

Superstition plays big part in sports

By John Howard
Associate Sports Editor

Since the dawn of athletic competitions, there has always been an intangible factor that athletes see as necessary in order to succeed: luck. Superstitions in sports are something that nearly every athlete and coach will admit to participating in, no matter what sport they play or at what level they compete.

"These shoes right here? I love these shoes," said Clif Wegner, who coaches men's basketball at Clackamas Community College. "In 2007, we got on a streak, and we won 21 games to close the season, and I was wearing these shoes. I wore these for 21 games in a row just because I didn't want to change them. I think there's some magic in them."

Wegner said that while he was superstitious, it was mostly just for fun. He also said that his habits are exemplary of many players on his team, saying that some had a lucky t-shirt or lucky shorts they wear under the uniform, and others had special rituals they performed before games.

Wearing lucky shorts isn't something local to the college. Michael Jordan, the hall of fame NBA player who many claim is the greatest basketball player ever to set foot on the court, was said to wear his University of North Carolina shorts underneath his Chicago Bulls uniform.

Perhaps the most superstitious of all sports is baseball. Players such as Wade Boggs, third baseman for the Boston Red Sox, would write in the dirt before each at bat, and became known as the "Chicken Man" because of his obsession with eating poultry before each game. Turk Wendell would chew four sticks of licorice while on the pitcher's mound and would sprint to the dugout after each inning to brush his teeth.

"I drink chocolate milk before every baseball game," said freshman shortstop Tyler Arnold, "and I have a baseball at home that says 'game day' on one side. Every game day I turn it

around so that the 'game day' side shows."

Superstitious behavior isn't just made of random acts. There are patterns and connections to be found, something that psychologists and sports fanatics alike find fascinating.

"Aspects of baseball where players have the least amount of control, and succeed the least, is where research has found the most superstitions," said Eric Lewis, chair of the social sciences and psychology professor at Clackamas.

"Players field the ball successfully over 95 percent of the time, depending on the position played, and there are few players who have superstitions with their glove or fielding. However, a 'good' batter will fail roughly 70 percent of the time. In this area of baseball, where control and success are fleeting and often come in spurts, superstitions are rampant," he said.

Lewis, a self-proclaimed sports nut, said that the superstition, while it wouldn't directly affect the outcome of the game, can often act as a placebo and boost the confidence of the athlete, therefore raising the possibility of a good game for the player or coach.

"People like predictability, controlling their own destiny and tucking themselves in at night believing the world makes sense," said Lewis. "In areas of life where random, unpredictable or unwanted things can occur, people are more prone to develop superstitions."

"These superstitions help an individual feel a sense of predictability and control over important and otherwise random events. Most superstitions not only help with predictability and the illusion of control, but also as a way to bring about good, or wanted, fortune."

In the end, the fans often get more enjoyment out of superstitions than the players. To the athletes themselves, their practices are a routine that gets them to feel comfortable, but to those looking on, it's an exciting pattern, much like LeBron James' powder toss before each game. For some it has meaning and for others it's simply fun, but for most it's just sports.



John Howard Clackamas Print

Hood Community College baseball player places a good luck charm on top of the visitor's dugout at Clackamas Community College's baseball field on April 12.

All Court Press: Blazers, Hawks looking for championships



Robert Morrison
Sports Editor

...ast term at Clackamas Community College we brought home a lot of championships and I'm glad to call our wrestling team the National Junior Athletic Association champions. It seems like the wrestling bug is going around Clackamas, too, because both the Portland Trail Blazers and the Winterhawks have been fighting for a spot in the playoffs or for a spot.

The Blazers have had a lot of injuries, drama and communication. The team is dealing with the surgery of Brandon Roy and its impact with the all-star play of Greg Aldridge. As the trade deadline nears, the Blazers could be in a tough spot. The team didn't move any veteran players like many thought they did deal for multi-million dollar player Gerald Wallace,

though. Wallace came over from the Charlotte Bobcats in a deal that included fan favorite Joel Przybilla.

The Blazers went on a win streak after the deadline that helped make a serious push towards the playoffs. On April 6 the Blazers lost in surprising fashion against the Golden State Warriors 108-87. The Blazers would have something to cheer about after the loss because my hometown Sacramento Kings went on the beat the Houston Rockets 104-101.

The Rockets were fighting for a playoff spot as well, but with their loss the Blazers clinched a spot for the third year in a row. The Blazers have been fighting for the sixth seed for the playoffs to try and avoid playing the LA Lakers in the first round, because they haven't had the best of luck against the Lakers in the playoffs in recent years. Tickets for the Blazers playoffs game go on sale April 15 at noon.

The Winterhawks have been playing another outstanding season. The team finished the season with a 50-19-0-3 record. The record gave them the WHL U.S. Division championship.

Portland got a nice seed in the playoffs for the WHL Championship and they started off hot, beating Everett 4-0 in

their playoff opener in Portland on March 26. Portland went on to knock Everett out of the playoffs by beating them in four straight games. During those games the Winterhawks outscored Everett in goals 22-8. Two of the games were at home and two of them on the road, showing the team can win anywhere.

On April 12 the team played host to Kelowna at the Rose Garden Arena but fell in the first game by a score of 5-1. They were able to tie the series at one game apiece with a 6-3 win the next day on the road. The Hawks have a chance to pull to a series lead when they play host to Kelowna on April 15 at 7 p.m.

With all of these playoffs in full swing and spring sports underway at CCC, sports fans should have more than enough excitement to keep them busy all season long.

Blazers playoff tickets go on sale April 15 at noon.

On April 15 at 7 p.m. the Winterhawks play Kelowna.

Find us on Facebook!



Follow us on Twitter!



@clackamasprint

WIP

i wonder ...

what is my next move?

Ranked as one of the best values and best baccalaureate colleges in the West by U.S. News & World Report 2010, Warner Pacific is an urban, Christ-centered liberal arts college in the heart of Portland. With 27 undergraduate majors, you can choose from hundreds of career options.

WARNER PACIFIC COLLEGE

2210 SE 68th Avenue • Portland, Oregon 97215
 ☎ 503.512.1020 • 📠 503.512.1500 • 🌐 warnerpacific.edu