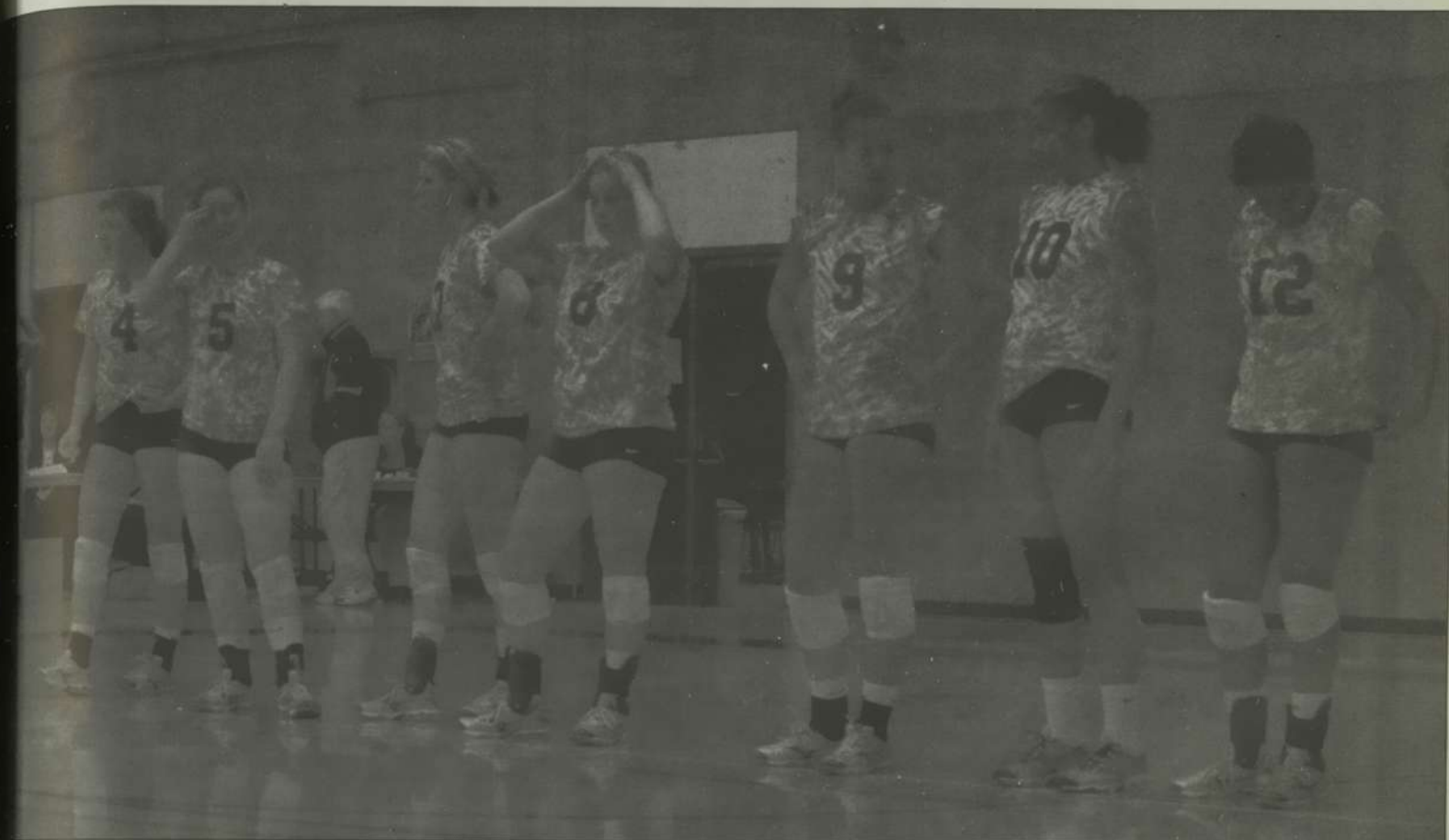


Volleyball digs deep for playoffs



All photos by John Petty Clackamas Print

Left to right: Kylee Perez, Richelle Heacock, Kelli Gamble, Rachael Strong, Shikara White, Sabrina Nelson and Vanity Massey stand along the endline to a game against Chemeketa Community College. Clackamas beat Chemeketa in five games on Oct. 28.

Kathie Woods and the women's volleyball team prepare for the post-season and hope to be on top of their game come the NWAACC championships

By Mark Foster
Sports Editor

With a team evenly split between sophomores and freshmen, Kathie Woods and the Cougar volleyball team hope to break out in the play-

After clinching the playoff

Clackamas' women's volleyball team is hoping it can turn a season of ups and downs around and make a run at an NWAACC title. One thing Woods feels could be the biggest downfall of the team is their focus mentally. Woods believes that this is what the team needs to work on most; they have the physical talent but they need to anticipate what could happen next rather than just reacting.

Last year's regular season domination and NWAACC tournament run will be tough to top. Going 41-15 in regular season play in 2008, the Cougars finished fourth in post-season play.



"Every team is different and has their individual strengths. This team is a team of great character. They respect each other and work hard. They give 100 percent in school, volleyball and life," said Woods.

After the game against Mt. Hood Community College on Nov. 6, Woods thought her team showed what they can do against top tier teams in the conference. Though losing to MHCC, the Cougars showed promise for the near future.

Shikara White, a sophomore on the team, recorded 24 kills in the game leading the team with almost half of the total kills for the game.

About the game, Woods said, "After last night's game with Mt. Hood, it regained our confidence of being able to upset many teams and making our goal to win the NWAACC championship."

Confidence is key for a team that has not performed as well as previous Cougar teams, Woods admitted, "It's

been a season of ups and downs." Knowing their abilities and strengths on the court will help this team go deep into the post season.

She feels that this year's team has an edge over others physically. Woods said, "Our biggest strength going into playoffs is our physical. We are very good offensively and can put up a good block."

She also was reluctant to say, though, that her team does sometimes lose their focus mentally and stray away from the gameplan and strategy. Woods did come back by noting that the team is very determined and has good practice habits.

After the season ends, the work does not stop for Woods. Losing all five sophomores along with one freshman, she agreed there will be a lot of shoes to fill come next season.

"We are presently recruiting and looking for the best possible people to step in and help continue the winning tradition of Cougar Volleyball," said Woods. "We have some great prospects and are excited about the future, as well as the present."

A big part of what Woods does with her recruits is not just volleyball related. She tries to help her players grow both on and off the court.

"I love seeing these young ladies grow and mature as people and also as volleyball players, while having success in their education," said Woods.

With the NWAACC championships readily approaching, Woods and her squad look to gain momentum and work out the kinks come game time. For a coach with a strong winning tradition, she knows the real work begins now in order for her team to be playing their best come Nov. 19.



Middle blocker Caitlin Howard (13) and setter Richelle Heacock (5) get ready to serve-receive.



Sophomore Joanna Abraham goes up for a kill.

Got hunting photos? Send them in or bring them by *The Print* office and we may use them in a future issue.

