

Men's basketball 'stepping up'

Cliff Sorensen
Clackamas Print

The Cougar men's basketball plowed through Southwest Oregon Community College Saturday, earning a 104-71 victory at home.

Cougars' Head Coach Cliff Wegner was pleased with the team's performance against the Southwest Oregon Lakers, citing precision in their shooting defense as the reason they came out the physically larger team.

"I thought we put together solid halves," said Wegner. "We're not very big, so we have to be very precise. We just have to play fundamental, sound defense, which we're capable of doing."

Wagner's precision from the field and three throw line certainly helped the cougars on Saturday as they shot 56.3 percent from outside the paint, and 82.4 percent from the line.

"I think we had a really good shooting night," Wegner said of the Cougars in general. "I think we've kind of been stepping up lately."

The biggest defensive push against the Lakers came from Matt Sims, who came away with 15 points and 10 rebounds that night.

"Matt Sims has just been hard on people to deal with," said Wegner. "He had 31 [points] at

Lane and fouled out three guys trying to guard him. When Lane came here he had 30 and fouled out three guys."

Another offensive highlight was Micah Mooney, who shot 100 percent from the field and the line. Mooney also had eight assists, allowing teammates Steve Vaughan, Martin Axnick and David Cernin to match his 12 points. Jake Kettles also contributed to the Cougars' success with seven assists.

"[Mooney] actually had a really good game," said Wegner. "[He had] four rebounds, I think. He played very hard and played well defensively."

With only five games left to go in their regular season the team is already looking forward to the NWACC championships in March, where they hope to continue a record-setting legacy.

"We're actually the only team that's been there all five years, so we want to go back and we want to try to place again," said Wegner.

Clackamas has not only been the only team to go to the

NWACC championships all five years since it has become a 16-team tournament, but they've placed every year ... a record that Wegner and his team are very proud of. This is part of the reason Wegner feels that there's lots of promise for the team to finish strong, and is staying positive about this Clackamas team's abilities.

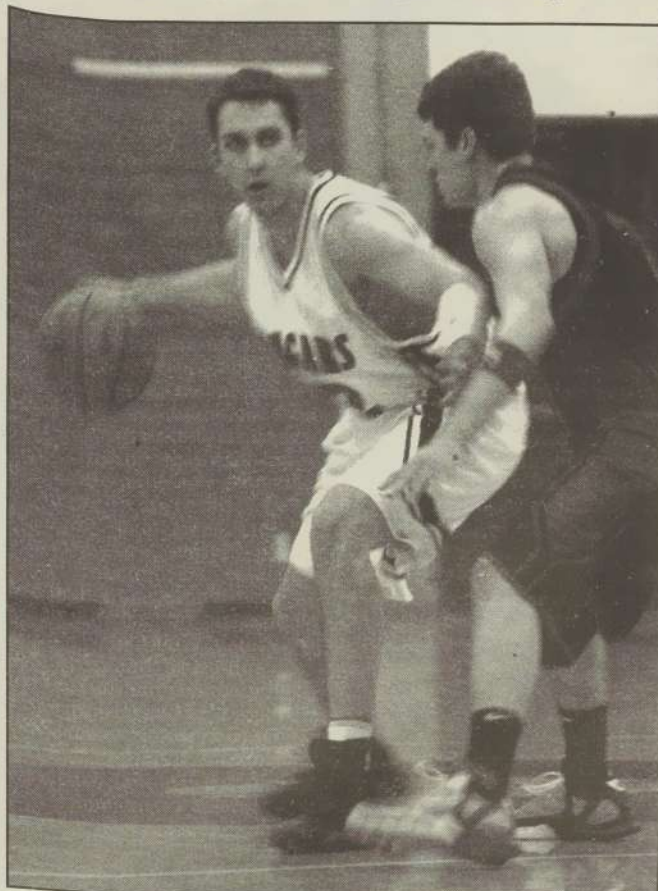
"I think the team is starting to come together a little bit," said Wegner. "I think people have a clear understanding of what the team needs from each individual and what the team needs to do to be successful."

Before the championships in March, however, the Cougars will be playing at Portland Community College tonight, and then they'll face Linn Benton at home Saturday, Feb. 18 at 6 p.m. in Randall Hall.

"[Linn Benton] will be a tough game," Wegner said. "I think they're very physical, and we've already beaten them twice."

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Cliff Wegner
Clackamas Men's Basketball Coach



Harriet Strothers Clackamas Print

Freshman Wing David Cernin keeps his cool while a Southwestern player attempts to keep up. The team is preparing to take on Linn-Benton Feb. 18 at 6 p.m.

Wrestlers shoot for All-American

Matt Olson
Clackamas Print

Last weekend the Cougar wrestling team placed third in the regional tournament in Astoria, where they also had several competitors qualify for the national tournament.

To attend Nationals a team must place in the top four at their regional competition, which the Cougars did. Northern Idaho took first and Southwestern Oregon took second ahead of Clackamas.

"It was a great regional tournament for me, and if any one of these guys didn't qualify it would have torn me apart," said Matt Haluska.

Mike Beeson, Shane Slover, Matt Roy, Alex Bubb, Brandon Sims, Jon Basting and Matt Pownall, will all attend Nationals in Rochester, Minnesota. Of the 9 wrestlers who competed, only wrestler Vela did not qualify.

"It's not a matter of work ethic," Haluska said of Vela, "it's weight." Vela competes in the 25-pound class but "barely weighs 117 soaking wet," Haluska joked.

Vela was disappointed, but it's still another year of competition ahead of him. As a freshman, Vela is still climbing for another season, unlike most of his teammates.

Haluska's goal is to have all eight wrestlers attend the national tournament and qualify as All-American. Having eight wrestlers qualify is a first in his program.

All eight wrestlers that qualify for Nationals achieve All-American status, then the wrestling program will have a total of 23 All-American

athletes in its history.

Among the ranks of past Cougar champions are Matt "The Law" Lindland, an Olympic silver medalist and Ultimate Fighting Championship fighter, and Glenn Garrison. Garrison is currently ranked number two in the US at 145 pounds, and is

the Armed Forces champion.

Clackamas wrestling has a great legacy, and a new chapter may be written on Feb 24 and 25 in Minnesota. If Haluska's predictions for his team come true, the CCC wrestling program may just be the next regional powerhouse.

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