

Straight-up diminished team

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Sports Editor

Clackamas volleyball (2-6 league, 17-15 overall) may be slipping in the NWAACC south standings, but Head Coach Kathie Woods is not at all pessimistic.

"The south has always had good teams," Woods said. "It's just all the teams in the south have been very good this year. Our league is so tight right now that we are trying to get over the hump."

Diminishing times have hit the volleyballers, dropping four in a row and falling to fifth place in the NWAACC south. The last two years of Cougar volleyball have been highly successful, with the Cougars winning an NWAACC championship in 2004. In 2003, they finished second at NWAACCs. They have also been in the NWAACC championship tournament 11 straight years.

"I won't lie ... this has been kind of a hard year," Woods said. "We have been on top for so long ... however, this is a very good team. We just need to execute at the end of games. This is a team of fighters, and there is a lot of promise because they work so hard."

Cross-town rival Mt. Hood CC traveled the short trip from Gresham last Wednesday, defeating the Cougar volleyballers 25-30, 27-30 in the first two games. The Cougars were able to get their roll on during the third game, beating the Saints 30-21 before falling in the last set 24-30. Earlier this season the Cougars defeated the Saints in Gresham, giving

the teams a league split.

Rachel Gowen (middle blocker) lead the way with 15 kills and six blocks. Samantha Hennessy worked her sophomore ways with nine kills en route to a 22 percent kill efficiency; Meggan Chapin added 11 kills for the Cougar offensive assault.

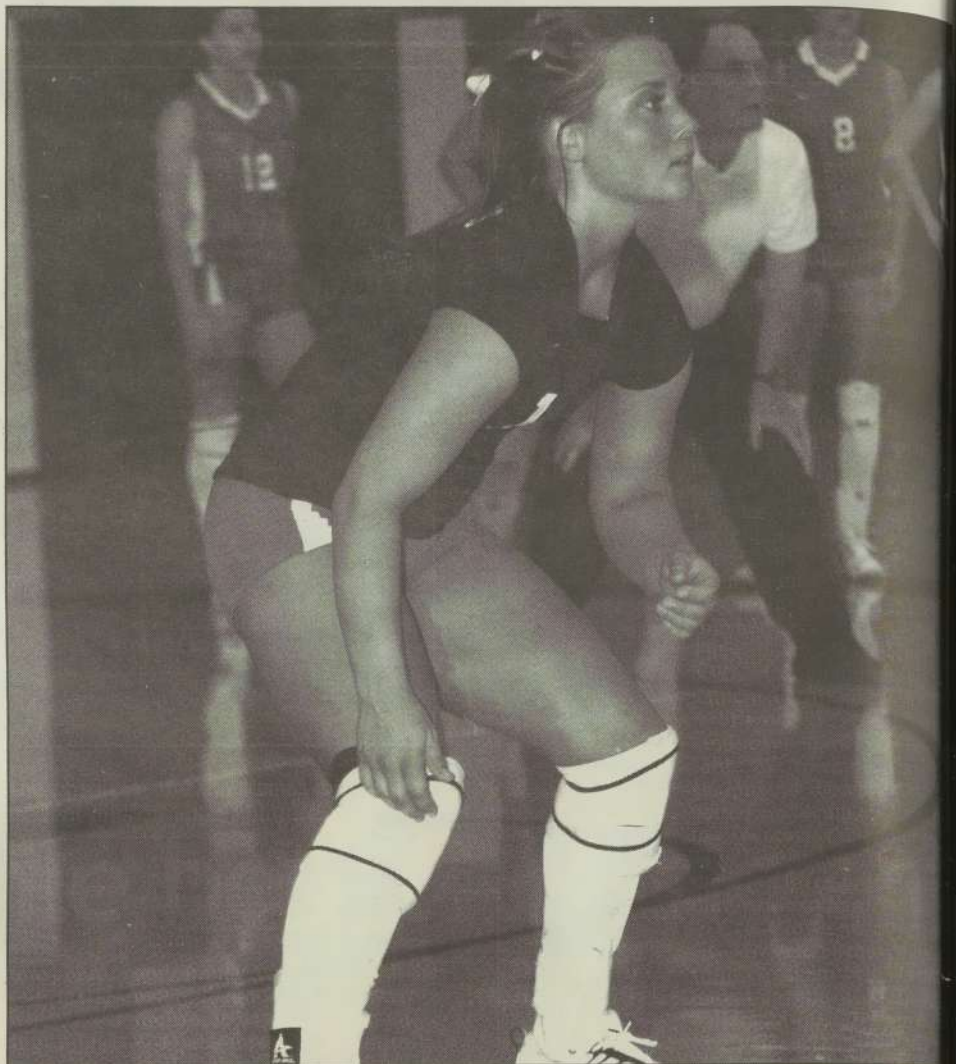
Defensively, Jami Duhrkoop had 20 digs, while Hennessy showed all-around flair with 18 digs. Catie Warren, who was named Cougar of the week by Woods, brought 16 digs to the table and two ace serves, serving 100 percent.

Remaining a tight squad, the Cougars put together a stellar team effort with 11 team blocks. Woods said the Cougars had been stressing team blocks in practice, but just could not turn the ball around against the Saints.

"We need to step it up in the next four games," Woods said.

A tough week is ahead for Clackamas. Tonight the Cougars face Linn-Benton CC at 6 p.m. in Albany. The Cougars are 6-2 in league, and as of press time ranked first in the NWAACC south. Friday, the volleyballers will tangle with Southwestern Oregon CC, the second ranked team in the south. The match will be at home at 7 p.m. in the Randall Gym. Check nwaacc.org or the Clackamas athletic department web site for a full list of volleyball stats and standings.

"We are trying for NWAACCs right now," Woods said. "We are just trying to pull it out and we need a lot of people there for our last two home games."



All photos by: Dick Clouser Contributed

Cougar defensive specialist Jami Duhrkoop gets ready during a recent game. Although the Clackamas volleyball team has fallen on hard times as of late, they continue to work hard and are fighting their way toward a berth in the NWAACC Championships.



ABOVE: Middle blocker Rachel Gowen comes ready, willing and able as she goes in for the kill. RIGHT: Outside hitter Meggan Chapin sets a nice dig. Chapin had 11 kills in last week's loss to Mt. Hood CC. The Cougars will play tonight at Linn-Benton in Albany. The Cougars will look to bounce, rock and skate to their first win in four games.

