

Ballers bring big hopes for 2011



Nathan Sturgess Clackamas Print

men's basketball warms up for practice last week. Though the Northwest Athletics Association of Community Colleges' basketball season does not begin in January, the team is readying themselves for the preseason which, begins this Saturday with the NWAACC Jamboree, hosted by Clackamas Community College.

By Katherine Suydam
The Clackamas Print

NBA season has started and you've probably been watching your television, cheering for your favorite team and trying to score points in your fantasy league. But how about trying to score a little closer to home?

Clackamas Community College will host a scrimmage on Friday, preparing our Cougars, along with nine other teams in the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges, for the upcoming season.

The scrimmage will be the first of three that the Cougars will play before their preseason games begin in December. The Cougars will play three preseason games in December, with two of them, along with the Christmas Holiday event on Dec. 28, in which eight teams will participate.

The NWAACC league season will begin in January; the Cougars will play their first of 14 league games on Jan. 15 at Chemeketa Community College, who the team considers the biggest threat in their battle to defend their title as two-year champions.

"In league our biggest threat will be Chemeketa. They're the last year's (Southern Region) champions and they have a good returning squad," said Travis Robbins. Robbins plays point guard and the wing for the Cougars.

Last year, CCC was the NWAACC champion, which has made them the team to beat this year.

"Everybody is after us, we've got the target on our back we're the team everybody wants to beat," said Head Coach Cliff Wegner.

Many new names have been added to the roster this year, and the Cougars are hoping these new players will help them clinch the champion title for the third year in a row. Only three players on the team are returning for a second year, Robbins and post players Brandon Troxel and Derrick Hayes.

"Those three kids have improved, they're better players than they were last year and we're expecting them to step up as sophomores and help lead us to defend our title," said Wegner.

The Cougars have filled their roster with new talent, each on equal footing in the coaches' eyes.

"Everybody that's still here has shown that they could be

a starter," said Assistant Coach Paul Fiskum.

Both coaches mentioned two newcomers that they think are good additions to the team: post Max Jacobsen and point guard/wing Brycen Driver, who are both championship players.

"Winning and championships can't be taught, and the fact that those kids have experienced that at the high school level brings something to the table. They know what it's like to be a winner, they know about unselfishness, they know about working together, they know about commitment to a common goal," said Wegner.

The Cougars are ready for the season, or at least they seem to be. Driver said that he thinks the Cougars are prepared, but they still have a lot of time before the season starts.

"I think everybody is excited, I think everyone is chomping at the bit to get a game and I think everyone is excited and I'm excited to play with this group of guys," said Robbins.

If you would like to see the Cougars new line up before the season starts, the NWAACC Jamboree will be hosted at Clackamas next Saturday, Nov. 6, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Randall Hall gym. Take this chance to see the two-year defending champions in action.

Cougar volleyball catches their stride

By Sarah Mitts
The Clackamas Print

After spending the first part of the season getting adjusted, the Cougars volleyball team is strong at the end of the season. They're ranked No. 4 in the region, making them competitive in the tournament. The team is hopeful to make the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges tournament. "We are doing a lot better," said Kylee Bellamy, co-captain of the team. "We started off as a really young team who didn't know each other very well. We're getting used to each other and getting into our positions. We have won our last two games which has jumpstarted us in the NWAACC. And we just keep getting better and better."

The team began the season with four freshmen and only one returning player, which made it difficult for the girls to find their rhythm in the beginning. The team went 0-4 in the Spokane tournament in which they entered

for fourth in their region behind Linn-Benton, Chemeketa and No. 1 Mt. Hood.

While their win-loss record is not where they want it to be, the coaching staff and team have been working hard to get this new team where they need to be. They've been practicing every day for a few hours, doing a lot of playing scenarios and working hard on their blocking and defense.

Courtney Pattock, setter for the team, shared about a goal reward program the coaching staff uses to help motivate the girls and improve their performance. "Before each game, we set goals and then the next day, we look at them and determine how many we achieved. If you get 10, then you get a goal reward, which usually is something fun," she said.

The team improved throughout the season after the Spokane Tourney in September, although they are a little off last year's pace when they were 18-17 at this time. Coach Kathie Woods is proud of how the team has grown and how far they have come.

"We knew we had the talent but we needed to learn how to play at the college level with all new teammates. These girls are hard working girls that are supportive of

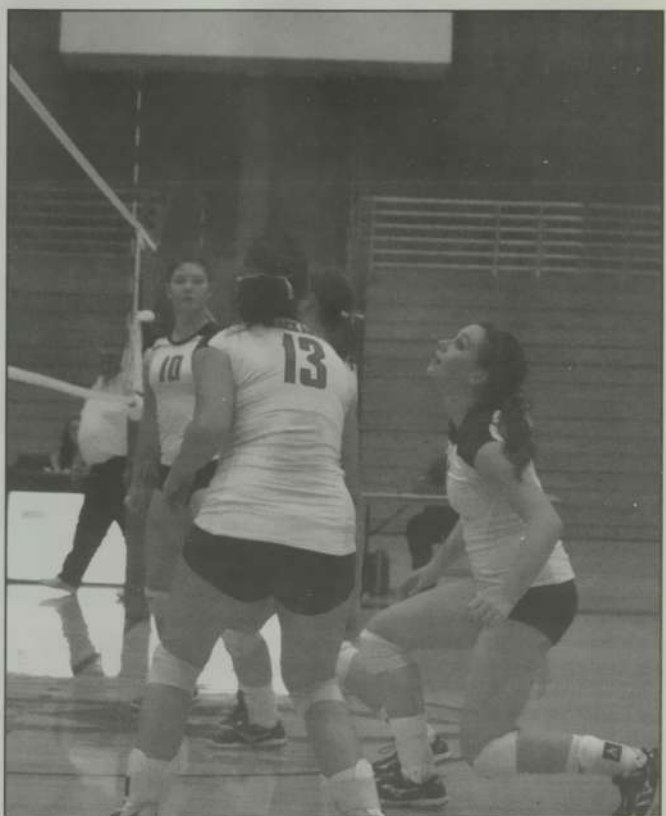
each other and are playing hard for each other. I am very happy about that. We are growing with each new day!" said Woods.

Woods, an author of various volleyball books and well known for her coaching style, teaches more than just volleyball and places a large focus on school, volleyball and life.

Bellamy, a transfer from another community college, loves her new team and getting to work with an experienced coaching staff. "I love all the team bonding things we do and I like my coaches better. We have five assistant coaches who come in everyday and help us. They communicate really well with us and let us know how we're doing," she said.

"We spend a lot of time building the team to work together," said Woods. "We have huge expectations and I give a lot of responsibility to my girls so that they have the tools they need in life when they are finished with volleyball. I want them to believe they can do anything that life brings them. We work hard and become leaders in the process."

The success of the team is much more than volleyball, but hopefully it will show on the court with the end of the season in sight.



Ben Carlson Clackamas Print

Cougar volleyball scrimmages during practice last week. The team has a 4-4 record and hopes to increase their win record to five this Friday when they play Mt. Hood Community College at 7 p.m. in the Randall gym.