

Wrestlers grapple with best in west

Heather Mills The Clackamas Print

Heavyweight Jake Mitchell won first place at the Best of the West Open in Ashland, leading the Clackamas Community College wrestling team to a solid two days of matches.

Mitchell, a sophomore from Portland, impressed everyone by pinning five opponents during the tournament. Trent Noon made his second straight finals at 174 pounds, finishing in second place. Of the 22 Clackamas wrestlers who competed, 11 placed in the event.

Other wrestlers placing in the top four included: second place at 149 pounds - Beau Roberts; second place at 125 pounds - Sage Ornelas; third place at 125 pounds - Stevan Knoblauch; third place at 141 pounds - A.J. Ballard; third place at 133 pounds - Daniel Leonard; and fourth place at 157 pounds - Richard Quesada.

Clackamas did not have a great first day, but those who made it to the second day showed a renewed sense of competitive spirit. Many used the time between matches in order to reflect and improve.

"I think they are doing a good job," said assistant coach Rich Vigorito. "It's funny, if you ask them, they would tell you they have a lot to improve on. It's definitely true, but to me it's encouraging that they were able to make adjustments within one week. If we keep that progress up throughout the year, we will be fine come nationals."

Vigorito said that improvements need to be made as far as hand fighting, control ties, moving opponents and setups, but that the need for these improvements are typical for this time of year.

"Usually, we find this is the biggest transition guys need to make from high school to college," said Vigorito.

The Best of the West Open was held over two days, with those who placed second and

above advancing to the second round on Sunday. The event, hosted by Southern Oregon University, gave Cougar wrestlers the opportunity to match themselves against a variety of opponents. The competition this year included participants from the University of Great Falls, Oregon State University, Pacific University, Southwest Oregon Community College, Lassen Community College, West Hills Community College and Stanford, amongst others.

Since the season started, Clackamas wrestlers have had problems with injuries and anticipate the struggle of keeping weight that may come with the onslaught of the Thanksgiving weekend. Some athletes are awaiting the results of MRIs, while others will be re-joining the team after a long absence due to injury.

Sophomore Jake Laden from Butte, Mont., is ranked No. 1 in the nation at 197 pounds and is one member who will be resuming practices after recovering from an injury amid hopes that he will participate in upcoming December tournaments. The welcome Thanksgiving break comes after a challenging week of competition.

"I think we found exactly what we were looking for in the weekend," said head coach Josh Rhoden. "It's just about getting in some tough matches, putting our kids up against some older guys, some guys that have been in a college for a while, and just gauging where we're at right now talent-wise and ability level."

Rhoden knows that having his wrestlers compete against athletes from four-year schools can only help them in the long run.

"We kind of put them up against a lot of adversity to see how they respond," said Rhoden. "Then we coach to that, and when we get to tournaments where more teams are junior college level, we definitely have an advantage."

Stevan Knoblauch, a freshman from Fresno, Calif., says he feels that he does better when the com-

petition is fierce.

"Anyone you wrestle is going to give it their all, so you got to give it all back to them," said Knoblauch. "They just want to beat us as much as we want to beat them. I don't think they want to lose to someone at junior college and we want to beat the people who are supposedly better than us."

Other wrestlers love the tournament atmosphere and being part of a team.

"It's always fun going to a tournament, hanging out with the team, supporting each other and watching each other win," said A.J. Ballard, a freshman from Canby.

"We really did good this weekend. It's always exciting to see kids at a junior college beat a division one kid or a National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics kid. I mean, they're

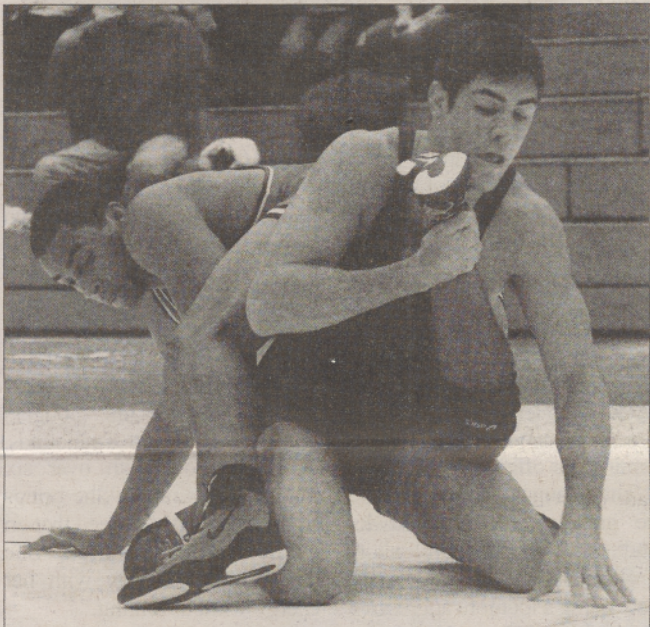
supposed to be better than you, and we whooped up on some supposedly top-ranked kids in the nation."

Now, the Cougars must hit the road for a series of matches all over the Northwest. This Saturday, Clackamas heads to Coos Bay to take on Southern Region foe Southwestern Oregon CC at 7 p.m.

The following weekend the Cougars head to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho for two matches on Saturday, Dec. 8. They take on North Idaho College at 11 a.m. and then Northwest Wyoming at 1 p.m.

Over Christmas break, the Cougars will head to Reno, Nev. for the Reno Tournament of Champions on Dec. 16.

You can follow all of the action on the Cougar wrestling facebook page or CCC athletics.



Andrew Millbrooke: The Clackamas Print

Trent Noon (right), a sophomore from Oakdale, Calif., gains the upper hand against freshman Kolby Mays (from Spring Creek, Nev.) before pinning him in the Navy and Scarlet match at 174 pounds earlier this year.



Joshua Dillen: The Clackamas Print

Wrestling coach Josh Rhoden is in his seventh year at the helm of the Cougar wrestling program. Rhoden led the Cougars to the 2011 National Junior College Championship and third place in 2012.

Cougars step up to plate

Passing by the baseball field this term may have been a confusing scene at times. Usually baseball would be seen in the spring, but fall has been busy for the men of Clackamas Community College's baseball team as they have been hard at work keeping in shape and preparing for the spring season.

The Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges' rules allow baseball to include a fall and winter schedule, before they start the spring season.

The fall schedule is seven weeks long with four game days planned against other schools. The rules allow baseball 12 weeks from Sept. 15 to Nov. 15 and Jan. 15 to March 1.

November and December are for conditioning only. March 1 is the first day allowed to play spring games. During the spring

they are allowed 22 game days against opponents.

Returning this fall to CCC baseball are four key players:

- Scott Myers, all-league third baseman from Kearns HS, Utah.
- Richie McCarter, pitcher from Kearns HS, Utah.
- Thomas Kelly, catcher from Warrenton HS.
- Josh Combs, outfielder from Hudson's Bay HS, Vancouver, Wash.

This fall Clackamas has a good group of freshmen recruits on campus including:

- Joe Strand, catcher from Seattle, Wash.
- Skyler Barkdull, infielder from Utah.
- Trevor Achenbach, infielder from Nevada.
- Kyle Austin, infielder from Wilsonville HS.

Clackamas has one of the fastest outfield groups in the northwest:

- Josh McLeod, outfielder from Seattle, Wash.
- Zach Caligdong, outfielder from Seattle, Wash.
- Justin Sievers, outfielder from Canby HS.

Several pitchers have shined this fall, including:

- Andrew Marquez from Milwaukie HS.
- Kylar Heaston from Tigard HS.
- Kennon Von Hollebeke from Connell HS, Wash.
- Zach Carter from Post Falls, Idaho.

All information and stats provided by CCC baseball head coach Robin Robinson.

—Compiled by David Beasley

Sports CALENDAR

Nov. 28 - Dec. 4

WEDNESDAY - 11/28

- **NBA:** Portland at Washington, 4 p.m., CSN and KEX
- **Randall Fitness Center:** 8:30-10 a.m. and 1-8 p.m.

THURSDAY - 11/29

- **College Basketball:** Texas San Antonio at Oregon, 7 p.m. on Pac-12 Network
- **Randall Fitness Center:** 12-8 p.m.

FRIDAY - 11/30

- **CCC Men's Basketball:** Concordia JV at CCC, 7 p.m.
- **CCC Women's Basketball:** Warrior Classic at Walla Walla, Wash., 6 p.m.

SATURDAY - 12/1

- **CCC Wrestling:** at Southwestern Oregon CC, in Coos Bay, at 7 p.m.
- **CCC Women's Basketball:** Warrior Classic at Walla Walla, Wash., 2 p.m.

SUNDAY - 12/2

- **NFL:** Seattle at Chicago 10 a.m. on FOX
- **Horse Racing:** Portland Meadows at 1 p.m.

MONDAY - 12/3

- **NFL:** NY Giants at Washington 5:30 p.m. on ESPN
- **Randall Fitness Center:** 8:30-10 a.m. and 1-6 p.m.

TUESDAY - 12/4

- **Randall Fitness Center:** 12-8 p.m. downstairs in Randall

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