the men's 800 and 1500-meter runs. Kegg's prediction that Jonas Welsch

would surprise people in the long jump came true. Welsch leaped 23-11 to earn first-place and 10 points.

Individually, the women had fantastic achievements, but they did not have enough fuel in their tanks to accomplish the feats of the Sasquatch. Spokane, led by Jennifer Kennedy, scored 194 points enroute to their second consecutive team title.

Kari Rissmiller added two NWAACC titles to her four Southern Region trophies she won last week and led all Cougar athletes with 20 points with first-place finishes in the 1500 and 3000. Sara Rowse had another good performance with a first place finish in the pole vault (12-0) and second place finish in the hammer throw (144-5) to earn 18 individual points.

Rebekah Yancoskie won the 800 in dramatic fashion. After leading the first lap, Yancoskie fell to third place going into the last turn of the last lap. She clicked into high gear and blew past Spokane's Susie Rantz in the straight away and barely surpassed Celina Ingalls, also of Spokane, at the finish line to earn the victory by 0.08 seconds.

Tiana Setser leaped 37-4 1/2 in the triple jump—a school record—but finished in second place behind Kennedy. Setser finished the meet with 14 points, as she also placed third in the long jump.

Kegg was unavailable at press time due to his recruiting campaign at the state track and field championships in Eugene. Kegg is hopeful that Clackamas will land some very good athletes that will propel the team to the top spot next season as the Cougars will be on the hunt for Sasquatch.

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Sports not ready to come out of the closet



From the Bleachers

Nick Barron
Staff Writer

Somewhere Greg Louganis is crying. The former Olympic diver, most notable for banging his noggin on a diving board in the 1992 Summer Olympics, is one of sports' most famous, if not only, homosexuals.

On May 21, New York Mets catcher and All-Star Mike Piazza announced that he was a heterosexual, ending the speculation that he was in fact playing for the "other team," thanks to a gossip column by the New York Post's Neal Travis.

Travis wrote in the May 20 issue of the Post that "there is a persistent rumor around town that one Mets star who spends a lot of time with pretty models in clubs is actually gay and has started to think about declaring his sexual orientation."

Speculation has it that Travis ran the unfounded rumor, hence he is a "gossip" columnist,

because of remarks made by Mets manager Bobby Valentine that major league baseball is "probably ready for an openly gay player."

First of all, Valentine is naïve to believe that to be the case. Could you imagine a major sports star, whether it is in baseball or hockey, admitting to homosexuality?

Not only would that be an "uncool" thing for a studly athlete to do, it would be a marketing nightmare. Ellen DeGeneres demonstrated that by having her former hit of a television show cancelled after her disclosure that she was a lesbian.

And that was in television, not even a realm that exalts manliness and ignores homosexuality like Michael Jordan dismisses the flu in the NBA playoffs.

The second issue at hand is the fact that our society forces a pro athlete to state his sexuality to the public.

If Piazza is gay, and residing in the closet, does it really matter? All personal beliefs aside, Piazza is paid to do one thing, and that is to be the best competitor on the field.

While the Mets slugger is struggling in the hit department this season, the Pennsylvania homeboy has hit over 30 home runs and maintained a .300 average over the last two seasons.

Now imagine a world in which every Tom, Dick and Harry knows that Piazza is a homosexual. Would the everyday New Yorker accept him as a role

model for their little leaguers? Would Piazza jerseys be something of pride to wear to the park?

I think not. The sad and simple truth is that even in this day and age we associate sexual orientation with certain things. Sports fans do not believe that a gay man can be a superb athlete.

There still prevails in today's America this belief that if a male is homosexual, he throws a ball like a girl and runs like a pansy. If you are a lesbian, the stereotype tells us that you must dress and talk like a man, and can kick most guys' butts.

It is a widely held, however "underground," belief that the WNBA is full of lesbians. I have heard open conversations between guys about which WNBA stars they think are "switch hitters," and every time I hear it, I realize how much I do not care.

When the day arrives that I can proclaim myself as perfect, then I will start telling other people how to live their lives. Until then, I really don't give a darn if Mike Piazza or Tim Duncan or any athlete is homosexual.

The fact remains that if an athlete is gay or lesbian, or even transsexual or bisexual and all other different sexual orientations that inhabit this planet, as long as they produce when it is game time, I could care less.

To reach Nick Barron e-mail barronoru@hotmail.com or drop by B-104.

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