

# BASEBALL TEAM ENDS SEASON ON 17-GAME LOSING STREAK

## THE COUGARS BASEBALL TEAM COMES TO A STRUGGLING END WITH A 5-29 RECORD

BY EDGARD VALENCIA

Every spring has its own story to tell and the Cougars Baseball team might be one to forget.

Nothing came easy for the Cougars this season. They split their first two series of the season before going on an eight-game losing streak, which came to an end by splitting their second series against Chemeketa, earning their first win in league play.

The momentum carried on into the next couple games as they split another four game series against Southwestern Oregon Community College earning their third win in league play 3-5.

From there things took an unexpected turn for the Cougars as they went on to lose all of the remaining games of the season ending with a record of 3-21 in league play and 5-29 overall.

Head coach Jim Hoppel knows that, despite the 17 game losing streak to end

the season, the players still gave it their all and is aware of how things could have been different for the program.

"It was a very tough year for sure," Hoppel said. "We had some high hopes for the team that we started out with, but unfortunately we had some players go down with injuries and some guys that became ineligible that we were really counting on being a key part of our success."

The Cougars encountered a few close league play battles along the season including two games with Clark 2-3 and 7-10, Linn Benton 3-4, and two games against Lane 7-8 and 7-9.

Freshman catcher Jake Dobecki looks back at his first season behind the plate.

"I think the turning point was in our second series against Clark when we got swept and lost three of those which were really close games," Dobecki said. "When

it got really tough I would just try to tell myself that no matter what is happening I'm always going to do everything I can do to try and win this game even if we were down by 10 runs."

Sophomore designated hitter Zach Wycaver took on the leader role in a team that had 23 freshman coming in. Wycaver played in 30 games which translated to 24 hits, 9 runs and led the team in RBIs with 11.

"During practices you could tell that we were working hard and trying to get better each day whether it's ground balls or hitting," Wycaver said. "We were a young team this year and had a lot of freshman starters that will be ready for next season, but our goal was to try and make it to the end. We just wanted to keep playing baseball."

Other memorable mentions include freshman pitcher Drew Martin who did

a fantastic job on the mound for the Cougars and kept them close in games he played in as he pitched 48.2 innings throughout the season, which included one shutout, 21 strikeouts, and 43 hits allowed. Sophomore third baseman Micah Clardy was another key player as he played 31 games translating to 17 runs, 25 hits and 8 RBIs.

Looking forward to next season, Hoppel knows that it's a new chance to start fresh.

"We are starting with a new team and not letting what happened this year affect the way we approach what we want to accomplish next year," Hoppel said. "We have some very good recruits coming in next year and some guys coming back that we feel can make a difference. We want to thank those that came out to watch us and continue to support our program."

photo by Travis David V Whittaker



Andrew Fine throws a pitch against Mt. Hood, in a game where the Cougars lost 14-0.