

Defending national champs still a team to fear?

By Robert Morrison
The Clackamas Print

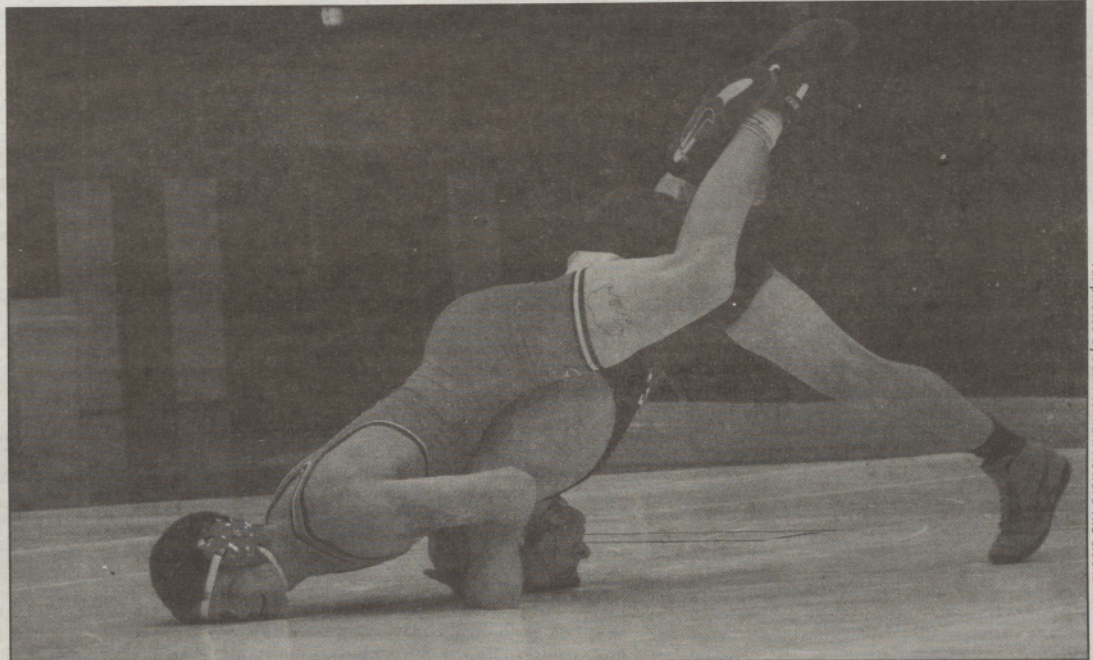
The 2011 National Champion Clackamas Cougars wrestling team started off the season in high gear on Nov. 10, when the team faced off against No. 11 ranked Highline Community College. Former CCC star Tarrence Williams was in attendance, as well as several members of the CCC Hall of Fame. NJCAA National Champion and 2000 Olympic Silver medalist Matt Lindland was also in the crowd. The Cougars entered the meet ranked No. 2 in the nation.

Clackamas won by a commanding score of 33-6 in a meet that featured seven wrestlers ranked in the top 10 nationally and three wrestlers ranked No. 1.

The night kicked off with a pair of tough exhibition matches that didn't count toward the team's scores. The teams split the exhibition matches but the bigger of the two was wrestler Shane Yacuta (133) with an outstanding win against number eight in the nation at 141, Sam Ottow, of Highline CC. Yacuta did well wrestling out of his usual weight class and won 3-2. The match started things right for CCC.

The Cougars wouldn't look back after their first win of the night as they took six of the next eight matches. 10 matches were scheduled for the night but Highline had forfeits at both 133 and 184. Among the top wins that counted toward a team score were No. 1 ranked Rudi Burttschi's (197) 11-10 decision over Anthony Whitmarsh and No. 8 ranked sophomore Eric Luna's (149) win over Josh Romero, 6-5. Burttschi was both an All-American and Region champion last season.

"I really like Nikko Veltri's win at 157. It was just real gutsy. We gassed him out



Rudi Burttschi (top) wrestles Anthony Whitmarsh of Highline. Burttschi was awarded the 11-10 decision after three rounds, bringing the team score to 24-3. Clackamas flattened Highline 33-6.

a little bit," said Coach Josh Rhoden. "Clinton McAlester just got on the mat for the first time in a year and a half. He has been injured and banged up so that was a win just by getting there and he got the win."

Among the two losses for the team, the biggest might have been in the 125 weight class where No. 10 ranked Sage

Ornelas fell short against number one ranked Steven Romero 0-5.

"I thought Sage's match was a good one even though he didn't win. He wrestled a top two in the nation. It was a real eye opener for him to see where he is at," said Luna (149). "There [weren't] any big losses, just areas we need to improve on."

The only match won by pin was No. 10 Trent Noon (174) against Lucas Huybar. Noon was leading 4-0 when he came up with the pin.

"There were some close matches that we could have beaten them a lot worse but we ended up winning all the close matches. I think we could have beat them by a lot more but we still did good," said Trent Noon (174). "I think I could have done better. I could have ended it sooner, but I got the pin in the second round and controlled the whole match to work him over."

Many of the players agreed that coach Rhoden and his assistant prepared the team very well for its match against Highline, which was also off to a good start beating North Idaho for the first time in a decade earlier this season.

The team pulled off a hard fought victory over Highline 33-6. When it came down to the wire, the Cougars showed that, despite losing several great wrestlers to four-year programs, they are still a team to be feared in the quest for the 2012 National Junior College Championship.

Wrestling

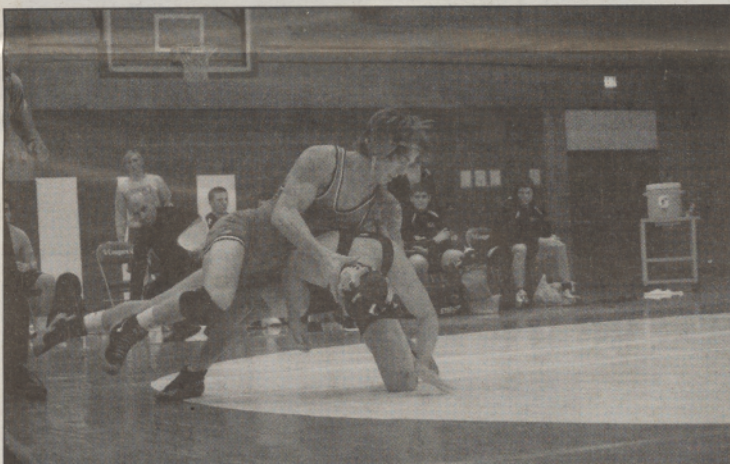
Next Up: @ SW Oregon
6:00pm Thursday Nov. 17

Clackamas vs. Highline Meet results

CCC 33, Highline 6

- 141 - **Clinton McAlester** decision
Kevin Ramp 5-2 (3-0)
- 149 - **No. 8 Eric Luna** decision
Josh Romero 6-5 (6-0)
- 157 - **Nikko Veltri** decision
Micah Morrill 6-3 (9-0)
- 165 - Tyler Story decision
Kaleb Cook 7-2 (9-3)
- 174 - **No. 10 Trent Noon** fall
Lucas Huybar 4:11 (15-3)
- 184 - **No. 1 Austin Morehead** win
by forfeit (21-3)
- 197 - **No. 1 Rudi Burttschi** decision
Anthony Whitmarsh 11-10 (24-3)
- 285 - **No. 7 Jake Laden** decision
Michael Henry 2-1 (27-3)
- 125 - No. 1 Steven Romero decision
No. 10 Sage Ornelas 5-0 (27-6)
- 133 - **Jordan O'Neal** win
by forfeit (33-6)

Numbers represent national ranking



Clackamas' Eric Luna wrestles Highline's Josh Romero. Luna, ranked No. 8 in the nation won his match in the 149 weight class by a count of 6-5.

Men's, women's cross country take fourth at NWAACC championships

By Brian Baldwin
Editor-in-Chief

Throughout this season, the Cougar's Cross Country team has seen some amazing runners and had some amazing moments but it all came down to the NWAACC's championship at Legion Memorial Golf Course in Everett, Wash. on Saturday Nov. 12.

The Cougars placed fourth in both the men's 8K and the women's 5K run, finishing behind Lane and Spokane community colleges in the men's and Clark and Treasure Valley community colleges in the women's run. Both the men and women's run was dominated by Everett Community College, winning their first men's and second women's championship.

"[The championship] was super, super close," said head coach Keoni McHone.

Clackamas freshman Jorge Gil-Juarez finished the men's 8K with a time of 24:59, trailing Berekat Piatt from Everett by 27 seconds.

"I'm extremely satisfied [with the time]. I didn't think that I could do that well this year," said Gil-Juarez.

"I felt that we did really well. A few of us didn't have a spectacular day but we were satisfied with our result."

Gil-Juarez said that the season exceeded his expectations for the team and that he will be returning to the cross country roster next year stronger than ever.

"I'm going to try to be more of a leader for the team and break the school record," said Gil-Juarez. "I believe that I am capable."

Standout freshman Teresa Lawson finished third in the women's 5K with a time of 18:31, trailing behind Mikel Elliott of Spokane by 24 seconds. Lawson's participation in the championship was still being decided just before the meet due to a nagging hip injury sustained earlier in the season. The injury kept her from running in the regional competition.

"I strained my hip flexor about two to three weeks ago and so I hadn't been running at practices and had been working hard to do everything I could to get to help it heal for the championship race," stated Lawson in a Facebook message. "It was nerve racking to go into the race with my hip still not 100 percent."

Lawson credits the athletic trainer Kevin Arizo and the other coaches for helping her push through the injury so she could race her best in the championship.

"I think all in all it was a really good race and both our teams did well and finished strong," stated Lawson. "Looking

back I think I did pretty well for my first time running cross country. I'm so glad that I came across the opportunity to run on the team and I think we had a good season."

Before the meet, McHone also commented that throughout the season Clackamas' performance has been what he expected, but he felt that they could be more competitive on the women's side, with Caitlyn Lewis' hip injury and Carissa Hill's foot injury holding them back.

During the season there have been some runners that have impressed McHone. Bradley Prettyman, for one, has taken a minute off of his personal record, which is double the improvement average between seasons that McHone has seen.

"It was a huge surprise to see [that large of an improvement]," said McHone.

Cia Bywater has been another runner that McHone has noticed as a positive force on the roster.

"She's a consistency workhorse. She's had no ups or downs; she's just been very consistent," said McHone.

With cross country finished for the season, McHone feels that the most important thing to focus on is getting rest for the team in preparation for track and field in the spring.

"We need to rest our bodies and get ready."