

Champs: Marlow named MVP for tourney

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Game two on Friday had the Cougars come out a little flat in a back-and-forth game. Koch started the game, but didn't get out of the first inning as Bellevue took a quick 2-0 lead. The Cougars, down 2-1, rallied in the third. Cijay Koanui singled, was sacrificed to second and scored on an RBI single by Middagh. Snyder singled with two outs, then Nikki Winkley singled in Middagh to take the lead. Alcalá singled in Snyder and Laura Hyland singled in Winkley to give CCC a 5-2 lead. Caitlin Storisson smacked a home run in the third to pull Bellevue within 5-3, but the Cougars got RBI singles from Snyder and Alcalá to get Clackamas the 7-4 win.

Holly Marlow relieved Koch in the first and allowed only two more runs and struck out 10 to gain the victory. Snyder finished the game 4-4 at the plate, while Middagh was 3-3 and scored three times for the Cougars.

The game of the tournament took place on Saturday as Clackamas took on six-time defending champion Lower Columbia and behind a masterful one-hitter by Marlow, the Cougars got an RBI single from Winkley in the seventh to defeat the Red Devils 1-0.

"A fantastic ball game, both teams played their hearts out and we were solid in all facets of the game," said Fiskum. "LCC's pitcher, Jennifer Pass, had not lost a game all season. But we came out and hit the ball very well against her."

Marlow walked three and struck out eight in her gem, giving up only a sixth-inning single to Misty Britt of LCC. Hyland opened the seventh by singling off the pitcher's glove, then Ernst pinch-ran for Hyland. Snyder sacrificed Ernst to second, then Winkley hit a clean single to center, easily scoring Ernst, who was running all the way. Marlow mowed down the Red Devils in the seventh to get the Cougars into the semifinals.

In the semis on Sunday, Clackamas took on the surprise team of the tourney, the Warriors from Walla Walla CC. The Warriors, who qualified for the tournament on the regular season's last day, had defeated Chemeketa CC and Columbia Basin College earlier in the tourney. But the Cougars had their own ideas in this semifinal matchup.

"The girls were very intense, but also very loose before and during the game," said Fiskum. "We continued with our strong hitting and Marlow pitched a solid game. She may have had a bit of a letdown from the Lower Columbia game, but she pitched well."

Snyder got the offense moving with a home run leading off the second inning and Roberti had an RBI single to give the Cougars a 2-0 lead. CCC picked up four runs in the fifth and a single run in the sixth en route to the 8-3 victory. Koanui, Winkley, Alcalá, Roberti and Brianna Mondragon each had two hits in the win, while Marlow gave up three hits in five innings and Koch tossed the final two innings to pick up the save.

The NWAACC championship was theirs for the taking by the Cougars, but Columbia Basin came out strong, taking a 4-0 lead in the fifth. Clackamas bats woke up just in time, as Ooley and Middagh singled, then Hyland smacked a three-run homer to get Clackamas within 4-3. CCC took the lead in the sixth as Alcalá singled, Roberti sacrificed Alcalá to second, Mondragon singled in Alcalá and Ooley doubled in Mondragon for the 5-4 lead.

Columbia Basin used two hits and an untimely error in the bottom of the seventh to grab a 6-5 win and force a winner-take-all game for the NWAACC title.

"The girls were devastated after the game, some tears were flowing from the players," said Fiskum. "But the team held a players-only meeting on the field during the 30-minute break

between games, and they pulled themselves together. It really was a defining moment for this team and this season."

The second game with Columbia Basin turned with two outs in the second inning, as Alcalá singled, Roberti walked and Mondragon singled to load the bases. Koanui doubled to left-center to drive in two runs, and Ooley singled in Mondragon for a 3-0 lead. Middagh picked up an RBI as the Hawks' third baseman had a throwing error, scoring Koanui for the 4-0 lead.

The Hawks came back for a single run in the second to get within 4-1, but Clackamas came back with four runs in the fourth as Mondragon singled, Koanui singled, Ooley had an RBI groundout, Middagh had an RBI single, Hyland doubled home Middagh on a hit-and-run and Nikki Winkley drove in the final run of the season with a single up the middle to give the Cougars an 8-1 lead.

Marlow struck out Heidi Dilger of Columbia Basin to give the Cougars the title. She pitched a complete game, striking out eight and walking five, while giving up four base hits. Koanui and Ooley led the hit parade, each going 3-5 with two RBI, while Mondragon was 3-4. The Cougar team pulled off a rarity for a Clackamas team, hitting better in the tournament than in the regular season. They hit .369 as a team in the tourney, seven points better than in the regular season.

"A fantastic showing by this team throughout the whole weekend. I have never been more proud of a group of girls than I am of this team. They pulled together as a team after the loss to Columbia Basin and had a great time," said Fiskum. "Erin [Snyder] told me that she had never played on a team that had bonded as well as this team did. And that is the most important lesson that this team took away from this experience. They are the NWAACC champions and nobody can ever take that away from them."

Marlow was named as the tournament Most Valuable Player for her four-win performance in the tourney. Alcalá, Middagh, Snyder and Koch were named to the all-tournament team and Fiskum won Coach of the Year

honors. The championship is the eighth title for Clackamas and the first since the last of three in a row won by the Cougars in 1997.

"Tim Mackin, the Lower Columbia head coach, told me that although his team didn't win, he was very happy for us and our

program and that he was that the championship would be staying in the South Division," said Fiskum. "I think that he was disappointed in fact that they could not seventh straight title, but the team won this weekend, was Clackamas."

"The best team won this weekend, and it was Clackamas."

Paul Fiskum
Head Coach for the Cougars



All photos courtesy of Denise... Cougar sophomore Cijay Koanui hit .318 and stole three bases in six games for the Cougars this postseason. She was also named to the South Division first-team all-conference.



The Cougars' championship season was a memorable one for these sophomores. (Left to right) Kayce Ernst, Chelsea Koch, Holly Marlow, Cijay Koanui, Laura Kudrna and Nikki Winkley all pose after the NWAACC championship game. Koanui and Koch were named to the all-tournament team, while Marlow was awarded as the Most Valuable Player for the tourney.

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