

Cougars off to good start, ready for strong finish

Story and photo by Jack Spencer



Clackamas Community College forward Madi Andresen creates space while being surrounded by two Mt. Hood Community College defenders.

It's mid-season, Cougar fans, and excitement is in the air. The men's and women's basketball teams are now at the halfway point in Southern League play and the race is on to make it to the tournament. With the men coming in at a record of 5-2 and the women at 3-3, both teams are in the hunt for one of four tournament spots.

Both teams have the same goal when the season starts: to make the NWAC tournament. This year the tournament will take place March 7 through March 10 in Kennewick, Wash. The tournament consists of 16 teams. Each year the four teams with the best league record in each division of the NWAC make it to the tournament.

"Once you're in it, you're in it to win it," said men's assistant coach Brian Stamme.

The men's team is currently in second place, sitting just one game back of first place – currently held by Chemeketa Community College. The men's team, coached by Clif Wegner, has their eyes set on multiple accomplishments this season.

"One of the only things that Coach Wegner has not done since he's been coach here is win the league in back-to-back years," said Stamme. "He's won the NWAC championship in back-to-back years, but one of those years, he didn't win the league title."

Wegner, now in his 15th season as head coach, has achieved many things here at Clackamas Community College, including 11 straight trips to the NWAC tournament, six league championships and three NWAC championships. This accolade may only be a small piece of an already legendary career here at CCC, however it's definitely within reach for this team.

"We have to keep playing together, keep bringing the team together," said Wegner after a thrilling 75-70 win against Mt. Hood Community College on January 28.

The women's team is currently sitting in a tie for fourth place with Portland Community College, but there's no lack of confidence in this team. Co-head coached by Jim Martineau, in his 16th season, and Kayla Steen, in her fifth, this two-headed coaching attack brings success and energy to the CCC community.

"The other coaches in my league tease me a lot because my wife PJ coaches with me still and she does all the recruiting," said Martineau. "Kayla does all the practice coaching and I just show up and coach games. It's a great gig," he said with a grin on his face.

"Once you're in it, you're in it to win it."

— Brian Stamme

However, their record under this system is nothing to joke about. Since Steen joined on as co-head coach, CCC has made the NWAC tournament each year, with three Southern League championships and a second place finish at the 2013 NWAC tournament. So no need for alarm Cougar fans, I'm sure we'll be seeing the women come March.