

Runners up: Track and Field takes second place

Men's and Women's track and field gets the best even finish since the 1994 season

By John William Howard
Associate Sports Editor

You often hear that life is not a sprint but a marathon. You don't have to hurry from one thing to the next in order to get to a certain place in life because you'll get there in time regardless, and you might as well learn something on the way. This was the case with the Clackamas Community College track and field team, who took second in both men's and women's at the Northwest Athletic Association of Community College championships on May 23 and 24.

It took a season full of battling injuries, weather and other setbacks, but the long road eventually came to a happy end. The Cougars walked away from the season

with their collective heads held high, led by Head Coach Keoni McHone, who was named Southern Region coach of the year after the Southern Region championships on May 14 at Lane Community College.

The women scored 174 points with 14 athletes for an average of 12.43 points per athlete. Spokane's women scored 250 points with 24 athletes for an average of 10.42 points per athlete. The men scored 20 points more than the pre-meet performance list predicted, while the women scored 12 more.

According to McHone, the Southern Region meet is nothing more than a springboard for the NWAACC meet, a meet in which McHone's teams have generally done well. Last year the Clackamas women placed second and the men placed third. At the time, that tied the top combined performance in the last 10 years, making this year's two second place finishes at the NWAACC championships the best Clackamas has seen since they finished in the same positions in 1994.



Contributed by Tracy Swisher

The Clackamas women's track and field team poses with their second place trophy. Per athlete, Clackamas outscored the women's meet champion Spokane Community College.

"We use the Southern Region championships as a tune-up for the NWAACC championships," said McHone, who is in his sixth season as head coach. "We just did whatever we needed to do to feel like we were

going into the NWAACC championships prepared properly. We under-raced and under-competed and under-emphasized the region championships quite a bit mentally and physically and set ourselves up for the NWAACC championships."

While it seems as though this may have made light of the Southern Region competition, it worked. Clackamas took second overall at regionals but beat the region winner, Lane Community College, at the NWAACC championships.

"On the women's side, we did what we should have done," said McHone. "On the guy's side, it was a super, super tight battle. The guys stepped up and 'gapped' it a little more than we foresaw on paper, and so we were excited that the guys decided to do that."

The numbers backed up McHone's claims.

"I did not have time to differentiate between individual's season bests and all-time best, but at NWAACCs we had 35 season-best performances," said Assistant Coach Danny Barley, who coaches the throwers. Of those season bests, 21 were women's and 14 were men's.

By the time the NWAACC championships were finished, Clackamas came away with seven individual champions, 16 All-Americans and 28 top three finishers. Sophomore pole vaulter Keisa Monterola and sophomore thrower Katie Higgins were named female co-outstanding field athletes, and James Ratliff was named as one of the male co-outstanding track athletes. The biggest prize, however, was the knowledge that they had given all they had and done their best; their marathon was finally over.



Contributed by Tracy Swisher

The Clackamas men stand with their second place trophy, their first since 1998.

Clackamas



Track and Field

Sports Information Director brings change to athletics

By Robert Morrison
Sports Editor

Clackamas' sports department is one that has seen great improvement over the last 10 years. The coaches and the recruitment are just a few of the reasons but in the wake of change there is a man behind the curtain: Tracy Swisher.

"He works hard, is positive and is easy to work with. He wants to do things as well as he can for everything he does. He is a team player," said Clackamas Community College's basketball Head Coach Cliff Wegner of Tracy Swisher.

Swisher is not only currently Clackamas' sports information director (SID) but also holds the same position for the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges. In addition, Swisher decided to take up sports photography to help him in this role. You may have seen his handiwork for team pictures, on the NWAACC site, on his website or even in *The Clackamas Print*.

Swisher has been with Clackamas since 2005 when the college contacted him about updating the sports website. He began a contracted job with the NWAACC in 2006 which resulted because of his earlier work with CCC, and in 2009 he became the school's sports director. Being a sports fan, according to Swisher, is one of the reasons his job is so fun.

When he started out in the field, Swisher was just your average photographer, but when he started on the website he knew he would have to get the best shots possible to liven up the pages. He started off with a high end point-and-shoot model but said he wasn't getting the desired results, so he switched to a Canon Rebel with some detachable lenses. After some time went by he upgraded and now is on his third

DSLR camera.

"His photography is great but the best part of him being in the SID position for us is that we have him as a resource for all of our website, athletic and press release needs," stated Josh Rhoden, coach of the 2010-2011 NWAACC Championship wrestling team. "It takes some of the work off of my plate as a coach."

Not only does Clackamas' sports director spend countless hours doing work for the sports teams and their websites, taking photos for the league and sending out press releases, but he is also a veteran.

"After a 20 year career in the Navy, I decided I wanted to do something that really gave me job satisfaction 24/7," stated Swisher in an email.

At one time Swisher was just another college student looking to find what makes himself tick, and like many people he started off at a community college. "I attended CCC to possibly get a start in teaching, since one of the highlights in my naval career was teaching rate training ('A' school) for three years," he stated. "After a year of teaching classes at CCC, I decided I didn't want to spend another four (or) five years to meet the state requirements for teaching, so I changed my degree to computer science. I had a background in web design, so I opted to go that route and received my CCC degree in June (of 2005)."

Change can be a good thing and with Swisher as the sports information director the school looks to improve every season from both the players, website, and Swisher's press releases.

Look out for Swisher's work in a number of places, including his website www.fotozoneonline.com



Brad Heineke Clackamas Print

Tracy Swisher stands and watches during an away softball game on May 4 at Clark Community College. Swisher attends most Clackamas athletic events.