

# Softball works toward season opener

**Softball looks to improve their 2003 NWAACC finish**

**Frank Jordan**  
THE CLACKAMAS PRINT



The Clackamas softball team warms up for the 2004 season as sophomore catcher Brady Adelhart works the plate during a March 8 practice.

FRANK JORDAN CLACKAMAS PRINT

The Clackamas softball team is cautiously optimistic about their chances on improving on an NWAACC second-place finish from last season.

"We have a pretty good team right now, but I feel now how I feel at this time every season," said Head Coach Paul Fiskum. "Are we ready? Can we get ready? We have been practicing really hard, but we have had problems getting all of our players together at the same time. We have had injuries and a rash of illness. Hopefully, all of the pieces will fit together."

The Cougars are facing several questions, but many of those questions will be answered before the first game, in the Fresno City College tournament March 20-21. The team returns several players from last year's team that lost 3-2 in the NWAACC title game to Lower Columbia College.

All-tournament players Randi Middagh, Angie Roberti, Kim Kraxberger and Carleen Lessard anchor an experienced group of nine sophomores. Throw in returners Brady Adelhart, Brienne Thurn and Nicole Obrist, and the Cougars have reason for optimism.

"The game starts with pitching and Lessard has had a great fall and winter. Thurn is continuing to

be plagued by heart problems, but is working her way back into shape," said Fiskum. "We have two freshmen, Holly Marlow and Chelsea Koch, that are strong pitchers who will give us some needed arms."

Kraxberger had a good off-season and returns as the team's emotional leader. Fiskum describes Middagh as "talented as any player in the league."

Roberti is coming along well, having been converted to first base from playing mainly designated hitter last year. Roberti has also been described by Fiskum as "probably our smartest player."

In fact, she received a prestigious scholarship from the Northwest Women's Sports Foundation. This foundation only gives out one scholarship to a community college athlete in the

Northwest every year, and Roberti was able to get it this year. It says a lot about her as an athlete and as a student.

Obrist and Adelhart have also improved tremendously over this off-season, and figure prominently in the Cougars' plans this season.

"Obrist's batting average could go up 150 points this season, she has worked really hard on her hitting," said Fiskum. "Brady

(Adelhart) has done a great job for us at catcher. She has split time with freshman Kayce Ernst at the position and will provide a great presence on the field."

Freshman Ashley Olsen, Kelly Rattay, Cijay Koanui, Makenzie Marineau and Nicole Winkley are having good preseason workouts and have impressed Fiskum with their work ethics.

"Koanui may be the most versatile player we have ever had," Fiskum said. "We are playing her at third now, but she has seen time at second and at catcher. She's a switchhitter and has good speed. A multi-faceted talent. Olsen is a real find, but has been hit by the adversity bug lately. She has been sick, had oral surgery and has been hit by migraines. But she has a tremendous upside to her game. Rattay has seen a lot of time at second, she is very athletic, but has also been struggling with a rib injury."

Lower Columbia has been picked by many as the team to beat in the NWAACC, but only because they are the defending champs. Mt. Hood CC and Chemeketa CC, along with Clackamas and Lower Columbia look to be the teams that will contend for the title.

"Bottom line, we need to get healthy, and then get the girls together for a couple of weeks to see where we stand. As with any team, unity and morale will be a big key to any success we have this year," said Fiskum. "There are always sacrifices that have to be made for the good of the team. These girls seem to want to get to that point, and that is always a good sign."

## Clackamas baseballers open season with split

The Clackamas baseball team opened the 2004 season on March 6 with a split at Blue Mountain CC in Pendleton, Ore.

All Cougar baseball games are doubleheaders in league play.

In their first game of the season the Cougar Baseballers lost game one 5-4. Offensively the Cougar Baseballers scored four runs off seven team hits.

Defensively the Cougar Ballers held their own only allowing one error. Sophomore Cory Buker pitched the opening game loss for the Cougars.

Game two the Cougar Ballers

were triumphant 4-1. Once again the Cougar ballers scored four runs off seven hits and only committed one fielding error. This time Sophomore Brad Neffendorf hurled the win in the second game of the season.

This doubleheader leaves the Cougar Ballers with a 1-1 record overall. This weekend the Cougar Ballers will travel Longview, Wash. to participate in the Lower Columbia CC Tournament.

Look for more extensive Clackamas baseball coverage during spring term.

—Compiled by Nic Delzell

### 2004 CLACKAMAS SOFTBALL SCHEDULE

March 20	Fresno City College Tournament @ Fresno, Calif.
<b>April 2</b>	<b>Chemeketa CC 2 p.m.</b>
<b>April 3</b>	<b>Southwestern Oregon CC 2 p.m.</b>
April 6	Mt. Hood CC time TBA @ Gresham
<b>April 9</b>	<b>Grays Harbor College 3 p.m.</b>
<b>April 10</b>	<b>Pierce College 2 p.m.</b>
<b>April 13</b>	<b>Centralia College 3 p.m.</b>
April 16	South Puget Sound CC 3 p.m. @ Olympia, Wash.
April 17	Lower Columbia College 1 p.m. @ Longview, Wash.
April 24	NWAACC Crossover Tournament @ Salem
April 27	Southwestern Oregon CC 3 p.m. @ Coos Bay
<b>April 30</b>	<b>South Puget Sound CC 3 p.m.</b>

\*Home games in bold

### 2004 CLACKAMAS BASEBALL SCHEDULE

March 12	Lower Columbia CC Tourney @ Longview, Wash.
March 19	Columbia Basin CC Tourney @ Pasco, Wash.
<b>March 30</b>	<b>SWOCC 12 p.m.</b>
April 3	Mt Hood CC 1 p.m. @ Gresham
April 6	Chemeketa CC 1 p.m.

\*Home games in bold

\*Not complete season

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