

Cougars mull bittersweet win

By Robert Morrison
Sports Editor

The nation's top junior college is home. On Jan. 14, the No. 1 ranked Clackamas Community College wrestling team hosted Montana State-Northern in the Randall gym. The cougars started off strong with a 6-4 win by Martin Gonzalez against Montana State-Northern's Cameron Neiss and a 9-1 win by Jordan O'Neal against Montana's Brandon Lelifeld.

"Lelifeld had been a three-time state champion in Washington," said CCC's Daniel Nelson.

Nelson, who wrestled in the 165 weightclass, lost his match. "(Jared Miller) had really strong hands. Every time he grabbed my leg, I couldn't get free. I should have pinned him. I lost a lot to a little. I was wrestling up (a weight class) this weekend," said Nelson.

The overall team match was right down to the wire. The Cougars won 22-20.

"We could have wrestled a lot better tonight," said Head Coach Josh Rhoden. "We were a little disappointed with the performance. We had some guys that didn't compete as hard as we would have liked. We had a lot of people come out to watch us after we won the title in Idaho."

The two biggest matches of the night had to have been Jordan Krich in the 197 weight class and Tyrell Fortune in the 285 weight class. Krich won a close 3-3 match by pinning Kody Reed. Fortune won his match 7-4 against former Cougar Rudy Schaffroth.

"There was no other way of us to win without the pin, and Tyrell finished it off with a win," said Rhoden.

The team pulled off the victory in their first match after becoming No.1 in the NJCAA Coaches Poll, but it wasn't all celebration for the team as many players were upset about their losses in matches and the effort they gave.

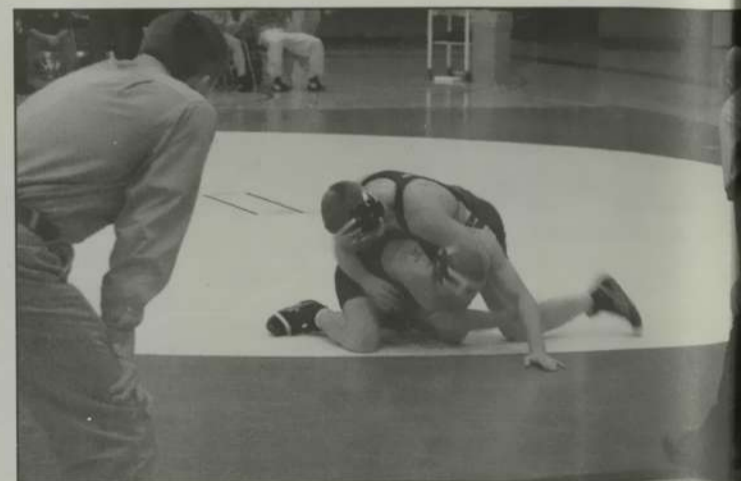
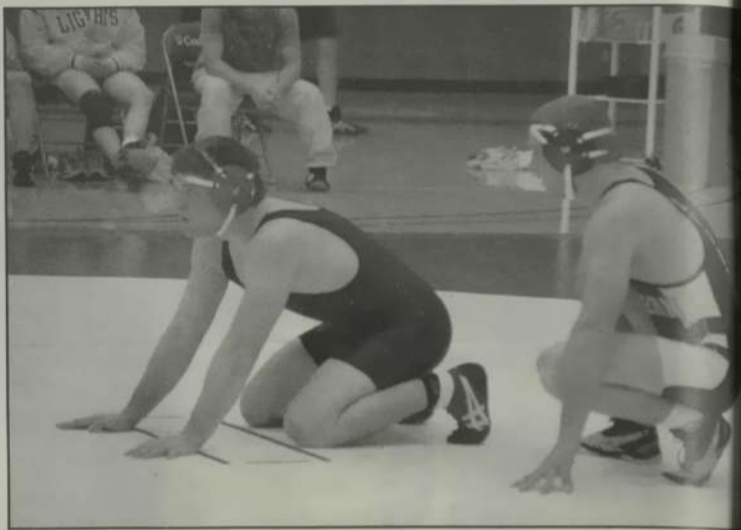
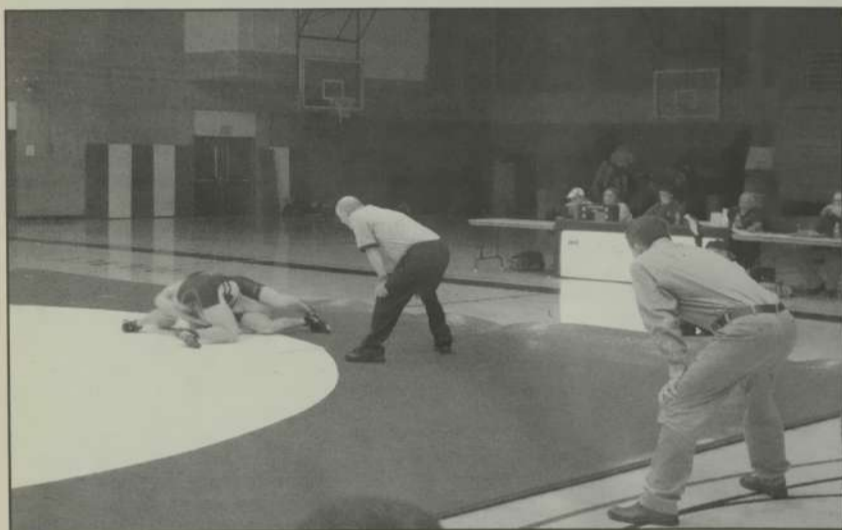
"We did pathetic," said Jordan O'Neal. "We wrestled 10 times worse then we wrestled last weekend and our

performance sucked. We had a strong weights that did alright, but than that we as a team did not do as we should have."

O'Neal, a 141 wrestler, also said that his personal performance was alright in his match against Montana State-Northern.

Many friends and family members of Clackamas wrestlers showed up to the matches. Cheering could be heard every call by the referee and the crowd erupted after the call on Krich's second to last match.

The CCC wrestling team is back into matches ranked No.1 for the time since 1971 and continues to lead ahead to the next opponent and the challenge.



All photos by Robert Morrison Clackamas

Top Right: Jordan Krich takes on Kody Reed during their match Jan 14. Reed wins by a pin.

Middle Right: Krich tries to keep Reed down to earn himself a point in the match.

Bottom Right: Jordan O'Neal takes on Brandon Lelifeld. O'Neal, 9-1.

Top Left: Daniel Nelson takes on Jared Miller. Miller beats Nelson in a lopsided match.

Middle Left: Tyrell Fortune wrestles Rudy Schaffroth. Fortune wins.

Bottom Left: Martin Gonzalez wrestles Cameron Neiss. Gonzalez wins 6-4.