



KEONI MCHONE Contributed

Men's team captain Pat Searing (#150) led the way to a 3rd place finish for the Cross Country Men's team and took eleventh place overall.

## Cross Country men take third, women finish sixth to end season

**Elena Boryska**  
Sports Editor

During a season loaded with struggles, Clackamas' cross country teams have had quite a long journey to make it to the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges (NWAACC) Championship meet at Lewisville State Park in Battleground, WA, on Nov. 9.

The women's team has been running incomplete at every meet except for at championship meets, when a couple of the women from the track team have been filling in. Kari Rissmiller and Rebekah Yancoskie were the only two women who started the season at CCC, but Clackamas was able to pick up Janel Quintana along the way. Clark is the only school that has been able to consistently run a full team during the season, so the Cougars aren't the only ones who are looking at reduced numbers. But it certainly hasn't made the season any easier.

"It's not too bad as far as training and everything, but the team atmosphere that a lot of times the women look forward to isn't quite there," said Head Cross Country Coach Keoni

McHone. "But they're still having fun."

Rissmiller and Yancoskie are both sophomores at CCC. Rissmiller finished as seventh out of 69 competitors at the University of Idaho Invitational on Sept. 5, and won the Southern Region title a couple weeks ago, but wasn't able to defend her NWAACC title from last season, coming up with a fourth-place finish at the championship meet. At the Southern Region Championships on Nov. 2, Rissmiller finished just seven seconds in front of the second-place finisher, but was greatly hindered by an ankle injury that she suffered a week-and-a-half prior. She was only able to take part in one workout in the eight days before the championship meet, and these things combined slowed her down about 40 seconds, according to McHone. At the NWAACC's, Rissmiller was racing to defend her title against a more competitive group than the one that she raced against last year.

Yancoskie, who is running about one minute faster in the 5,000 meters than she was last year, finished in 40th place at the Idaho Invite and took home the eighth place spot at the Southern

Region Championships. Yancoskie even finished with a little bit left and could have placed a little bit higher.

"She is in better shape than what she thinks she is, and so she feels more confident in being able to race a little bit harder," said McHone.

At the NWAACC's, Yancoskie repre-

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**Keoni McHone**  
Cross Country Coach

sented CCC well, finishing 14th. The other women who raced for Clackamas were track athletes Natalie Walruff and Jen Petersen, who finished 36th and 40th, respectively, and Quintana, who finished 51st. This helped the team finish in sixth place out of the 11 teams who competed in the women's race. Clark College took home the champi-

onship, with Mt. Hood CC trailing 50 points behind them with 77.

The men had a much better showing at the NWAACC Championships, coming in third place behind Spokane CC and Mt. Hood CC. This has been an up-and-down season for the men, as they lost a couple of new recruits before the season even began. Jeremy Branson finished 25th at state last year while in high school, making him CCC's most promising recruit, until a stress fracture that he had during the spring came back and made it impossible for him to participate. Chris Osburn also suffered a reoccurring stress fracture, taking him out of the mix as well.

"(It was) really tough because we would have had a lot of depth, which would have made it much easier to challenge Mt. Hood," said McHone. "The men started off pretty shaky. They weren't quite racing to the potential that they have. Part of it is, some of our top guys are freshmen, so they are learning how to run the 8,000 meters and adapt to some of the training. We're really coming on. We're a lot different team than what we were at the beginning of the year. They've really learned to start training and running

with each other, started figuring out they can race as a team and help each other out."

Two of the men who have had outstanding performances for Clackamas have been Eli Nevarez and Ben Dowdy. Nevarez, a freshman from Tigard, has been consistently running as the number one man, but was the third-highest finisher out of all Clackamas men with a 16th-place finish at the NWAACC's.

Pat Searing had the Cougar men's highest finish, taking the 11th spot overall, while Ira LaFontaine claimed the 14th spot as his own. Dowdy had a nice finish at the NWAACC meet, coming in right behind teammate Nevarez to take 17th place. Other finishers for the men were Russ Pruden, who took 22nd place, Ryan Hennessy finished in 36th and Ben Oakerman, who claimed the 42nd spot. All of these finishes added up to the 80 points that the Cougars finished with, while champion Spokane had 29 and Mt. Hood had 59.

As a combined effort, Clackamas took the fourth spot, coming in behind Spokane's combined teams, Mt. Hood's and Clark's.

## Cougars win division title, await playoffs

**Elena Boryska**  
Sports Editor

In a week where all of the top soccer teams in the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges' Southwestern Division played each other in an attempt to weed out the weaklings, the Clackamas women triumphed, taking down the division leader and claiming the top spot as their own.

After the hard fought battles of that week were over, the women traveled to Clark and were caught looking ahead to the playoffs, losing their last match of the year. The loss dropped their final league to 12-3-1.

On the afternoon of Oct. 30, CCC played host to Southwestern Oregon CC and shut them out, 3-0. After a day off, they came back on Friday to battle with Southwestern Division-leading Tacoma CC. The Cougars were able to capitalize on a Tacoma team that was not playing up to their ability, and handed them a 3-1 loss. Though this was a huge win for

Clackamas, they did lose a starter for their game the next day. Midfielder Jennifer Riehl injured her knee during this game, but she was back for their last game of the season.

Going into the Tacoma game, the Cougars were doing great against the rest of the league, but had been unable to defeat Tacoma in their first meeting.

"Tacoma actually probably didn't play their best game against us," Head Coach Tracy Nelson said. "And tying them before gave us a lot more motivation to beat them this time."

On Nov. 2, Clackamas rounded out the week by hosting a very competitive squad from Lower Columbia CC. Even though Clackamas was tired from playing three games in four days, they were still able to win their third game of the week, 2-0.

"Saturday was probably the hardest, just because we played our third tough game in four days," Nelson said. "Both teams were just mentally

and physically fatigued and exhausted."

As Nelson looked toward the team's last game of the regular season against Clark, and the playoffs just beyond, she was confident in the ability and level of play that they were displaying.

"The fact that they're playing with so much heart and desire, and they're working for each other... they've found ways to win the game without two starters right now, so in that sense, that's great. And once we get on a decent-sized playing field where we can actually play our style of game, I think we'll be playing very well."

Once these three games were completed, the Cougars got a bit of rest before playing the last league game of their inaugural season at Clark on Nov. 6. This game didn't turn out the way that they had hoped, with Clark coming out with a 3-1 victory.

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ELISABETH MEYER Clackamas Print

Freshman midfielder Jennifer Riehl slides in for the ball during a Cougar victory against Shoreline CC.