

Lady Cougs maintain first place

Frank Jordan
The Clackamas Print

The Clackamas women's basketball team struggled last week, but came through with two wins to maintain their first-place standing in the Southern Division of the NWAACC with two weeks to play in the regular season.

The Cougars traveled to Portland CC Feb. 15 and overcame a bad performance to post a 66-61 victory over the Lady Panthers. Clackamas was missing freshman post Kellyn Cooper, who was out with strep throat, and the Cougars' play suffered as a result. Clackamas did not play a very good first half and only led 26-25 at the halftime break.

"We really struggled offensively," said Head Coach Jim Martineau. "Portland played very hard and we did not. Kellyn's absence hurt, but we should have picked up the slack. We just didn't." But the Cougars came out of

the halftime with some renewed energy and quickly took control of the action. Sophomore point guard LaToya Hill led the Cougar effort in the second half by scoring 18 of her team-high 23 points in the final half, and played huge down the stretch, hitting some big shots and making some clutch free throws to ice the game for the Cougars.

Charday Hunt had 15 points and five rebounds and Kellie Morey scored 14 points in helping Clackamas to the victory.

Last Saturday, Clackamas jumped out to a big lead early and held on in the second half to defeat Linn-Benton CC 71-56 in the Randall Hall gym.

"We absolutely played a great first half, but we relaxed a little bit in the second and it allowed LBCC to hang around a little longer than they really should have," said Martineau. "We lost our focus and just kind of went through the motions. It was disappointing, but we played well enough to defeat our opponent."

Hunt hit four three-pointers and shot 6-9 overall, leading

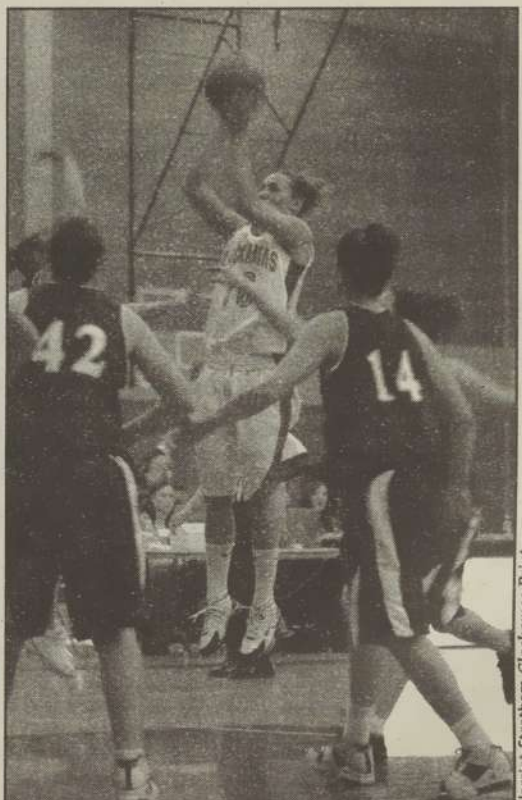
the Cougars with 26 points, including 20 in the first half, helping Clackamas to a 43-25 halftime lead. Hunt also led the Cougars off the backboards with eight rebounds. Rochelle Reeves had 18 points and six rebounds, and Hill continued her outstanding all-around play with 14 points, six rebounds, eight assists and seven steals.

The Cougars improved their division record to 10-1 and their overall record to 20-4 with the two wins, maintaining a first-place tie in the division with Lane CC.

Clackamas will host Chemeketa CC tonight with a 5:30 p.m. tip off in the Randall Hall gym. Then they will play Umpqua CC on Saturday at 4 p.m., also in the gym in Randall Hall.

Reeves, Hill and Morey, as well as Kayla Ohlman and Emma Ward will be playing the final game of their Clackamas careers on Saturday.

The Cougars look to make a statement heading into the NWAACC tournament in two weeks in Kennewick, Washington.



Linn-Benton ladies attempt to thwart the efforts of sophomore guard Kellie Morey. The Lady Cougs go up against Chemeketa CC in the Randall gym at 5:30 p.m. tonight.

Harriet Strothers Clackamas Print

Second half turn-around keeps winning streak alive

Jeff Sorensen
The Clackamas Print

The Clackamas men's basketball team overcame a seven point deficit in the first half to beat Linn-Benton's Lady Runners 73 - 65 last Saturday in the Randall gym.

Cougars' Head Coach Cliff Wegner was disappointed with the team's performance during the first half, but was pleased that his team turned things around and finished strong to take the win.

"I thought the first half we were a little flat," said Wegner. "[Linn-Benton] came out very jazzed, which doesn't surprise me, but we didn't surprise our kids."

The Cougars - who shot 100

percent from the free throw line throughout the game - had to find something other than foul shots to help them pull ahead of their opponents.

"In 30 years of coaching, I've never seen this happen," said Wegner. "... perfect free throw shooting from both teams."

Help came from point guard Jake Kettles, who managed nine points and eight assists for the night. Kettles shares his coach's opinion about his team's performance.

"It was actually pretty rough to start off," said Kettles. "There wasn't any intensity with our team at all, [but] we shot pretty well in the second half."

Even more help for the Cougars' offense came from wingman Steven

Vaughan who led the team with 21 points and seven defensive rebounds.

Vaughan chalks up the Cougars' close-call to a healthy learning experience in the team's fight to make it into the NWAACC tournament in less than three weeks.

"I think we came a long way as a team," said Vaughan, "[We've] got to be real concerned because there's always a chance that we don't make it, [but] I think this team is definitely good enough [to] get into the NWAACC tournament."

Kettles - who feels the second half of the season has been better for the Cougar men than the first - believes that the way the team has grown together is part of the reason why they've been seeing so much

success as of late, both on and off the court.

"It's been a really fun year just because everybody enjoys playing together and everybody really enjoys each other personally off the court," said Kettles, who attributes the team's camaraderie partly to Vaughan's mother. "We go over to [Vaughan's] house and his mom cooks us all a big meal before the game."

This technique by Vaughan's mother seems to be working, as the Cougars have won five of their last six games.

The Cougars will face Umpqua CC on Saturday, Feb. 25 at 6 p.m. at home, but first they'll host Chemeketa CC tonight at 7:30 p.m. in the Randall gym. The Cougars

have been beaten by Chemeketa once this season and are anxious for the chance to play them at home.

"I think we're going to come out with a lot of intensity, [and] we'll play harder than we have all year," said Kettles. "There's some personal rivals from high school [on Chemeketa's team] and there's really not a lot of love lost there."

"We've got to focus on Chemeketa," he added, "We're playing hard, and any time you go out and play hard things are usually going to fall into place."

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