



All photos by John William Howard The Clackamas Print



Left: Freshman Mehgan Angel hangs a history filled poster

Above: Coach Cathy Woods cheers after pulling off a first round upset in the 2011 championship tournament.

## Alumni gather to honor beloved coach, mentor, friend

By John William Howard  
Sports Editor

Early on a Saturday morning, Randall Hall usually stands still and silent, devoid of its typically bustling activity from hoards of passing students. It's on such days that old memories, ghosts of a time long past, begin to echo in the empty hallways, across the barren floor and up abandoned stands. They recall the rich history that the building has, and whisper stories of defeat, heartbreak, drama, learning, victory, success and progress. The people who have walked its hallways and run its floor have gone on to lead lives of their own, occasionally returning to pay respects to their past.

However, the quiet murmurs of the past were drowned out by the building of new memories last Saturday, when droves of volleyball alumni grouped together to share in something they all loved, playing volleyball. The gym was filled with bright shirts of many colors, and on the wall with a large

volleyball painted on it hung a sign with bold letters on it saying, "Once a Cougar, always a Cougar." Looking around at the players here and there, the proverbial phrase adorned nearly every neon green, pink and yellow shirt. The ladies wearing them were as diverse as their eye catching colors.

The ones in dark blue tie-dye were familiar. For the most part, they played volleyball together in the fall, wearing the red, white and blue Clackamas colors. A few faces were new, but at least recognizable. The same couldn't be said for the rest of the players on the floor. The team across the net looked to be in their mid 20s and older, and several of the members from the team on the far side of the room appeared to have broken well into their 30s, yet they were all grouped together with the same smile on their faces, as though they'd returned home once again.

As more players began to trickle in and games began to finish, a few of the attendees grouped together to catch up, telling sto-

ries from their past year and reminiscing their time playing at Clackamas. Perhaps the veteran of them all, Chrissie Lewis, was the oldest alumni to participate, having played in 1987-88, just four seasons after current head coach Kathie Woods was hired. According to Lewis, none of it would have been possible without Woods herself.

"The whole root of it is Kathie. Just her dedication, her value that she puts in us, her confidence that she puts in everybody," said Lewis, who has maintained a relationship with Woods ever since graduation. "I think that's what makes it. That's what makes you feel good about coming back and supporting her."

Lewis said that there were many alumni members who would have attended but now live too far away or had too many responsibilities to make it. Some, however, went through a lot of trouble to be there to play for Woods once again.

"This is my volleyball fix," said Samantha Hennessy Schreiner, who played on the 2004

NWAACC championship team. "I'm a new mom, so I haven't had time to play, but it all comes back. It's like you kinda just pick up where you left off, and it's a great feeling."

Woods' emotions wavered for a few moments when she heard the loving words from her former players and looked out over the court at all the faces that she knew by heart.

"They're a blessing. They're my blessing and this is by far my most important day of the year for coaching. For me, this is why I coach," said Woods. "I tell my girls, I go, 'I'm gonna be moving around talking because, think about it, I'm the only one in the gym that knows everybody, that knows everybody and I want to talk to everybody to make sure I say hi and see how they're doing.'"

Woods also talked about the importance the alumni tournament had for her current players, saying truthfully that the turnout and the family atmosphere spoke volumes of the tradition of Cougar volleyball.

"It means that we're a family," said 2011 standout Taylor Richardson. "All these girls have been through what I've been through. No one else can relate to having two years with Kathie Woods. She's the stickler of the NWAACC, the old fashioned, hard working coach. We have to be solid in academics, in our social life, on the court. Everything is school, volleyball and life. All these girls have had to be held up to that standard that I have, and so it's an automatic sense of family."

In a few years as time passes, Richardson and her teammates, like so many of their predecessors will make the trip back home, connecting with their peers and bringing joy to their coach's heart.

"To see my alumni, to see how they've grown, to meet their families, to see what they're doing and to make sure that they're happy. This is what it's all about," said Woods, "and it means the world to me. Every year I want more and more. I love it. I just love it."

## Model student is the picture perfect athlete

By Emily Rask  
Associate Sports Editor

There are many athletes at Clackamas Community College, but Jake Buchanan, pitcher for Cougars baseball stood out with his "posing" background. Buchanan is a model for Abercrombie and Fitch and an aspiring firefighter. He started his baseball career when he was four years old, his earliest memory of baseball being when he hit the ball, but ran to third base instead of first. Despite the early mishaps, he continued playing all the way through high school. A graduate of Aloha High School, he decided to continue baseball at CCC and plans to move on to a school in Kentucky or Corban University in Salem.

Throughout high school Buchanan wrestled and played football, but after enrolling in college, decided to focus on baseball; although he is redshirting this year to recover from a shoulder injury.

For many, jobs are hard to find. Others, like Buchanan, walk right

in to theirs.

"I got recruited," said Buchanan. "I was walking around looking for a job and just got offered a position."

What Buchanan landed was his first modeling job for Abercrombie and Fitch, with whom he had his first shoot.

"I had to take pictures with my shirt off," said Buchanan. "It was interesting, I was still nervous but I knew the photographer so that made me more comfortable." Modeling is something Buchanan mentioned he would like to continue doing as a career, and it has influenced the person he is today.

"It makes you more comfortable and confident with yourself," said Buchanan.

Baseball and modeling aside, public service seems to run in Buchanan's family, and growing up, he shared a dream job with thousands of other kids.

"It was always between a cop and firefighter," said Buchanan, "but then in high school I decided that since my uncle is a firefighter

and my grandpa is a retired firefighter, it is something to continue doing." Buchanan is not currently serving as a firefighter and hasn't done any training. He has taken related classes and an EMT class. To him, firefighting is different than what he had imagined it to be.

"I don't really know what I'm getting myself into. Not all firefighters can save everyone's lives, so I would have to live with that if I couldn't save a life. It would put a damper on that [job]," said Buchanan, who shared that he thinks being a firefighter is admirable. "It's good to think about others before yourself because in class they've been talking about [how] doing something is better than nothing in emergency situations."

Buchanan's story suggests that anyone can be anything they want to be, all it takes is a goal and the motivation to reach it. From baseball player, to model, to prospective firefighter, Buchanan has great potential to reaching his dream.

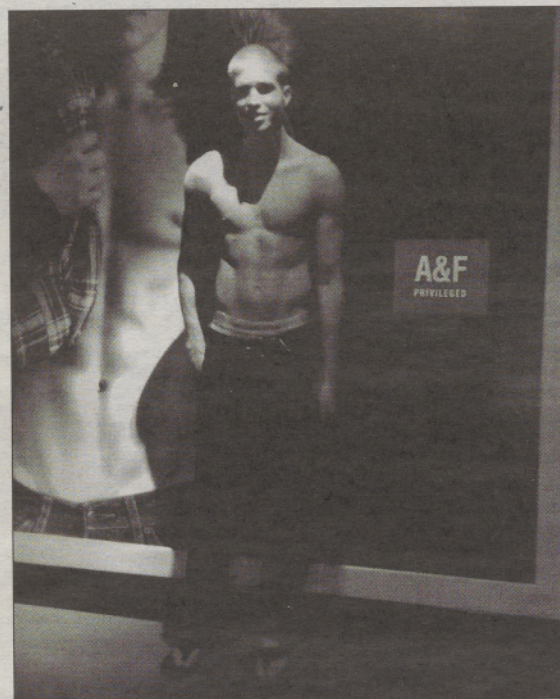


Photo courtesy of Jake Buchanan

Jake Buchanan balances more than most, as he is a college baseball player, a model for Abercrombie and Fitch and an aspiring firefighter.