

Shades of pink: coloring a victory in tie-dye

By John William Howard
Sports Editor

To say that the volleyball team's trouncing of Multnomah University was a beat-down would be a euphemism, if the conclusion was made purely from the stat sheet. If you were in attendance, it would be an outright lie.

The Clackamas Community College Cougars flattened Multnomah last Wednesday in straight sets to the tune of 25-13, 25-7 and an embarrassing 25-4 at home in the Randall Hall gymnasium. Were it not a "pink-out" in support of breast cancer, the pink tinges on the cheeks of the Multnomah girls might just have been visible on their faces as they slunk from the gym, utterly defeated.

In atmosphere, it was a far cry from just a few weeks ago, when a throng filled the gym and watched two powerhouse programs struggle to the finish. This time, the home team donned pink tie-dye T-shirts instead of their regular jerseys. The unusually thin crowd was dotted with shirts, hats and sunglasses and kept fairly quiet most of the night.

That didn't seem to affect the Cougars. While they weren't as pumped before the game as they have been in the past, Clackamas jumped out to a quick 4-1 lead in the first set, taking advantage of the height and skill difference between the teams. Multnomah was helpless against the towering front line of Clackamas and took a beating from the start. The lead grew to 21-8 before the teams traded a few points and the Cougars finished the first set 25-13 without breaking a sweat. It was clear from the first serve that Multnomah was in for a thrashing, so the attention turned from the competition between teams and toward the competition within Clackamas itself.

According to Head Coach Kathie Woods, the game against Multnomah was an opportunity to try out a few different things and mess with the lineup. With middle blocker Shauna Salopek out with an injury, freshman Brittney Bevens got the starting spot. Also new in the starting lineup was Jessica Staigle, who started at libero in place of Maeghan Angel.

"Both [Angel] and Staigle are competing against each other for that spot. They both played equal time," said Woods. "We're just trying to figure out

who is going to take that nod in league play. It's really intense and it's really close," said Woods.

The team is making efforts to be more balanced in their attack, rather than feed a heavy amount of their offense through sophomore star Taylor Richardson, who leads the southern region and is fourth in the NWAACC in kills.

"We're working on spreading our offense so we don't have to wear [Richardson] out so much," said Woods. "We have other hitters, and others are stepping up. I think that [Bevens] did a really good job tonight working in the middle."

While Bevens isn't brand new to the middle blocker position, it isn't quite what she's used to. Bevens said that she hadn't really played anything other than outside hitter since the eighth grade, but that the transition from one to the other wasn't too tough.

"Tonight [the coaches] really wanted to push me, so they put me out there and I did what they asked," said Bevens, who led the Cougars with ten kills and zero errors, hitting .714 for the match. She also mentioned that despite the lower than usual level of competition, they still needed to "always go out playing like they were the best team [that we've faced]. That pretty much keeps us in check."

Woods went as far as to set goals for points allowed, and differentiated between points that Multnomah earned and points that Clackamas gave away.

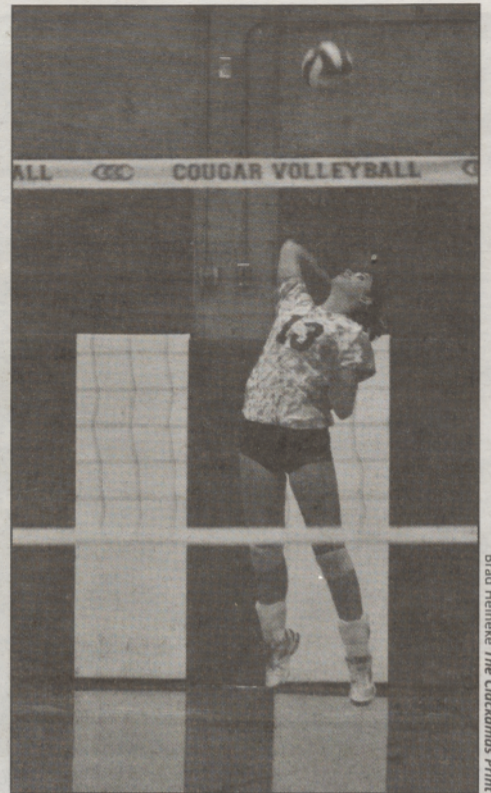
"I'm really proud of my team because they actually got better with each game," said Woods. "Usually when you play a weaker team, you end up playing down. They didn't do that tonight, which I think is tremendous growth for us."

"Focus is what we talk about the most within the team," said freshman Julia Toscano, who led the team in total attack attempts, and was second in kills with 9.

"[We're] learning how to finish a game out and be quick about it," said Toscano.

In spite of the large margin of victory — Multnomah had six kills to Clackamas's 39 — there was still room for improvement. Of the 24 points that Multnomah scored, 9 of them were from errors by the Cougars, putting them above the total that Woods and Associate Head Coach Brad Swayne set for the evening.

"The improvement was good, but we didn't meet the goal," said Toscano.



Brad Heinke The Clackamas Print

Richardson sets up to serve against Multnomah University. She had five serving aces and no serving errors in the match.

In the end, Clackamas held their opponents to the lowest point total (24) and lowest set total (4) this season, in what turned out to be little more than a rehearsal in preparation for the NWAACC championships next month. The women continued their winning streak with wins at SW Oregon Community College (25-17, 25-22, 25-23) on Friday and Umpqua Community College (25-18, 27-25, 18-25, 22-25, 15-13) on Saturday and sit third in the southern region standings behind Linn-Benton and Mt. Hood.

Positive power pulls through for fifth consecutive win



Katie Aamatti The Clackamas Print

Clackamas' Ashley Brewer (12) battles Clark midfielder Kelsey Fraiser (19) Clackamas won 2-0, their fourth consecutive shutout.

By Katie Aamatti
Associate Sports Editor

Wind blew through the surrounding trees and storm clouds hovered as the Clackamas Cougars and Clark Penguins met for the second time this season last Saturday at Clark College in Vancouver, Wash.

Throughout the 90 minutes of fast-paced play, each team had the other sprinting, reaching, rolling, jumping and diving over the mushy footing and each other for control of the ball. While each team played with diligence and aggressiveness, the Cougars came out on top by scoring two goals in the final ten minutes, bringing the final score to 2-0.

Throughout the game, the two teams battled for position and took control of the ball, sending it back and forth across the pitch. Both teams had each other actively pursuing every pathway that led to the net and would later on lead to a win for the Cougars.

In the 15th minute, Clark midfielder Jovanna Baza found an opening and launched a shot toward the net from within the 18 yard box and into the open arms of Clackamas' goalkeeper Tori Wilkinson.

As the ball traveled back up the field toward the opposing net, Clark Head Coach Stan Rodrigues began to shake his head in frustration as he watched Clackamas midfielder Sevilla Soriano make her move and aim toward the far corner of the net in the

32nd minute.

"No, no, what are you doing? Reach for it!" said Rodrigues toward Clark goalkeeper Marissa Tyler as she tipped the ball forward and caught it, shutting down Soriano's attempt. The first half ended after a few more wide and high attempts from both teams but much to Clark's relief the score remained 0-0.

As the Cougars talked openly about their efforts so far, head coach Janine Szpara instilled within them confidence and insight, as well as explaining certain instances in the game where an improvement could be made. Never did Szpara belittle them or count them out as a weak link in the team's effort.

"Last time we were on our home field and

this time we're on their home field. It's a tight game; they're out here to play," Szpara said to the team at halftime.

The second half began with both teams battling just as hard as they were in the first half. In the 72nd minute, it was clear that the aggressive action and the Cougars' fast pace were taking a toll on Clark.

While attempts for control were made during the 80th and 81st minutes, the ball continued to fly in every direction before it came into the path of Clackamas' Jasmín Garcia, who guided the ball toward the goal in the 82nd minute. As the ball popped into the air, Clark goalkeeper Tyler tipped the ball backward, scoring an own goal and putting Clackamas up 1-0.

Despite the encouraging words from Clark teammates on the bench, it was apparent that the Penguins had given up to the Cougars. In the 86th minute, Clackamas' Samantha Hamacher charged forward and scored her first goal of the season from 20 yards, giving the Cougars a two goal lead. Hamacher's goal would prove to be the finisher and Clackamas would walk away with their seventh win of the season.

As the game ended, the Cougars shared smiles and words of praise with fellow teammates while they packed up their gear. The Penguins, however, prepared for disappointment to come at them from all sides as they listened to the criticism from their coach.

The win came as the fifth victory in a row for the Cougars, who have only allowed one goal in that stretch since falling 0-1 to second ranked Spokane on Sept. 24. Four of Wilkinson's five shutouts have come in the last five games.

"Today they all did well offensively and defensively. [Wilkinson] did a great job guarding the goal," said Szpara of the team's efforts as well as Wilkinson's fifth shutout of the season.

"Watching the Cougars [play] is thrilling, especially when there is so much action and I can't stop watching or I'll miss something," said Lisa McHenry, a longtime spectator of Clackamas athletics. "Szpara is sure to take them to new levels."