

Clack, Lower Columbia, redundancy

Continued from SOFTBALL, Page 1

Jessica Schell was 2-3 at the plate with a home run, while Heather Rightley had three hits, Janelle Cristofaro had two hits, including a triple, and Slocum had two hits to lead the Cougar offense.

Game 2

The Cougar win advanced the team into a second-round showdown with Eastern Region champ Wenatchee Valley CC. Cotie Howard led off the bottom of the sixth in a scoreless game with a triple. Howard was pinch-ran for by Jessica Calderon, who scored on an RBI groundout by Forbito to give CCC a 1-0 lead. Santos mowed down WVCC in the seventh, and Clackamas held on for the win.

Game 3

The win over Wenatchee Valley propelled the Cougars into a quarterfinal matchup with Lower Columbia Saturday morning, and the Red Devils wasted no time getting started, hitting three homers in the first inning and building a 4-0 lead. Clackamas pushed three runs across in the fifth to tie the game at four, but LCC's Ashlea Strode hit a grand-slam homer in the seventh to give LCC a 9-4 lead.

Clackamas battled back in the bottom of the final frame, pushing a run across to get the score to 9-5, before Howard belted a three-run home run to close the deficit to 9-8. CCC got two more runners on base, but couldn't push them across, and Lower Columbia held on for the 9-8 victory.

"This might have been one of our best hitting performances of the season. We were so patient at the plate, and we got some timely base hits," said Farnsworth. "We gave ourselves chances to win, and that is all you can ask for. Lower Columbia is a great team, and they won the game, simple as that."

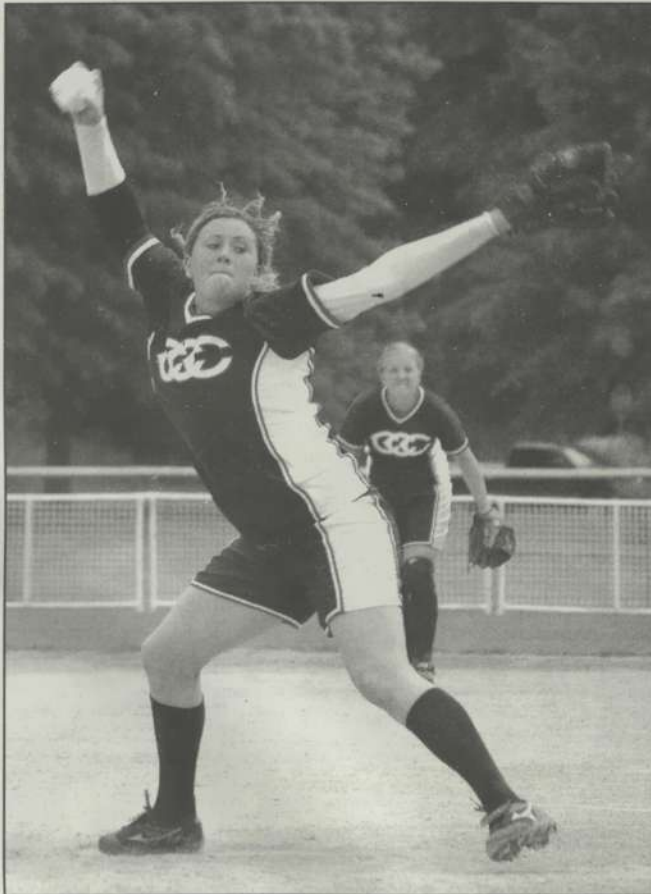
Rightley had four hits, all singles, and stole two bases for CCC. King had two hits and two RBIs, and Ashley Roy hit two doubles for the Cougars against LCC. Cristofaro had a solid game on the mound with nine strikeouts.

Game 4

The loss dropped Clackamas into a losers-bracket game against Walla Walla CC, and the Warriors took a quick 1-0 lead before the Cougars bats warmed up. Slocum hit a solo home run in the fourth to give CCC a 2-1 lead. Walla Walla tied the game in the fifth, but King hit a homer of her own in the bottom of the fifth to give Clackamas the 3-2 victory.

Slocum made the defensive play of the tournament in the seventh with a sprawling catch of a long drive in left field to save the game for CCC. Santos had another stellar game on the hill, striking out 14 and allowing only six hits.

All of Sunday's games at the tournament were rained out, allowing the Clackamas team to regroup mentally and physically



Pitcher Renee Santos prepares to unleash the beast on the mound. Santos led the free world in K's this season.

and get ready for the long haul that faced the team on Monday.

Game 5

CCC opened Monday play with a 9 a.m. game versus Wenatchee Valley, and Santos spun another masterpiece on the mound, allowing only two hits and striking out 10 in the Clackamas 4-0 victory. Forbito had a solo homer to give Clackamas the lead, then King blasted a three-run tater in the sixth inning to put the game away. Rightley had another four-hit game for the Cougars, and she stole two more bases to lead the offense.



Sophomore pitcher Janelle Cristofaro rounds the bases.

Game 6

The win over Wenatchee Valley sent the Cougars into a semifinal matchup with Mt. Hood CC, and

the Cougars got solid pitching performances from both Cristofaro and Santos, while Daline and King supplied the power as CCC defeated the Saints 5-1.

With the game tied at one, King stepped to the plate with a runner on and blasted a ball over the fence to give CCC a 3-1 lead. Daline extended the lead in the fifth with a two-run homer of her own to give the Cougars the 5-1 lead. Great relief pitching by Santos and solid defense the rest of the way gave Clackamas the 5-1 win and sent the Cougars into the championship matchup with Lower Columbia.

Clackamas would have to defeat the Red Devils twice to win their ninth title overall, but Lower Columbia got the timely hits and defeated Clackamas 3-2 to win the NWAACC championship.

"Renee and Janelle pitched as well as they have pitched all season; we asked a lot from those two girls all season and they really delivered. Renee's performance on Monday was really clutch," said Farnsworth. "We just battled and battled all day and all weekend, and I am so proud of this team that words just can't describe it."

Clackamas now has eight NWAACC titles and five second-place finishes in their softball history. King, Santos, Schell and Slocum were named to the All-Tournament team for their efforts. Lower Columbia shortstop Jessie Hanna was named tournament most valuable player, and Tim Mackin of LCC was named

Coach of the Year.

"Clackamas and Lower Columbia are the two best programs in the NWAACC, and both teams showed it again this weekend," said Farnsworth. "We both get great players every year, and although there are other good programs, everyone just expects us and LCC to be around at the end come tournament time. Again, we did not disappoint."

It was a very successful year for first-year Head Coach Farnsworth. Clackamas set a school record for victories with 40 and set numerous individual and team offensive and pitching records. King broke the single-season record for home runs, and Daline broke the single-season record for hits. As for the future, the coach is hoping for the best and preparing for it.

"I owe a lot to the players and the absolutely terrific coaching staff that we have. Paul Fiskum, Denise Nasuta and Larry Chapman are the rocks of Cougar softball, along with Denise's husband, Louie; they have taught me a lot of things about being a coach," said Farnsworth. "We get tremendous support from the college, and it really has been a great experience."

"I can't wait for next year to start. We should have a great nucleus coming back. Hopefully, Renee will be back. With the season she had, there will be a great deal of interest about her and her pitching. She deserves all of the attention. She had a memorable year."

Awards galore

The Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges handed out their postseason softball awards at a banquet in Portland last Thursday, and seven Clackamas Cougars were selected to the Southern Region all-star team for 2007.

Catcher/1B Katie King, Catcher/1B Cotie Howard, Shortstop Samantha Daline and Pitcher Renee Santos were named to the first team. Pitcher/OF Janelle Cristofaro, OF Heather Rightley and OF Lacey Forbito were named to the second team.

In addition, Santos was named as the Southern Region pitcher of the year and was also selected as one of 12 NWAACC players to the 2007 Louisville Slugger/National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) All-American team.

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A Lady Cougar attempts to evade the tag from the opposing catcher as she slides head-first into home during the game vs. Highline CC.

All photos by Sam Krause Clackamas Print