

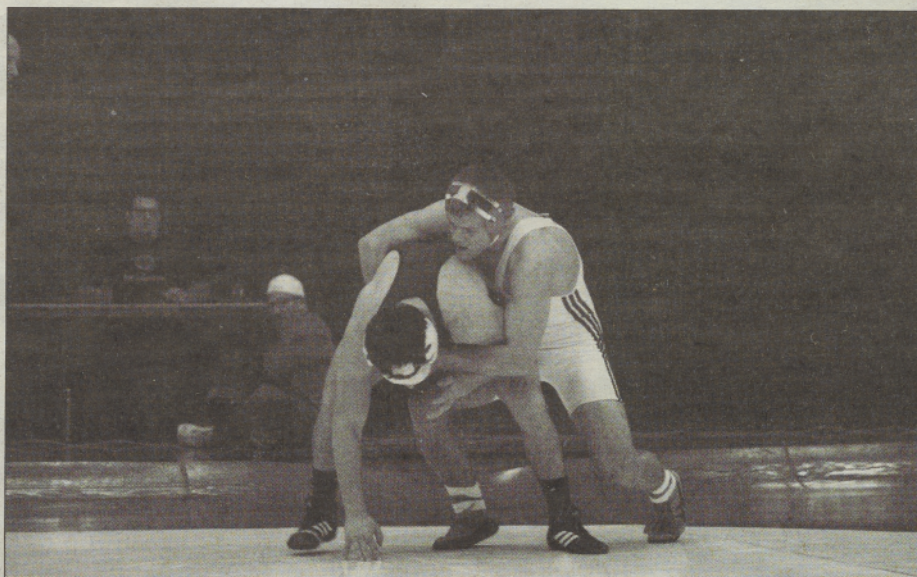
Successful recruiting brings strength to Clackamas athletic programs

By David Beasley
The Clackamas Print

For many years, Clackamas Community College has had success in the athletic department. Not only does the department provide positive reinforcement and opportunities to continue education for students, it also manufactures a high quality athletic product. With the last of the sports seasons wrapping up for the year, focus now turns to rebuilding and revamping each team in an effort to pick up where they left off.

Recruiting is used for sports at CCC to help gain advantage and put together a team with a strong talent base. This is just as important to junior college athletics as it is for four-year university teams. The coaching staff at Clackamas is a tireless group of enthusiasts who share their love of athletics with students and strive to help them succeed in sports and academics equally. It is not just a job to the coaching staff; it is a favorite past-time and hobby.

The wrestling program is a great asset to athletics at Clackamas. Head coach Josh Rhoden recalls, "In six years we haven't placed lower than eighth in the NJCAA National Championships (where the team placed fourth in 2012).



Austin Morehead was recruited several years ago into the Cougar athletics department from central California. Morehead competed twice in the NJCAA Wrestling National Championships.

We've got Austin Morehead, 184 lbs national runner-up this year and he just signed with OSU, the PAC-12 champs, 10th in the country."

How does the wrestling team stay on top and gain student athletes like Morehead of Sutter, California? Aside from the obvious roster building methods like signups and try-outs, recruiting

lends strong leverage to teams and can help tip the competitive scales of talent and ability. Rhoden and his assistants spend a great deal of time scouring stats and data on the internet, calling high schools, attending large competitions, and general networking with students and coaches.

The wrestling program enjoys a large talent pool to choose from.

Students from across the US travel to Clackamas for the wrestling program.

"We have recently been able to recruit all over the United States," said Rhoden. "We search in-state and the Portland area of course, but we've got kids from places like Pennsylvania, Arizona and Minnesota. We have a kid walking on from the state of Texas. He'd done some research and found that this is a great program and then he decided to come to Clackamas. We can help kids with a tuition waiver — there are 16 three-term tuition waivers — that number is set by the NJCAA."

The success of individual athletes and the team helps grow the program and build a strong presence in the league as well as nationally. Being well known also helps to attract good wrestlers. "Winning the nationals helped us a bunch because now kids seek us out," said Rhoden.

Wrestling is the only sport at Clackamas that competes at the national level, but wrestling isn't the only program that benefits the college. Among the other athletic teams currently recruiting members for next season are men's and women's basketball.

"We look for players within

the Northwest states, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada and Alaska," said women's basketball assistant coach P.J. Martineau. "Recruiting is vital. It determines how the season will go the following year."

Athletes are recruited in a number of different ways for each sport at Clackamas. Attending and hosting competitions are good examples.

"Each year the women's basketball team holds the nationally recognized End of the Trail Tournament," said Martineau. This event attracts many top ranked, talented players and is a great yearly opportunity to recruit.

The scholastic side of women's basketball is just as talented as their last four years on the court.

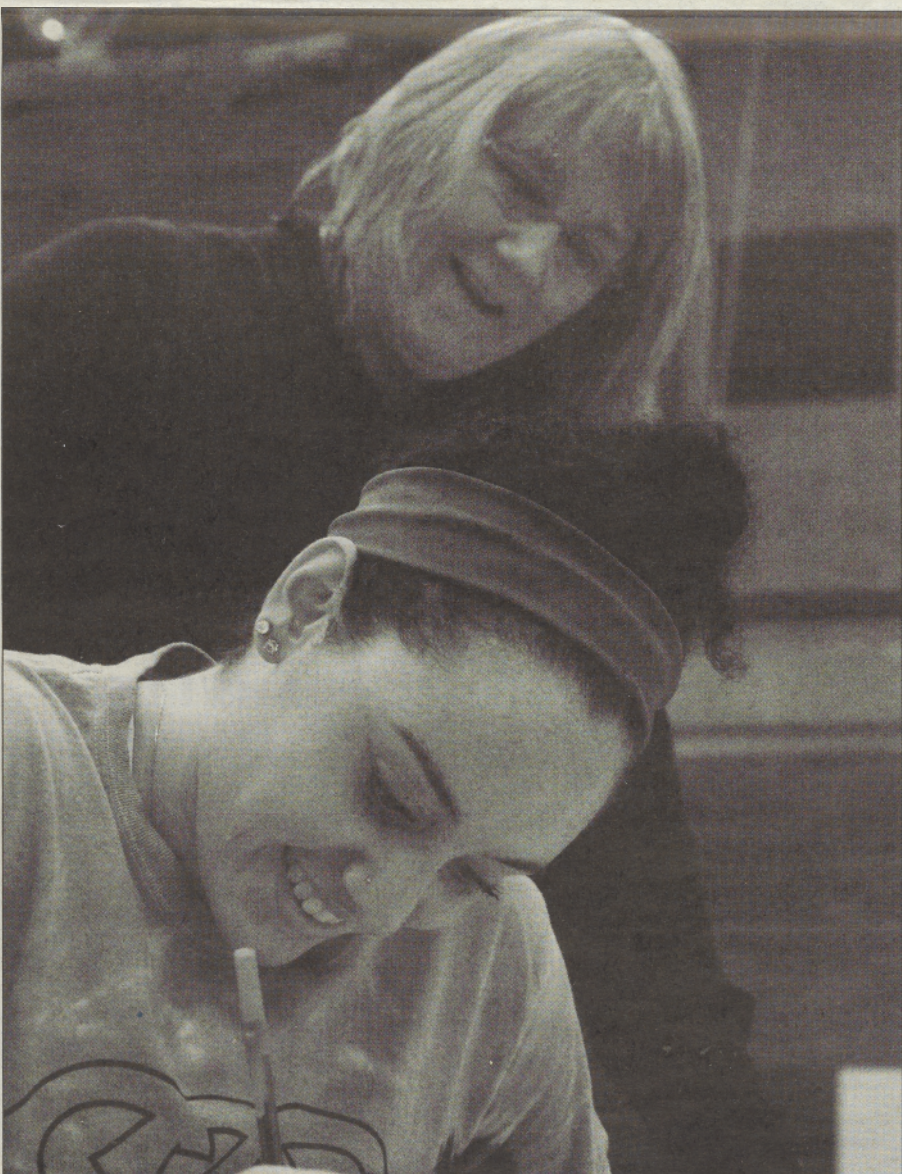
"In the past ten years, 90 percent of our players who played both seasons with us graduated with associates degrees," said P.J. Martineau.

As a whole, the athletic department has great ways of helping students through college. GPA expectations and requirements are monitored and guidance is facilitated by coaching staff and the athletic academic adviser.

"P.J. Martineau is the academic advisor for all the sports," said Jim Martineau, director of athletics and husband to P.J. "She helps all the student athletes and keeps them on track throughout their time at Clackamas. Our number one job is to help student athletes develop academically and athletically to transfer. Number two is winning."

A little known advantage of recruiting is finding natural leaders. A good leader can be a great asset to a team that has student-athletes playing only two seasons. There is not a great amount of time to develop the tools required for a strong team captain, so when a born leader comes along it is of great help to the team coaching staff.

When student-athletes at Clackamas perform well athletically and scholastically, it attracts more students and community support for the school. Athletic recruiting is a vital lifeline for the college.



Kathie Woods observes Zoey Martin as she signs her letter of intent to play volleyball at Clackamas next fall. Martin is one of many players to have already signed for the volleyball team.

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