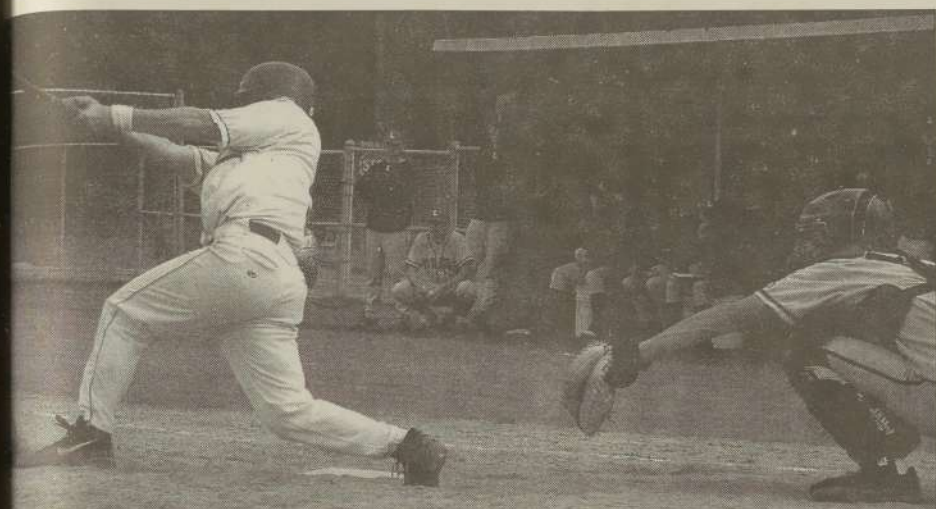


Cougar bats 'offensive' in losses



Cory Price Clackamas Print

Cougars' Frank Paletta rips a shot in game one of the doubleheader versus the Titans last Thursday. With this hit, Paletta drove in two runs and tied up the game at four apiece. Clackamas eventually lost in the 10th inning 5-4.

Michael McCormack
Sports Editor

The Cougars had a rough one last week; losing four games in two doubleheaders versus league rivals Mt. Hood and Lane CC and by doing so, made the remaining games must-wins to earn a playoff spot.

"I think we can make the playoffs without question, but we need to win the games we should be winning," catcher Mike McNally said.

On Thursday, Lane came to town to play in a double-dip versus Clackamas. Chris Derthick made the start for the Cougs and spotted Lane one run in the first inning. After the first he was able to settle down, and going into the fifth inning the Cougar offense had given him a 2-1 lead.

In the top of the fifth Derthick got into trouble, loading up the bases with no outs and barely holding onto that one run lead. A fielder's choice tied up the game at two, and at that point Jason Hart came in to relieve the starter.

Hart gave up a sac fly scoring one run, and the following batter hit a shot right back up the middle giving Lane a 4-2 lead. Both runs scored on Hart were charged to Derthick.

"I've been put in that position before, and I know what I need to do. I'm in there to throw strikes and get some outs," Hart said.

The Clackamas offense struggled to get the base hits they needed when runners were on and failed to tie up the score in the fifth, sixth and seventh. Hart, on the other hand, pitched himself out of numerous jams and was able to keep the score at 4-2 heading into the bottom of the eighth.

Miles Johnson led off the Cougars' eighth with a single, followed up by another single by DJ Johnson. With two runners on, Josh Breslaw came to the plate and grounded into a fielder's choice. After Breslaw made it to first safely he successfully stole second base, putting runners on second and third for Frank Paletta. Paletta hit a single and nodded the score up at four.

After a scoreless ninth, the teams went into extra innings. In the top of the 10th, Hart gave

up a solo shot to Lane's Sean Martin, which gave his team a 5-4 lead. The Cougars were unable to score in the bottom half of the inning, and had lost their third game of the week.

"We want to score runs, but we just aren't doing it right now. We're not hitting when we have runners on and it is killing us," McNally said. "We are swinging at bad pitches and aren't giving ourselves the opportunity to succeed up at the plate."

In game two Hap Purden took the mound for the Cougars and got himself out of a couple of jams in the early going, but once again the Cougars' offense was no where to be found with runners on.

In the top of the third, the first run of the game was put up by Lane, thanks to two Clackamas errors. With two outs and a man on third, a Lane batter hit a shot to centerfield, but Breslaw made a spectacular diving catch to keep the score at 1-0.

In the bottom half of the inning, DJ Johnson was at second base with no outs, but Clackamas was unable to bring him in to tie up the score.

In the fifth, Purden got into more trouble, walking the first batter and that was followed by a sac bunt, moving the Lane runner to second. An error by Tyler Liebelt in left allowed Lane to score and give the Titans a 2-0 lead.

Clackamas was unable to put a run up on the board in their final three at-bats and eventually lost the game 2-0.

"You are going to fail in baseball, but we just fail at the wrong times. We get hits with no one on and then follow those up with nothing; we need to reverse that," Johnson said.

Earlier in the week the Cougars traveled to Mt. Hood CC and lost both games of the doubleheader, 7-1. Clackamas never gave themselves a chance in winning the games, getting only eight hits for the day and coughing up eight errors.

Travis Galbraith and Brian Goff were both awarded a loss in the twin bill, but the lack of hitting was the downfall for the visiting Cougars.

Clackamas is at home this Thursday and will be playing a doubleheader against Chemeketa. The first game will begin at 1 p.m.

Track members compete with elite at invite

Jimmi McDonnell
The Clackamas Print

Last Saturday, at Hayward Field in Eugene, the Cougars took a selected group of track athletes to compete at a rain-soaked Oregon Invitational against first-rate competition.

The meet was full of Division I schools such as Oregon, Oregon State, Portland State, Boise State, Washington, and Gonzaga; all of which made for either intimidation or a reason to step up their game.

"The competition was tough this weekend; there were a lot of big-time universities and a lot of hype surrounding a couple guys in particular from other schools," Coach Jack Kegg said. "I think some of our athletes felt the pressure to perform, and I am not disappointed at how they did at all."

This meet was freshman Galen Rupp's first race in a University of Oregon uniform, and the *Oregonian* had been hyping him up all week. Rupp ran the 1500-meter this weekend and accidentally fell halfway through it, but still managed to pull off the 15th-fastest

time in the nation this year. So it is easy to see how some of the Clackamas runners might have been a little intimidated, but it didn't affect them much.

Troy Sexston finished fourth in the elite 110-meter hurdles with a time of 15.13 seconds, which beat out runners from Washington and Portland State.

Sean Jones competed in the elite section for pole vault, along with Sexston. Both athletes recorded strong heights. Sexston finished with a height of 15 feet, 11 inches, while Jones recorded his best height of the year with a vault of 16 feet, 1 inch, which is the highest in the NWAACC this year.

"I thought that our pole vaulters really performed strongly and were probably the highlight of the meet for us," Kegg said. "Both Sean and Miranda finished with season's best. I really feel they competed strongly for the amount of pressure they faced."

Erin Shaffer and Miranda Carter also stepped up to the challenge for the Cougar women. Shaffer recorded a vault of 11 feet, 1 inch, while Carter had her season best with a height of 10 feet, 8 inches.

Jessica Harper ran the 1500-meter and recorded her season best as well. She finished with a time of 4:53.

"I'm really happy about how Jessica ran the 1500-meter. She really showed a lot of guts," Kegg said.

The men's 4 x 400-meter relay team finished with a strong enough time to take third, and en route turned some heads. Chris Hoppie, Trevor Snook, and Ryan Richards ran the first three legs, while anchor man Adam Miller capped it off with a split time of 50.7 seconds.

"I'm really happy with our men's 4 x 400 relay, they seem to be getting better and better with every meet," Kegg said. "As a matter of fact it seems like our whole team does, so watch out."

The next Cougar track event will be the Western Oregon Twilight held at Western Oregon University. The entire Clackamas track team will travel for this one.

Editor's note: In last week's issue of The Clackamas Print, a track athlete's name was misspelled. The name should have read John Butkey.



Photo courtesy of Keoni McHone

Clackamas runner Jessica Harper (far right) competed in the 1500-meter event last Saturday at the Oregon Invitational and recorded her best time of the year with a run of 4:53. Several other Cougars made the trip to compete with Division I schools as well.

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