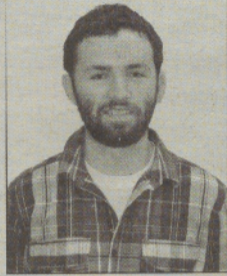


Athletic department, college crippled by lack of cohesiveness



By John William Howard
Sports Editor

In case you haven't been paying attention, last week our women's softball team won their ninth NWAACC title, beating out Lower Columbia College 6-5 and 7-6 in front of a rowdy bunch of parents, friends and staff members at Delta Park.

After several minutes of wild post-game celebration and the presentation of the awards, Assistant Athletic Director Kayla Steen finally allowed several of the ecstatic fans to rush the field and celebrate with the softball champions.

However, back at the college, unless students were fans of the team, friends with the athletes or really in tune with the athletic department, they had no idea that such a huge game was being played. In a brief survey through the community center a few hours before the first pitch, few of the students that knew Clackamas had a softball team knew that they were playing for a championship.

The reason that this is a big deal is that Clackamas has one of the best overall athletic departments in the Northwest at the two year college level, and hardly anyone knows about it.

There are several reasons behind this, not the least of which being that Clackamas is a commuter college and a large portion of the student body lives a considerable distance from the campus. Another is because of the proximity of Portland, there are bigger and more exciting teams to follow, and it's difficult to draw attention away from the big professional sports franchises.

However, there are definitely steps that other colleges have taken in order to build a thriving fan base. Colleges like Clark College and Shoreline Community College are very, very active on social media sites, and do an impressive job of keeping their fans updated. Clark has their own athletics website, ClarkPenguins.com, which differs from Clackamas' approach greatly. Clackamas' athletics website is an offshoot of the main

website, which makes it difficult to find unless you're looking for it.

That, according to Director of Athletics Jim Martineau, is something that Clackamas may change in the near future, as he said that the department would be taking a look at marketing and promotion in the coming months. This is welcome news, as it could be a big first step in sweeping changes for the department as we move into an age driven by marketing, not just by success.

For now, we can only sit back, look at eye candy from other schools and offer up ideas for the department to consider.

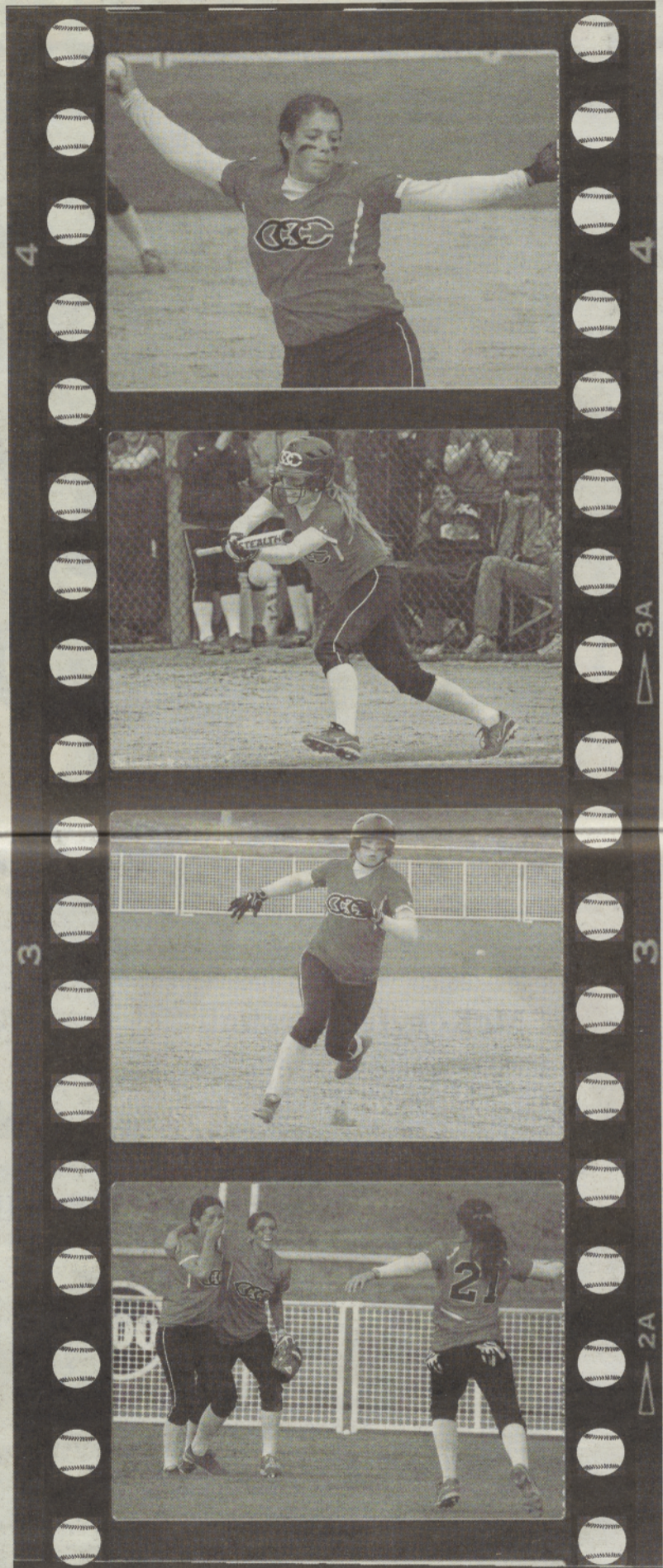
The biggest thing I would like to see is increased cooperation between athletics and the rest of the school. The fault comes from both sides, but neither ASG nor the college itself seems to pay much attention to the athletic department. It's rare that ASG promotes an athletic event (even though they make money off of concessions), and just as unusual when the college's Facebook or Twitter account talk about important games coming up. According to Simon Tam, the social media coordinator at CCC, the public affairs office simply didn't know that the softball championship was happening until shortly before it happened.

"I haven't been contacted by athletics since I started the position here because they have their own hired publicist and web presence," stated Tam via the college's Facebook. "We generally promote events that are sent to Public Affairs or when other dept's request us to do so but we haven't been notified about the championships."

Part of that falls on the athletic department's failure to get the information out, but part of that also falls on the college itself. Athletics being one of the proudest programs offered at Clackamas, the eyes of the public affairs office should at least be aware of what's going on over in Randall Hall.

The disjointed communication is just one of many hurdles to jump before Clackamas steps into the elite in fan support. Walla Walla Community College does TV broadcasts of many of their basketball games. Lower Columbia Community College and Lane Community College both have radio broadcasts. Columbia Basin College sells jerseys. The list goes on, full of goals and dreams for what Clackamas could be, given the effort. Let's keep our eyes peeled for change.

NWAACC champions



Top: McKenzie Marshall pitches as the championship game winds down on Wednesday, May 23. A home run in the title game gave Marshall her 52nd RBI this season, which put her in a tie for the most single-season RBIs in Clackamas history.

Second from top: Bailie Foxworthy bunts during the first game of the championship series. Foxworthy scored two runs in the contest, which Clackamas won 6-5 to force the second game.

Second from bottom: Megan Malvick runs for second base in the first game of the series. Malvick scored two runs and had one RBI in the game.

Bottom: Ashley Bacon (left), Katie Aden (center) and Briana Bruce celebrate after Bacon made the game winning catch in the top of the seventh inning to clinch the title.

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For the full recap of Clackamas softball's journey through the NWAACC Championships, visit www.TheClackamasPrint.com