

Cougar softball looks to NWAACCs

Frank Jordan
The Clackamas Print

Clackamas softball swept Grays Harbor CC, split with Mt. Hood CC and won a key game with Lower Columbia College last week, with their eyes on the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges' championships coming up in two weeks.

Last Tuesday, the Cougars (22-5 league, 28-10 overall) roughed up Grays Harbor (2-24, 2-26) 16-0 and 10-0 on the Clackamas diamond. Miranda Gillaspie combined with Brienne Thurn on a one-hitter in the first game. Angie Roberti supplied the most offense as she went 2-for-4 at the plate with a three-run double, a two-run homer and a sacrifice fly, accounting for six RBI in the game.

Carleen Lessard dominated the second game on the mound for Clackamas, tossing a no-hitter with 12 strikeouts, including eight in a row during one stretch. Roberti went 2-for-4 with three RBI and Kim Kraxberger continued her hot hitting of late, connecting in the fourth inning with a three-run inside-the-park home run.

"Carleen was overpowering on the hill. She was simply awesome," said Head Coach Paul Fiskum.

"I can't remember the last time we had a pitcher strike out as many as she did in a five-inning game. Not just striking batters out, but many of them on three pitches."

Friday, Clackamas took on Mt. Hood (18-8, 18-13) in a key Southern Division showdown. In a classic pitcher's duel, the Cougars scored a run in the top of the eighth inning to win 1-0.

"Miranda Gillaspie probably threw her best game of the year," said Fiskum. "Neither team could get much going, and Miranda was totally in control of her game."

Gillaspie allowed four hits, walking one and striking out eight. The Cougars had only one hit through six innings and the game was scoreless heading into extra innings.

In the eighth, Melissa Gibson led off with a single and then she stole second. Morgan Huffstutter sacrificed Gibson to third, then Brooke Comstock hit a sharp ground ball to shortstop, which scored Gibson with the game's first run.

Gillaspie mowed down the Saints in the bottom of the eighth to preserve the 1-0 victory.

Game two with Mt. Hood was more of the same, with the pitchers dominating the action.

Clackamas let themselves down defensively, giving up four runs in the third on two hits, two walks, a bases-loaded single that ended up clearing the bases on an outfield error and another error on the pitcher that led to the four runs.

"We played okay, but we got ourselves caught up in a situation where one bad hop turned into a big inning, and it cost us," said Fiskum.

Clackamas got a run back in the fourth inning when Carla Lillis scored off of a wild pitch, but it was too little, too late and Mt. Hood went on to a 4-2 win.

"It was the first time all year that our pitching deserted us," Fiskum said. "Mt. Hood is a very good team and it seems that they have gotten more breaks against us than with any other team. But that is



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Brooke Comstock (above left) waits patiently as impending rain forces Clackamas to share the practice field with Chemeketa; Morgan Huffstutter (15) and Jessica Nagi (right) look on. Kim Kraxberger (pictured at left) leads the Clackamas women in homeruns, knocking out two last week, for a season total of four.

softball."

Saturday, the Cougars traveled to Longview, Wash. for a showdown with division-leading Lower Columbia (23-4, 31-4). Clackamas got a great pitching effort from their whole staff and scored runs in the first, fourth and sixth innings to get their third straight win over LCC, 4-1.

Kraxberger supplied the big blow in the top of the sixth, hitting a monstrous two-run homer over the right centerfield fence to turn a close game into the 4-1 victory.

"It was a great win on the road for us and a great turnaround from the disappointment of the day before (the loss to Mt. Hood)," Fiskum said.

Game two of the doubleheader started fast for Lower Columbia as they scored a run in the first and two in the third to jump to an early 3-0 lead. Then the rain started to fall.

"It was just pouring out there, but the umpire would not call the game," said Fiskum. "Our pitcher (Thurn) couldn't even grip the ball.

Because the ump wouldn't suspend the game, Brienne gave up two more runs in the fourth. It really

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hurt us."

With CCC down 5-0, the rally began in the downpour. Roberti walked and Jessica Nagi sacrificed her to second. Gillaspie walked, then Kraxberger singled in Roberti on a line drive that the LCC second baseman had deflected off of her glove.

"That second baseman dove to her left and the ball glanced off of her glove. She hit the infield and

slid about six feet in the mud. When she got up, her whole front side was covered with mud," said Fiskum. "When the field umpire saw that, he conferred with the plate umpire and it was decided to suspend the game."

The game will resume today in Longview with Lower Columbia holding a 5-1 lead in the top of the fifth. Clackamas has runners on at first and second with one out and Gibson at the plate.

Clackamas will finish up the regular season this weekend with home doubleheaders against Pierce College (0-24, 0-28) on Friday and Centralia CC (14-14, 14-14) on Saturday. Saturday is also Alumni Day, with a celebration taking place between games. All Cougar softball alums are invited to attend and a pizza feed will take place at Jimmy O's Pizzeria in Oregon City after the games. Friday's games begin at 3 p.m. and Saturday's start time has been moved from 2 p.m. to noon to accommodate the Alumni Day festivities.

Don't let rain stop MLB from coming to Portland



Cory Price
Co-Photo Editor

To the tune of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game:"

"Make me a good baseball team, one that can make me proud. Find me an owner and good ball club, I don't care if we never win games. Let me root, root, root for the

Expos, if they don't come it's a shame. For its one, two, three million bucks at the going price. Play ball!"

With the recent developmental idea of bringing a major league baseball team to Portland, some critics might cry out that Portland is too rainy and doesn't have a good enough economy. I laugh at this idea. Don't we need jobs that will stimulate the economy?

With the slumping economy, Oregon employment is at an all-

time low. The purchase of a baseball team will create 200 full-time jobs and 1400 part-time jobs. It will also bring in an estimated \$433 million in state revenue over a 25-year period from taxes off player salaries alone.

The placement of the stadium will be a crucial decision. The neighborhood that houses the new

stadium will experience increased property value and economic development. Portland is the largest market in the US without a major league baseball team. The metro area contains two million people: 22nd largest city population in the country, according to US census.

What about the rain?

Actually, with 12.07 inches of rainfall during the baseball season, Portland has less rainfall than 13 cities with a major league team. Miami, known for its sun, records 44.94 inches of rainfall. Miami is one of the southernmost cities with a club.

Now is the time for a major league team. The economy is hurting, and the rain is holding off between April and October.

So take me out to the ball game and bring us a major league team. Any team will be better than the Beavers.

