

Cougars advance to NWAACC's

Frank Jordan

The Clackamas Print

The Clackamas softball team wrapped up the regular season last Saturday with a doubleheader split against Mt. Hood CC, winning game one 2-1 and losing the second game by a score of 14-2.

The first game was a classic pitcher's duel, as the Cougars' Chelsea Koch threw, in the words of her coach, "possibly the best game of her collegiate career." Koch allowed only five singles while striking out three and walking only two Saints.

The Cougars took the lead in the third as Casey Middagh reached base on an error, took third on a single by Lanea Hyland, then scored on the back end of a double steal to give Clackamas the early 1-0 lead.

The Saints tied the game in the bottom of the third on a single, a fielder's choice and a Cougar error. Clackamas came back in the sixth as Hyland was hit by a pitch, then stole her seventh base of the season.

Nikki Winkley then came through with an RBI single on a hit-and-run play, scoring Hyland, who avoided the catcher's tag on a masterful slide with the winning run.

"It was a great game to be involved in; it seemed like that with every pitch, there was something on the line," said Head Coach Paul Fiskum. "We needed this sort of game to show the girls that they really are NWAACC contenders. We faced arguably Mt. Hood's best pitcher and we came through with a big win."

Game two did not fare as well for the Cougars, as it was pitching by committee, and it showed in the 14-2 loss. Staff ace Holly Marlow was not at the ballpark as she had a personal commitment she had to attend to.

"We knew beforehand that Holly would not be there on Saturday, so we put Caitlin Ooley on the mound to start the game, and she really gave us a great effort," said Fiskum. "We had Chelsea [Koch] come in after three innings, but she clearly gave all she had in game one, so she really had nothing left in the tank,

and she got pounded."

Middagh also tossed an inning of relief, but the Cougar staff gave up four home runs in the loss. Cijay Koanui and Erin Snyder each had two hits in game two, with Snyder driving in both Cougar runs.

The Cougars finished the regular season with a 29-11 record, including a 25-7 mark in the Southern Division of the NWAACC. Their third place finish in the division means that they will open the NWAACC tournament on Friday against Spokane CC at Delta Park in North Portland. The Cougars' opening game is slated to begin at 1 p.m.

"We know that we have a group of girls that can win the NWAACC championship. We have improved so much in the last few weeks; our hitting is outstanding and our pitching is rounding into great form," said Fiskum. "We will work on continuing to improve our defense this week in practice, but we have a great attitude from top to bottom. The girls now believe that they can win the whole thing. We just need to do it on the field, and I believe that we will."



Jeff Sorensen Clackamas Print

The Cougars' Chelsea Koch threw in both games last week, and earned the victory in game one. She has seen her delivery improve since she was a shortstop. Erin Snyder (back-ground) gets into position to make the play. The Cougars split the doubleheader versus Mt. Hood.

NBA needs to look no further than the NFL for help

Lebron James (left) and Carmelo Anthony (right) are two current NBA players who came into the league before they had turned 20 years old. If the league establishes an age limit this summer in their negotiations, high school players, such as James, will not be allowed into the league until their 20th birthday.

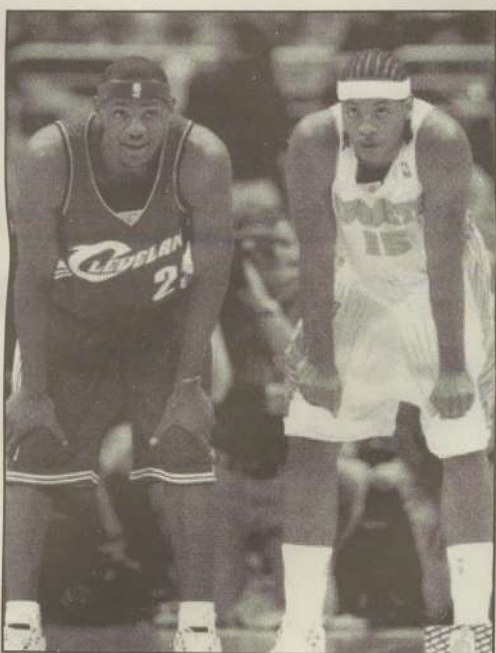


Photo courtesy of Huntjnc.com

With labor talks coming up this summer, the NBA may be in jeopardy

Frank Jordan

The Clackamas Print

The National Basketball Association is on the very exciting road to the end of its season, as the conference semifinals are well underway. But as soon as this season ends, it could be an ugly summer as talks continue to hash out another contract between the league and its player's association and the latest American professional sports league undergoes the collective bargaining process.

All of the sides involved are hopeful of coming to an agreement soon after the season ends, but storm clouds are on the horizon. One of the biggest issues in the news lately has been the league trying to institute an

age minimum for its players, something the players are overwhelmingly against—and for good reason.

The players' arguments are cut-and-dry. Why should there be an age limit? After all, this is America, land of free enterprise; a land where a citizen should be able to have a dream job, no matter their age. The league employs teenagers now, why change?

The league says that these youngsters should not be able to play in their league until they are at least 20 years of age, so this will give them a chance to grow up a little and be able to better handle their newfound millions when they sign that first big pro contract.

The players counter that baseball and hockey draft teenagers for their sports, but the problem with that argument is that those two sports have a well-established minor league system in place, and the total amount of under-21-year-olds in the big show is very, very small.

I wish the NBA would go the way of the National Football League, where the 20-year-old age limit is in

place, and that the contracts, by large, of NFL players are not guaranteed. This way, the basketball player would realize how privileged they are to be getting paid big bucks to play a game for a living, and if they want that \$50 million contract, they have to go out and earn it.

I hope that the NBA and its players look at the current National Hockey League situation and realize that a strike could hurt or possibly ruin sport. The NHL was forced to end the entire 2004-05 season, a first for the major sports in this country, all due to the fact that the owners of the players couldn't pull their respective heads out of their asses and come to an agreement that both sides could live with.

Because of this, who really missed professional hockey in the few months? Not many people, but a few diehard fans like me, but is it. Could the NBA suffer the same fate? Yes, people could learn to live without the NBA, just as they can live without the NHL. Let us hope that does not come to that.

SUMMER WORK

GREAT PAY & FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES

Can start after finals, Customer sales & service

No experience necessary, we train, all majors welcome

All ages 17 & older, conditions apply

Clackamas 503-353-7507

Beaverton 503-203-1103