

# Cougars leave Saints without a prayer

## Clackamas hands Mt. Hood their worst loss in region play

By John William Howard  
Sports Editor

For the road team, nothing is sweeter than the sound of a silent gym. That is unless the silence is interrupted by the bustling of hopeless fans heading for the exits, having given up any sliver of a chance that their team could pull out a miraculous victory.

Clackamas was greeted with plenty of both last Wednesday night, when they paid a visit to their southern region rivals in Gresham and dealt Mt. Hood Community College one of their most shocking losses of the season, winning 67-46 in a dominant, crowd-stifling performance.

The Saints of Mt. Hood were sitting atop the southern region standings coming in to the game, and had already delivered a defeat to Clackamas on Jan. 18 at home. That loss came in heartbreaking fashion in front of a packed and energetic crowd, adding to the already tense atmosphere as Clackamas and Mt. Hood tipped off.

Things were close for the first several minutes. The teams traded buckets, neither ever getting a lead larger than five. After 12 minutes, both teams were knotted at 18 points each. Then Mt. Hood's wheels came off.

Freshman wing Malcolm Jackson broke the tie with a three pointer and Clackamas never looked back. Behind a pair of steals and a free throw from sophomore Andre Dickson and five quick points from Taylor Dunn, the Cougars found themselves with a nine-point lead. That lead would be pushed to 16 before Mt. Hood would score again, finally hitting a lone free throw to end a seven and a half minute scoring drought. The Saints would tack on another field goal before the end of the half but the home team headed to the locker room with their tails between their legs, trailing 34-21 in a game they thought would come easily.

The crowd was given a glimmer of hope as the second half started, with Mt. Hood scoring the first three points and cutting the deficit to just 10. That was the last time that Mt. Hood showed any life. Clackamas reeled off seven quick points to push their lead to 17 and with less than six minutes

gone in the second half Clackamas was up by 20. Mt. Hood would cut the Cougar's lead to 14 on one occasion, but eventually fell behind by 22, which was when the fans gave up and went packing.

What the fans missed was a classic finish to a rivalry game. Leading 64-46 with just 25 seconds remaining, freshman guard Riley Charlish was content to dribble out the clock behind the three-point line and end Mt. Hood's night of misery with a little dignity. With only a few seconds left, the Clackamas bench stood and shouted for Charlish to shoot. Charlish let it fly and nailed a three pointer at the final buzzer, bringing cheers from his teammates and grumbles from the disgruntled Saints.

As the team mingled with friends and family after the game, Cougar assistant coach Paul Fiskum couldn't contain his excitement at the dominant victory, smiling and walking over to get the opinion of press row.

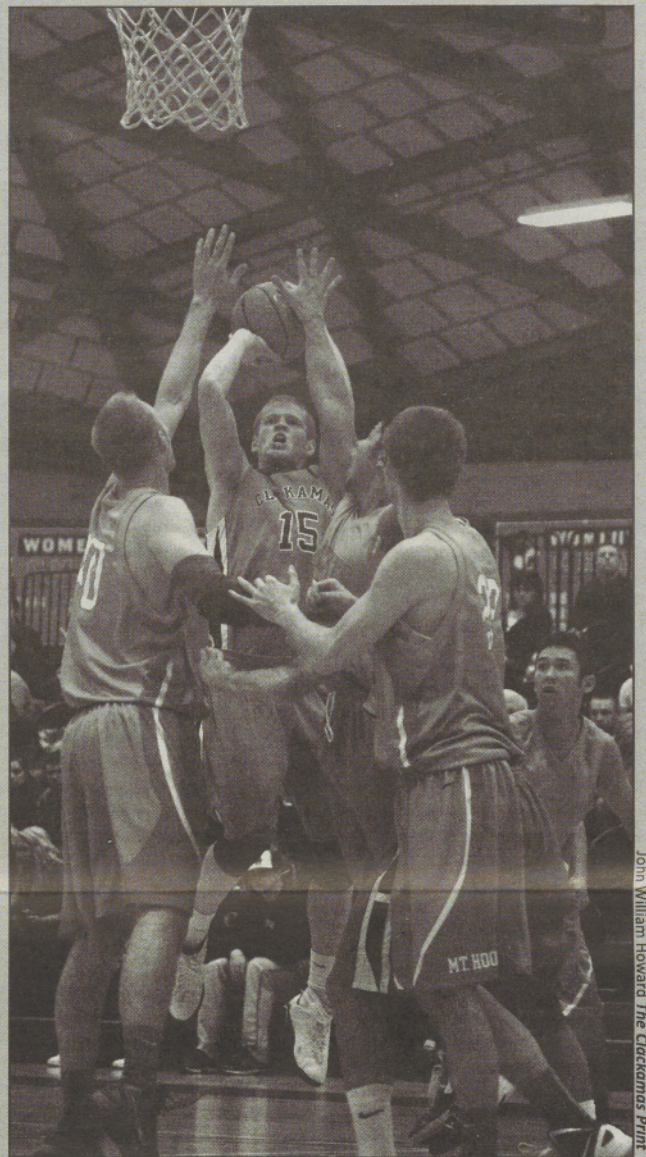
"They take a lot of bad shots," Fiskum said of Mt. Hood. "They're a momentum driven team."

Momentum was something that Clackamas never surrendered, holding Mt. Hood to an impressive 30.5 percent shooting from the field, a stat that Clackamas head coach Cliff Wegner was quick to point out as a key.

"This is huge here," said Wegner, pointing to the box score. "I thought a real key was our defensive activity. They shot 30 percent, and that's great defensive percentage. They're gonna win the league. They're a good team. We held them to 30 percent and that was huge."

By the time the game was over the stands were mostly empty except for a few diehard supporters. Even the Clackamas women's team had already headed for the team van. Once the men had gone into the locker room to debrief, all that remained were a few parents, whose conversations were soon drowned out by the rhythmic clapping and banging coming from the team room.

"We were pounding on the table," said Charlish. "We're just excited we won."



Clackamas sophomore guard Taylor Dunn takes a shot against Mt. Hood. Dunn scored 20 points and five rebounds in 34 minutes play, helping Clackamas to move up in the southern region standings.

John William Howard The Clackamas Print

## Stubborn style could slash success for women's basketball



By John William Howard  
Sports Editor

Basketball is a simple game, really. All the dribbling, shooting and running aside, basketball is about fooling your opponent into going one way, when you're really sprinting in the opposite direction. It's about confusing the defense; chaos and out of that pandemonium, one team will score and the other will go home empty handed.

Basketball is also about keeping the defense on their toes. If something works, keep doing it but always try something new to keep them guessing. Doing the same thing over and over again, no matter how high the level of proficiency, will eventually get you caught.

The Clackamas Community College women's team was caught last Saturday

night falling to Lane in a game that exposed the weaknesses of a team that has been flying high all season. They lead the NWAACC in scoring, assists and steals. They lead the league in three pointers made and attempted. They have one of the highest margins of victory in the league and have been blowing opponents out since day one.

At a glance, it would seem that the magic is working but when you look closer, there are a few teams that have obviously figured out how the trick works and plenty of others that have it figured out and how to counteract it.

The first loss of the season, a 72-53 blowout to Yakima Valley, was one of those instances. Yakima Valley had been watching Clackamas throughout the preseason crossover tournament, and quickly caught on to one of their biggest and most stubborn tendencies.

I'd feel bad about giving away head coach Jim Martineau's secrets but they're already out, so I think it's okay.

Here's the basic play: one of the Clackamas guards drives in from the right sideline, looking for a layup. If a lane opens up they take the shot. If not they take a flying leap under the basket

and kick the ball out to a shooter waiting on the three point line. In games against weaker opponents, this usually works.

Against Yakima Valley, however, the opponent smelled the pass coming. They would give the Clackamas player the baseline and force the pass, but would jump into the passing lane and intercept the ball before it ever got to the hands of the shooter.

That's one problem with that play. The second is that it forces Clackamas to win or lose by how well they shoot the three point shot. When they're playing free and loose, threes come easy. There is a menagerie of stellar shooters for Clackamas, but they can be streaky.

If the three point shot doesn't fall, as in the home loss against Lane, all teams have to do is defend the low post because Clackamas refuses to shoot jump shots. It's practically written in the team handbook as one of Martineau's hard and fast rules. It's his personal style.

"Our philosophy is to either shoot threes or layups," said Martineau after Clackamas' 21 point victory over SW

Oregon. "We're not a fan of shooting 15 foot jump shots."

The misconception is that the style works. Fed by success, the stubbornness grows so that even when a player has an open jumper from the free throw line, they'll pass it up in favor of an ill-advised three pointer.

The flashy stats and the 20-4 overall record causes many, including the coaching staff, to overlook the gaping holes in the offensive scheme. Clackamas may have only been bitten four times by their mistakes but poor shooting has been masked by pure talent and plenty of heart for some close victories that the Cougars didn't really deserve because of how badly they played.

Don't get me wrong, Martineau runs a great and successful program. He's a good coach and his teams have always done well, but he's just as stubborn as the rest of us. The fast paced, threes-or-layups approach works wonders in the regular season but ruling out certain important facets of the game will always come back to bite in the end. It's just a matter of time before the system breaks.