

Nationals: wrestlers to Minnesota

Mathew Olson

The Clackamas Print

The Clackamas wrestling team placed 10th in the country at the NCAA Nationals competition, while also receiving the Academic Award for scholastic achievement.

"I couldn't have been any more proud if we'd been the national champions," said Coach Mike Haluska "though I'd probably be a bit happier."

Placing 10th out of the 43 teams that attended the competition was a great accomplishment. Despite a great performance, many of the matches were very close.

"We lost about seven matches that were decided by one point. It could've gone either way and it could've gone our way," said Haluska.

Taking place Feb. 25 and 26, the national competition saw hundreds of competitors meet to duke it out. Eight competitors from Clackamas traveled to Minnesota to compete, but only Bryan Cantrell managed to beat out the stiff competition and place.

"Everything flowed so naturally. I didn't second guess what I was doing," Cantrell said of the competition.

Cantrell started strong win-

ning two matches, but stumbled on the third match of the day. "It happened in the first round," said Cantrell. "He took me down and pinned me."

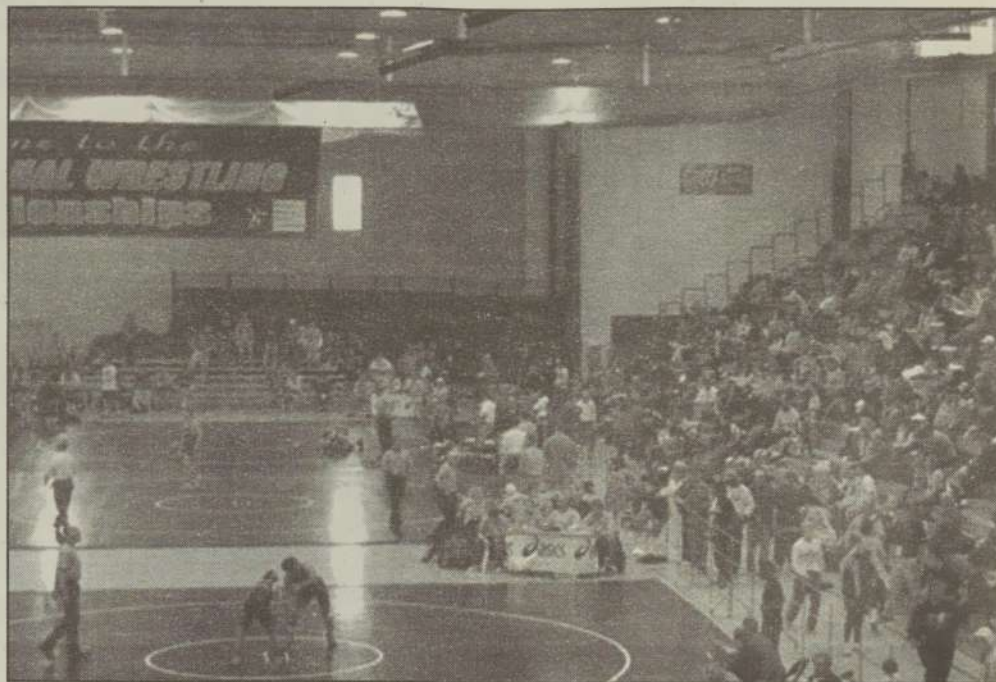
With all but Cantrell falling out of the running on the first day, the Cougars watched the lone wrestler climb up the ladder, while the rest of the team relaxed and contemplated their performances, Cantrell had to steel himself for another round of matches on Saturday.

Weigh-in on the morning of the second day was harrowing for Cantrell. "On the first scale I was .3 [pounds] over, on the second scale I was .2 over, and finally on the third I was .1 under!" explained Cantrell. Such miniscule discrepancies can disqualify wrestlers, though the rules stipulate that weigh-in can be redone on different scales, a saving grace for some.

"The whole second day I was more focused and relaxed," said Cantrell. This mindset carried him through the next three wins to place third, with six wins and one loss, qualifying as All-American in his 157-pound weight class.

"I think I could have beaten the kid who took second," said Cantrell. "I even think I could've taken first!" With such confidence, Cantrell's future at a university seems promising.

"I still have three years of eli-



Internet Photo

Wrestlers compete during nationals in Minnesota this last weekend. Out of eight Clackamas wrestlers, Bryan Cantrell was the only one to achieve victory.

gibility in Division One schools," said Cantrell. When asked about his choices, Cantrell replied, "I'd like to go to Minnesota, Oklahoma,

or Iowa State."

Cantrell heads to harder training and tougher competition in Division One, but he leaves Clackamas on a

good note.

"This is the most fun team I've been on," said Cantrell. "We're like brothers, we're like family."

Lady Cougars continue hot play; next stop NWAACC tourney

Frank Jordan

The Clackamas Print

The Clackamas women finished their home schedule for the 2005-06 season with two victories last night. A victory over Mt. Hood CC in Gresham will place them in first-place tie with Lane CC for the Southern Division title.

The Cougars took on the Lady Cougars from Chemeketa CC last Tuesday and held their oppo-

nent to 33 percent shooting leading to a 72-54 victory. Clackamas led from the beginning, jumping out to a 10-point halftime lead. The Lady Cougars led by as much as 19 in the blowout win.

Charday Hunt led the Cougars with 21 points and nine rebounds, while Kellie Morey chipped in 17 points and seven rebounds. Rochelle Reeves had 15 points and LaToya Hill contributed another triple-double with 11 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists from the point.

The Cougars played their final home game of the season on Saturday and pulled away from a three-point halftime lead to defeat the Umpqua CC Timberwomen by a score of 84-67.

Hunt led a balanced scoring attack with 19 points and seven rebounds. Morey had 18 points, while Reeves chipped in 17 points and nine rebounds. Hill had a near triple-double with 13 points, nine rebounds and nine assists and Monique Tribble had eight points. Kellyn Cooper made her

first significant showing since her recent bout with strep, contributing six points, six rebounds and four blocked shots from the post. Kayla Ohlman played her last home game as a Cougar and chipped in three points and six rebounds.

Hill, Reeves, Morey, Ohlman and Emma Ward played their final home games in a Clackamas uniform and contributed to the continuation of a very successful Cougar women's program. All hope to keep contributing as Clackamas gears up for the NWAACC tourna-

ment next weekend in Kennewick, Washington.

The Cougars play their final regular season game tonight in Gresham against Mt. Hood. Tip off for tonight's game is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. The NWAACC tournament runs March 9-12 in Kennewick at the Toyota Center. The Cougars hope to improve on last year's third-place showing and get back to the level of the 2004 season, the year Clackamas won their first-ever NWAACC championship.

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Autistic athlete amazes all

Mike Guidice
Sports Editor

A player leads the team in scoring, and is carried off the court on his teammates' shoulders. You've probably heard of similar scenarios before — but wait. There's a lot more to this story than you might think.

I could write about the Winter Olympics here. I could also talk about the Trailblazers recent trade move, the pending MLB season or the upcoming NFL draft. While all these things are significant, none have touched me more than the story of 17 year-old Jason McElwain.

Haven't heard of him? It's okay. Up until a couple days ago I hadn't either. Neither had many people outside of his home in Greece, New York, for that matter.

Up until one fateful night, McElwain, an autistic senior at Greece Athena High School, had served the team water and towels as the team manager. He hadn't made the team, but provided for the players on the varsity basketball squad the best he could.

From a very young age, McElwain was socially inept and didn't begin speaking until age five. The classes he attended at Greece Athena were for slow learners and had only about half a dozen students in them. It wasn't until he found basketball that the 5-foot-6-inch student began to finally open up and establish friendships.

All season long, Coach Jim Johnson had been impressed by the boy's work ethic and dedication to the team. Despite being relegated to the bench in a white shirt and black tie, McElwain has always maintained a positive attitude.

His time would come however, as good things tend to for those who possess the virtue of patience.

Feb. 15 was the last home game of the season for Greece Athena, and the fans had come prepared. Although there was no guarantee that McElwain would play, the people came out in full support, displaying pictures of McElwain's head on popsicle sticks and chanting his name.

Then it happened, with four

minutes left, McElwain's number was finally called. Running onto the court to deafening cheers, the young man was finally living his dream, just getting onto the court was apparently not enough though.

McElwain proceeded to hit six long three pointers, almost seven. His foot was on the line for one attempt. In just a four minute span the diminutive guard became the team's leading scorer for the game, but it was so much more than that.

Johnson was quoted as saying "It was as touching as any moment I have ever had in sports."

The gym erupted in pandemonium as the seconds ticked off, fans stormed the court and McElwain's teammates hoisted him on their shoulders.

Since that day McElwain has become a superstar of sorts, signing autographs, posing for pictures and holding interviews with various newspapers. While I'm sure the attention is nice, McElwain just wanted to play ball, and when he finally got the chance, he contributed a performance no one will soon forget.