



John William Howard The Clackamas Print

Clackamas volleyball huddles after a time out during the third and final set last Friday. Mt. Hood outscored the Cougars 25-16 en route to a 3-0 win.

RIVALRY: Cougar volleyball falls short to rival Mt. Hood Saints

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Whatever hope was left for a miracle comeback was ripped away, as the Cougars again dug a hole to start off what would be the final set. A faint glimmer of hope appeared when Clackamas scored a few quick points to make it 24-16, but Mt. Hood buried the road team and walked off the victors in straight sets, making it the second time in as many games that the Cougars had come up empty against the Saints.

"We know we can beat them," said sophomore outside hitter Taylor Richardson. "It's a matter of who is going to come out strongest in the beginning. Start strong, stay strong, finish strong."

Perhaps they'll get that chance when they return to the campus of Mt. Hood Community College on Nov. 17 for the NWAACC volleyball championships, but for now they have to focus on another powerhouse opponent in Linn-Benton, who will visit tonight at 7 p.m.

"We just need to go in with fire," said Best. "We need to take [this loss] out on them ... there's no reason to let up."

Best and freshman Julia Toscano had strong showings for Clackamas, getting eight and seven kills respectively. The team combined for only 26 kills to Mt. Hood's 46 and finished with a lowly .130 hitting percentage.

Mt. Hood was lead by Devan Belshe, who turned in a stellar performance with 19 kills, four serving aces, and hit .472 with only two errors.

Goalkeeper Tori Wilkinson fights for success inspite of injury



By John William Howard
Sports Editor

Playing against the odds usually tends to make the best stories. We get the most excited about David vs. Goliath, a Cinderella team or succeeding despite huge setbacks. The Super Bowl that everyone remembers isn't the one where the two best teams scrapped with one another for 60 minutes, it's the one where the nobodies came back to win against their powerhouse opponents.

It also seems that there is nothing quite so inspiring as watching a player struggle with an injury but prevail.

Yes, Clackamas Community College lost its final home soccer match to Lane Community College last Wednesday and yes its seven game win streak has been snapped but that wasn't the story of the game that audience members will recall.

The story of the game was watching injured Clackamas goalkeeper Tori Wilkinson.

Some time between the Oct. 22 game at Clark College and the Oct. 25 game against Southwest Oregon Community College, Wilkinson acquired an injury to her right knee. At that time, Wilkinson had four shut-outs in a row and hadn't allowed a goal since the end of September. Coach Szpara declined to comment on the injury itself. "[I'm] taking the Chip Kelly approach," said Szpara. "I don't really want to talk about injuries."

During the SWOCC game, which Clackamas won in a 6-0 blowout, Wilkinson was being rested to help heal a minor injury heal. When the team ran out on to the field last Wednesday, it was clear that things weren't completely back to normal.

The first thing you'd notice was the ugly black brace. If that didn't tip you off, you might think to watch the home end of the field when nothing was happening. You'd see Wilkinson jogging across the field after her shin guard that had gone astray. You'd see a grimace. You'd definitely see the pronounced limp after every brush of action.

Wilkinson's first test came early in the match.

In the 5th minute, Lane's Kenzie Harding lobbed a corner kick across the face of the goal to the far post, where Kiki McDonagh headed the ball past Wilkinson and into the net. There wasn't even time to raise her arms

before Lane had scored, putting Clackamas down a goal for the first time since losing to top ranked Spokane on Sept 24.

Normally when a goal is scored early in a match and especially an easy one, it can take the air out of the game. It happens even in big professional matches. The crowd quiets considerably and the players get heated with one another.

Perhaps it was a lack of focus or the knowledge that the game was meaningless for Clackamas, as they've already clinched the Southern Region Championship. Maybe they were caught a little by surprise by Lane's physicality.

Whatever it was, they fixed it. And Wilkinson fixed it.

From that point on, limp or no limp, Wilkinson and the Clackamas defense tightened things up considerably. After each time Lane forwards would near the goal, Wilkinson would corral the ball and boot it back toward the center of the field. As the game continued, Wilkinson's pain level seemed to rise and she could be spotted gingerly favoring her good knee between attacks.

Once the final whistle sounded, the injured freshman didn't hobble over to the bench and wait to be treated by the team trainer. She jogged over with the rest of the team. The only sign that she was ailing was that instead of cooling down, she sprawled on the ground to remove her brace.

Wilkinson's secret? She had just put it out of her mind.

"I just don't think about it," said Wilkinson.

And you know what? I'd like to see more athletes like her. All too often, a minor bump or bruise will keep a player sidelined for far too long. Show some toughness.

Not without reason, of course. If you could hurt yourself worse and threaten the rest of your season, then okay, sit on the bench. But if you can play through the pain and make a difference for your team, then you should be out on the field. Or court. Or wherever it is you play.

Those are the performances that we remember. We remember watching Tiger Woods win at the US Open in 2008 with a torn ligament in his knee and a stress fracture in his tibia. We remember Brandon Roy's return during the 2010 playoffs against Phoenix. It's those times that you see somebody do something extraordinary that stick in your mind. Those memories help us to remember that in whatever we're going through we should just stick it out to the end.

It's not just a game. It's not just a distraction from life's worries. There are lessons to be learned and I just learned another one.



Brad Heineke The Clackamas Print

Goalkeeper Tori Wilkinson surveys the pitch from her goal during the final home game of the regular season against Lane Community College on Nov. 2.

Upcoming Events



| Volleyball | Time/date |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Clackamas vs. Linn-Benton CC | 6 p.m. Wednesday Nov. 9 |
| Women's Soccer | Time/date |
| Playoff Quarterfinals Vs. TBA | 7 p.m. Saturday Nov. 12 |
| Cross Country | Time/date |
| NWAACC Championships @ Everett CC | 11 a.m. Saturday Nov. 12 |

Trails End Saloon
1320 Main St. Oregon City 503-656-3031

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