

Mike Hodges Cross Country Invitational



All photos by Andrew Millbrooke The Clackamas

Cougar men wash competition down storm drain

Andrew Millbrooke
Sports Editor

The first rainy day of the fall term didn't put a damper on the enthusiasm or the turnout as the Clackamas men's team swept away the competition by convincingly winning the men's portion of the Mike Hodges Cross Country Invitational Friday afternoon on CCC's campus.

Ten teams and over 100 runners came out on a grey, drizzly afternoon to compete on Clackamas' brand new, flat and fast cross country course. The meet is named after a former Clackamas cross country and track and field head coach who built the Cougar programs into a regional power in his time at CCC from 1986 to 2002.

"This is the first time we've run collegiately out here and we got incredibly positive feedback on how everything went," said CCC head coach Jarret Mantalas. "Coach after coach was talking about how nice it was and how fun

it is to have a cross country only area."

Although the rain came down consistently throughout, the meet ran smoothly and many spectators showed up ready, in full rain gear.

"Despite the rain, it's perfect," said Mantalas. "At least we didn't have to race in 80-degree weather again."

In two of the previous three races this season they faced high temperatures and hot sun.

The CCC men had the top five runners in the team scoring contest, as only three unattached entries were able to break them up.

"As a whole, the major focus today was to get out up front, be aggressive and see what happens," said Mantalas. Clackamas did just that, as they had six runners all within striking distance of each other early in the race.

"We are exactly where we need to be as a team," said Mantalas.

Freshman Badane Sultessa led the men with a second place overall finish in 21:14.25 for the four-mile course.

"Badane finally had a breakout as far as pushing it in the middle of

the race," said Mantalas.

"I didn't go all out early," said Sultessa. "I tried to catch up at the end, but it didn't happen."

Unattached runner Anteneh Woticha ran to a big early lead and then held on for victory in 21:09.86. Sultessa and unattached third place finisher Danny Mackey closed the gap on Woticha during the final mile, but were unable to catch him.

Mantalas was very pleased with all of the men's performances.

"Tony Gil-Juarez had a fabulous race, running hard from the beginning," said Mantalas. Gil-Juarez said he loved the new course and that the rain helped the conditions.

"I put in a couple brand new spikes, so I was able to claw through with no slipping," said Gil-Juarez. "It couldn't be more perfect weather. The rain helped keep it cool."

"We were looking at it as a workout, trying to pack it up top," said freshman Gil-Juarez, who was CCC's 2nd runner and 4th-overall in 21:24.91.

"We came out successful and couldn't be happier with the way

things turned out." Behind Gil-Juarez, Clackamas had three runners fly through the line within 13 seconds of each other: Jon Obeso (21:49.05), Austin Peila (21:58.66), and Mark Medgin (22:02.35).

"That was the most fabulous race I've seen out of Austin Peila," said Mantalas, adding, "Mark Medgin moved his way through this race incredibly." Zach Hibbs added some depth with a 13th place finish in 22:27.11.

"Zach Hibbs ran incredibly well, a very smart race," said Mantalas. Chris Stash (23:26.16), Jordan Grimes (23:34.12) and Tyler Nizer (24:33.89) were the final Clackamas runners across the line.

Clackamas scored the minimum 15 points in winning, while six other teams fielded complete squads: Western Oregon (58), Green River CC (83), Willamette (113), SW Oregon CC (138), Mt. Hood CC (140) and Highline CC (164).

Oregon State University brought its women's team, while Clark CC and Central Oregon CC also brought runners.



Tony Gil-Juarez

X-Country women run X-odus through rain

David Beasley
Associate Sports Editor

Wet and wild was the name of the game Friday afternoon, as Clackamas Community College hosted the Mike Hodges Invitational. Chains of runners strewn about the trail, appeared to advance effortlessly through the deluge of mist and rain.

Onlookers and passersby adorned rain gear and umbrellas. There was a playful mood in the air, with excitement for the first rain of fall and the opportunity to run in the rain. The country-crossers stormed the trail, taking on the elements and traversing the terrain, in a dazzling display of skill, willpower and stamina.

"Runners set!" the orders from the megaphone declared, and the race literally began with a bang as the starter pistol was fired. A stampede of athletes sped down the open field, disap-

pearing around a corner of trees and bushes to continue along the uneven course. The women's 5,000-meter race around the cross country path began with some runners battling the cold weather while keeping up with the pack.

As the race wore on, many who had been chilly, started to warm up and enjoy the run in the rain. "I like running in the rain," said Clackamas' Randi Chance as she smiled and looked up toward the misty sky.

"I run better in the rain," said Grace Viuhkola, Clackamas' top runner. "I don't sweat, so it's nice, the rain cools me down."

This year, the ladies of Clackamas have a strong team bond. "We had a team camp at the beginning of the season that really broke the ice and helped the team feel more like a family," said Chance.

"We have a really close-knit team this year," said Viuhkola. "Everyone cheers each other

on and it makes us a stronger team."

The women had to overcome the obstacle of having their most successful runner, Cia Bywater, sitting out due to a foot injury. The girls shined in true Cougar cross country fashion. Viuhkola finished 12th overall with a time of 20:58, despite battling a chest cold.

"It was hard for us as a team without Cia running," said Viuhkola. "We are looking at this race and the next at Lane, as good preparation for NWAACC Championships in a month."

"Grace has really stepped up in the last couple weeks and shown she can be a leader on this team," said head coach Jarret Mantalas. "She battled really hard and fought during the race."

Chance finished second for Clackamas with a great time of 22 minutes even. "I thought I could have run faster," Chance admitted. "I ran the course

yesterday and ran it faster." Mantalas seemed pleased with her progress. "Randi ran almost the same time here on a significantly harder course as she did at the Willamette Invite," said Mantalas.

Joanna Feeney was CCC's next finisher in 28th with a time of 22:28. Zaira Sanchez ran the first cross country race of her life, finishing 38th in 24:20.

"It was a little bit of a shocker for her," said Mantalas. "But, she battled and fought tough. She's a hurdler at heart, not really a true cross country runner, but she's starting to show it."

Running long distances, non-stop, for extended periods of time, is no small feat. Friday was a stunning display of willpower. With excitement building for this season's upcoming NWAACC championships on Nov. 10, there's no better time to be paying attention to the fantastic runners of team Clackamas.



Grace Viuhkola

Sports
CALENDAR
October 17-23

WEDNESDAY - 10/17	THURSDAY - 10/18	FRIDAY - 10/19	SATURDAY - 10/20	SUNDAY - 10/21	MONDAY - 10/22	TUESDAY - 10/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer: CCC at Lane, Eugene 1 p.m. • NBA: Denver at Portland, 7 p.m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intramural Soccer: 12-2 p.m. in the field next to Hwy. 213. • College FB: Oregon Ducks at ASU, in Tempe, Arizona at 6 p.m. • NFL: Seattle at San Francisco, 5:20 p.m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volleyball: SW Oregon at CCC, 7 p.m. in Randall Gym (Sponsor Night) • Flag Football Fridays: 11:30-1:30p.m. in the field next to Hwy. 213 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volleyball: Umpqua at CCC, 1p.m. in Randall Gym. (Diggin' Pink) • Soccer: CCC at Chemeketa, Salem, Noon • College FB: Utah at Oregon State, 7:30 p.m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MLS: Portland Timbers at Vancouver, 4 p.m. • Horse Racing: 1 p.m. at Portland Meadows. • NBA: Portland Trail Blazers Fan Fest, 5 p.m. Rose Garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCC Weight Room Hours: downstairs in Randall, 8:30-10 a.m. and 1-6 p.m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCC Weight Room Hours: downstairs in Randall, 12-8 p.m.