

Men's Basketball taking it one day at a time



AMY CASHMAN CLACKAMAS PRINT

Ammon Bemins (25) goes after a loose ball during a 83-74 Cougar loss to Chemeketa on Feb. 4.

Frank Jordan THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

Clackamas men's basketball split two games last week, with a loss to Chemeketa at home that snapped a six-game win streak and put a serious damper on the Cougars' chances of winning a division title with five games left in the regular season.

The Cougars (16-6, 7-3) faced a tough Chemeketa team on Feb. 4 that was tied with Clackamas for second in the NWAACC Southern Division heading into the game. Clackamas got a great shooting performance from Garrett Johnson to send the Cougars into the halftime break with a 33-32 lead. Johnson hit 7-9 from the floor in the opening 20 minutes, scoring 18 points in the half.

The Cougars and the Strom went back and forth in the second half, with neither team leading by more than five points, until the end of the game. Momentum changed for good in Chemeketa's favor with three minutes left when the Cougars missed a putback at the offensive end that would have given them a late lead, then a Chemeketa player banked in a wild three-point attempt

at the shot clock buzzer to give the Storm a four-point lead. Clackamas never recovered and Chemeketa went on to win 83-74.

Johnson led the Cougars with 22 points. He also had seven rebounds and three blocked shots. Alex Swerzbin had 18 points, a game-high 11 assists and four steals. The Cougars shot a cold 40 percent from the floor and only 27 percent from beyond the three-point line. Chemeketa also pounded the Cougars on the glass by a 50-29 rebounding margin.

"Two big factors in the Chemeketa game killed us," said Head Coach Clif Wegner. "Our rebounding was atrocious and we just shot poorly. Chemeketa was really tough and they just plain beat us."

The Cougars traveled to Coos Bay on Feb. 7 and defeated a tough Southwestern Oregon CC squad by a score of 74-70. Clackamas got behind early by a 17-3 count, before using tough, pressure defense to jump to a 37-28 halftime lead. The lead basically stayed around 6-8 points throughout the second half before the Cougars held on for the four-point win.

Johnson led the Cougars with 16

points and grabbed six rebounds. Wes Jensen had 15 points and led Clackamas with nine boards. Brandon Gill had 12 points and four steals.

"Saturday was a huge win on the road for us and the result guaranteed a playoff spot for us," said Wegner. "SWOCC is always a tough gym to win in, but the kids kept their poise down the stretch and we got an important win."

Tonight, the Cougars take a short ride to Portland CC to take on the Panthers in a 7:30 p.m. tip on the PCC-Sylvania campus. Saturday, Clackamas will play its final home game of the season when the Cougars play Linn-Benton CC in a 6 p.m. game in the Randall Hall gym. Clackamas will be honoring its sophomores and their parents before the game as they play their final home game for CCC.

"We are focusing on one day, one practice, one game at a time. The NWAACC tournament at this point is a distant thought. We still have players banged up and are trying to get everyone healthy," said Wegner. "Unfortunately, we can't rest players because we have too many big games left as we fight for playoff positioning."

NWAACC Tournament

The Clackamas Athletic Department has tickets available for the NWAACC Basketball Championships from Feb. 27 to Mar. 1 at the Tri-Cities Coliseum in Kennewick, Wash. Cost is \$31. For info or to purchase tickets, contact Athletic Director Jim Jackson at ext. 2295 or Athletic Secretary Dotty Coburn at ext. 2291.

Blazer beef drives sports editor to throw bones

Nic Delzell SPORTS EDITOR

This week, I'm going to drop it like it's hot and hit my readers with a matter that is near and dear to my heart, my beloved Portland Trail Blazers and their "fans."

As a devoted Blazer disciple, I make my way to at least half of the home games each year. Recently I have not been impressed with the behavior and attitude of certain so-called "fans" that are attending games.

Most recently, I attended the Blazers vs. the Sonics on Feb. 8. It was an excellent game with the Blazers winning 95-85. Most everyone, I noticed, enjoyed the game. The Blazers controlled the tempo for the entire game and the vibe in the arena was one of confidence and delight.

Then former Oregon Duck Luke Ridnour was put into the game. This is when I noticed certain "fans" getting ready to roar. Ridnour is a great player. The Rose Garden erupted when Ridnour entered the game.

What I didn't understand is why the backup point guard for the opposing team received more praise than any Blazer when he entered the

game. I truly enjoyed watching Ridnour during his years at Oregon.

I don't agree with calling Ridnour's first game at the Rose Garden a homecoming. Ridnour is from Washington. I don't agree with these "fans" going into raptures over Rid.

In addition to the Ridnour incident, I want to bring up the Jan. 31 game against the Chicago Bulls. Once again during team introductions, former Blazer Scottie Pippen received a larger welcoming than any Blazer did. And during the game several self-styled Blazer "fans" had one positive thing after another to say about the aging Pip. While most of these

comments towards the Portland players were jokes about marijuana, these "fans" are haters, haters, haters and more haters on top with some hater juice to drink.

Pippen is not a Blazer; he played three lackluster, injury-filled seasons with P-town. He was clutch at times, but he will enter the NBA Hall of Fame as a Bull. Chi-town is Pippen's home. Let the Bulls' fans holler at Pippen.

Next, I would like to bring up one of the best nights in Blazer history, the return of Blazer legend Terry Porter on Dec. 16. Porter now coaches the Milwaukee Bucks and came to town and beat the Blazers 106-99. Porter received

a much-deserved standing ovation during his introduction. This is one time I agree with rooting for the enemy.

Porter still hangs on my bedroom wall and always will be one of my favorite Blazers. But because the Blazers' front office cares more about cash money than the team, the ticket read: Terry Porter's Milwaukee Bucks vs. The Portland Trail Blazers.

What the fizzle was that about? The front office is trying to propagate the fans into rooting for Porter, taking the focus off the real issue, a blazer W.

What I'm getting at here is the fact that Blazer "fans" live for the moment. Blazers "fans" are spoiled with 20-plus consecutive playoff trips. Blazer "fans" get caught up in hype and can't even really be called fans.

Don't go to Blazer games to root for the enemy unless the enemy happens to be your team and you are a real fan. And then be prepared to see a loud sports editor with his Blazer gear and a big smile who's ready to throw some bones at any Blazer hater.

As for Feb. 9 trade I say, BRING BACK SHEED dang it. Gone.



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