

# Facilities long overdue for renovation

By John William Howard  
Associate Sports Editor

Imagine that you are in the final stretch of your senior year of high school and making final decisions on which college you will be attending in the fall. You're a track star and are hoping for a scholarship to Clackamas Community College, and have nearly completed a tour of the campus.

You walk with one of the coaches out of Randall hall and past the dilapidated tennis courts, taking great care to walk around the muddy patches and the cracks in the asphalt on your way. Finally rounding the corner and reaching the track, you take one look at the fissures and hummocks in the track surface and turn to leave. Your career as a runner would be much better spent elsewhere.

That story, according to Assistant Athletic Director Kayla Steen, isn't all that uncommon. "You're trying to promote what a great school this is and you walk out to show them the facilities and it's 'Oh by the way, we can't run in the first three lanes of this track and we're not actually going to compete on this track, we're going to go to a different location to compete, but you should really come to our school.' It's a hard sell," said Steen.

Steen coaches women's basketball for the college as well and understands the challenge that recruiting poses, even with a decent facility.

However, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. In May, Clackamas Community College will place a \$130 million bond measure on the ballot. While some of that money would go to things like updating classrooms, increasing campus security and building a new technology learning center, money would also be devoted to the much-needed replacing of crumbling athletic facilities. Both athletes and coaches think these upgrades couldn't come quickly enough.

Decathlete Carlos Vazquez said that it was the coaching staff that drew him to Clackamas in spite of the horrible state of the track. "It's in bad condition for any kind of runner, whether it be a sprinter or a distance runner," said Vazquez.

When Vasquez first came to CCC, head track and field coach Keoni McHone showed him around the school and the athletic facilities. Vasquez remembers being unimpressed. "My high school track was better than this," he said.

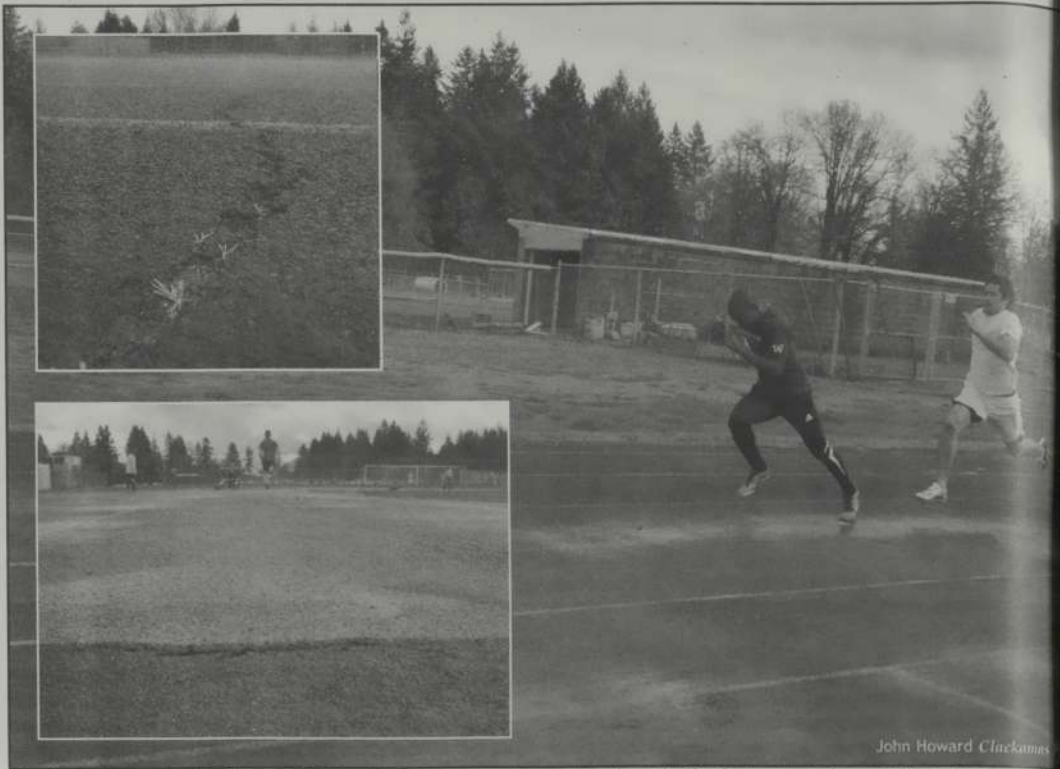
Track troubles have gotten bad enough that the track is no longer suitable for competitions and home meets have been moved to Oregon City High School's Pioneer Memorial Stadium. This means that most of the profits that are made from hosting meets go towards renting the stadium, a price of \$50 per hour.

Money isn't the only loss due to a bad facility, though. The track, in its current condition, is unsafe for both athletes and the community.

"I always make the joke that I'd rather have the kids out on our cross country course running on the grass because there's less of a chance of them rolling their ankles than on the track," said Distance Coach Jerret Mantalas, who also highlighted the facilities importance to local residents.

"It's a huge community piece. How many times do you see people that are out running around the field that are members of the community and how many times do you see them want to use the track? It's not safe and it's not something that people should technically be running on. There's almost a greater risk of hurting yourself on the track than off, which shouldn't be the case," Mantalas said.

Worn out facilities go beyond the aged track. Along with having track meets at the OC stadium, Clackamas



Keelynn Johnson (left) and Carlos Vazquez practice relay handoffs during track practice. Runners like Johnson and Vazquez have to sidestep cracks and bumps on the inner lanes (insets).

also hosts home women's soccer matches on Oregon City High School's field, something that has been the case for nearly a decade. With potential upgrades, athletics can really turn things around.

"The hope is that we'll be able to host our first track meets and soccer games in the last nine years since our playing surfaces have been up to competition standards," said Steen, who said that both the track and the soccer improvements would be part of the same project. "The idea is to put a regulation size soccer field inside the track and that would require the track expand slightly to be wider and shorter."

She also mentioned several other projects, including replacing some of the older bleachers and resurfacing the tennis courts, which "... campus safety has to literally take a lawn mower to because there are so many cracks and weeds coming from them," she said.

The new soccer field would accompany a period of great success for the program on the field. Since soccer began at Clackamas in 2002, the program has gone 132-37-17, winning three NWAACC championships and five Southern Region championships and qualifying for the playoffs every year they have existed. They've done so well that first year Head Soccer Coach Janine Szpara thinks that players will come to Clackamas regardless of where they play home games.

"Clackamas has so much going for it that the facilities would be a bonus for recruiting but not a deal breaker," said Szpara. "I think a new field could help recruiting but also have a very big impact on what other events could be held at the school, so the affect could be more far reaching than just recruiting."

Recruiting aside, everyone that heard about what the bond could do for athletics was excited about the prospect of having a new place to play.

"It would be nice to have home meets at the school," said jumper Kenney Shoenfeld. "I'm sure we'd have

a lot more support because people wouldn't have drive anywhere; they'd be able to stay at school and watch us."

"I think the bond itself would promote Clackamas athletics in a much stronger avenue," said Steen. "I said that the bond passing would bring in new students both athletically and as part of the general student body. We've been very successful with what we've had. I see a lot of potential for a lot more success in different programs with what this bond is going to help us with."

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The Clackamas Print struck-out last week with a front page error, so here is our correction. Nick Olney was incorrectly labeled as Nathan Douglas. GO COUGARS BASEBALL!