

Men's basketball preps for tourneys



John Petty Clackamas Print

Clackamas' men's basketball team practices hard on Nov. 29 in Randall Gym as they prepare for their upcoming tournaments.

By Katherine Suydam
The Clackamas Print

Even though the preseason has just begun, there is no reason to think that the Cougars men's basketball team is not hard at work. The Cougars will play in three tournaments this December before the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges season begins, the maximum they are allowed to compete in.

The Cougars, a two year NWAACC champion team, will be defending their title this season and hope to get a look at the other teams' rosters during the preseason, especially during the tournaments where they can see multiple teams at once. But that is not all that they get out of the tournaments.

"It's a bonding experience because you go away and you hang out together for a whole weekend. You're in hotels together, you're at every meal together, you play games, you practice; it's just the time for teammates to learn about each other and see each other away from the court," said Cliff Wegner, Cougars men's basketball head coach, who has led the team to nine championship matches since he started coaching for Clackamas in the 1998-1999 season.

Even though they haven't played a tournament yet, the team can feel the closeness growing.

"At first it was just like, I'm going to get mine and you're going to get yours, but I think that everybody wants to win so people are adjusting to each other's game," said sophomore wing/post Derrick Hayes.

Though they haven't played many games so far, the Cougars have been using their preseason to the fullest, hoping to become a stronger team by the time the NWAACC season begins in January.

"It's been productive ... It seems like each time we played, we exposed some things that we needed to fix so we started correcting those in practice and the kids have responded and concentrated. I think that they're better than they were before we started playing the scrimmages," said Wegner.

The Cougars will begin the three tournament

streak with the Spokane/North Idaho Tournament in Spokane, Wash, an eight team tournament held Dec. 8 through 10, which they will open against Green River, who the Cougars played in the NWAACC semifinals last season. The Cougars are hoping to get to the championship game to play Northern Idaho, a National Junior College Athletic Association team, ranked number one on the top ten national poll. But in order for that to happen, both teams must win their qualifying matches.

The Cougars will next face Bellevue Community College for the first qualifying match of the Blue Mountain Community College NWAACC Crossover Tournament on Dec. 17. The tournament is an eight team tournament and will be hosted in Bellevue, Wash. Dec. 17 through 19.

"A lot of people counted us out because we lost a lot of good players ... (but) I think that we can win it all," said Hayes.

Though the Cougars are most excited about the Spokane/North Idaho Tournament, fans can look forward to the only tournament hosted by Clackamas this preseason, the annual Clackamas Holiday Tournament, which Wegner estimates has been going on for at least 20 years.

"It's been a fixture in the NWAACC for quite some time and Cliff has just done a great job with it," said Assistant Coach Paul Fiskum. "It always has some of the top teams in the NWAACC, the historical top teams ... It's always a really good tournament."

The Holiday Tournament is an eight team tournament hosted by the Cougars Dec. 28 through 30. The Cougars begin the tournament against Yakima Valley Community College on the 28th. Lower Columbia College won the tournament overall last year but will not be participating in it this year.

Prices to attend the Holiday tourney are a steal, as Clackamas Community College students with a student ID and children under the age of seven get in free. Adults pay \$5 and students without their IDs pay \$3 at the door.

If you don't want to wait for the Clackamas Holiday Tournament to see the Cougars in action at home, you can watch them scrimmage Bellevue on Dec. 11 at 4 p.m. in Randall Gym.

NBA joins NFL with a possible lockout



By Robert Morrison
Sports Editor

In light of recent news, I have decided to pay more attention to lockouts in the world of professional sports. This time it hits closer home. Most people here in Portland have a love for our Trail Blazers, but Blazers and basketball fans in general have an idea of a very probable NBA lockout.

In the past few weeks, I have written about the lockouts of overpaid athletes and a possible lockout. In recent news, it looks like the lockout of the topics in those columns will play a role in what now looks to be a tough 2011 season for sports fans.

The NBA and the National Basketball Player Association have been in negotiations for the past year about a new collective bargaining agreement, much like the NFL. So far each side has stood their ground about what they need in the deal. The biggest issue in the agreement is the pay; owners want players to earn less and players don't want a pay cut. Revenue and both the owners' and players' salaries have been talked about in the past between the two sides.

Both sides seem to be trying to sway the other their way. The NBA put out reports that ticket prices have gone down to a new low in many cities while the better teams' tickets

stay at a stable price. On the other side the NBPA is saying that revenue and ticket sales are at a record high. With no imminent deal on the horizon, neither side will be correct if the ticket sales hit zero at the start of next season.

The negatives of an NBA lockout are very similar to that of an NFL lockout: the teams and players lose money, fans are unable to watch a professional sport, ticket sales hit the zero mark and television companies that air the sport lose money. Also, cities that only have a professional basketball team and no other sports teams will lose a part of their tourism and revenue that comes with having a professional team. It's hard to pay for an arena if no one pays to come watch a team play in it.

The NBA isn't the only industry that would be affected with a lockout. How about the jobs of hundreds of sports journalists? What will they do if there is no NBA or NFL in the same year, especially if that is their area of focus? Sports writers would either have to write out of their element or write about what their readers don't want to read from them. Not to mention the fact that there could be lay-offs. I don't think a newspaper would want to pay for a sports writer if there is hardly anything sports-related to write about.

According to reports done by NBA.com and Sports Day, NBPA executive director Billy Hunter said he is "99 percent sure" there will be a lockout next summer. Hunter has also gone so far as to tell players to save their money.

The last NBA lockout happened in the 1998 season and lasted 50 games, more than half of the season. This is the last thing anyone wants to happen again.

With two professional sports in flux, the sports world is in distress over what to think and what to do. The possibility of both the NBA and NFL in lockouts next year could have both social and economical consequences. Sports fans and cities alike should beware the lockout; in a lockout no one wins.



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