

Softball pounces opponents

CLACKAMAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE HAS AVERAGED 9.89 RUNS PER GAME OVER THEIR LAST NINE

photo by Doug Fry

photo by Sam Weston



Clackamas celebrates number 33 Ashley Dugan's homerun in their game against Centralia.

Katie Zook puts the ball in play against Centralia.

BY DOUG FRY

Cougars' softball is in the process of peaking as the regular season came to an end on Friday May 12.

In Jessica Buel's tenth season as head coach, she has the same goal in sight for her team, a championship.

"Our expectations are always to win an NWAC title, we plan to be there and be competing for that title," said Buel.

***"I have to give it to my coaches they help a lot, if you need extra cuts they stay after practice."
—Katie Rose Whetstine***

Her players reflect the same winning attitude that Buel has. They have their sights set for success and execute their game plan week in and week out.

"We've been having a good season this year. Hopefully we're going to start

peaking for NWAC's," said Buel. "It's been a great year. We have a great group of kids and they work hard every day."

Clackamas Community College's softball team has been able to do just that. Ending their regular season on a nine game winning streak, outscoring their opponents 89-37 in that span. The team has found great success from the plate all season, but has excelled in recent games.

Sophomore catcher Katie Rose Whetstine has carried a large part of the scoring this season, attributing 60 RBIs in 32 games. Whetstine has only struck out three times and leads the team in batting average, homeruns and RBIs (.486, 11, 60) this season.

"I have to give it to my coaches, they help a lot. If you need extra cuts they stay after practice," said Whetstine. "Just knowing that you're better than before, knowing that you're a better hitter than the pitcher."

CCC has benefitted from stellar pitching on the mound all season from sophomore Hannah Vandomelen. With a record of 15-1, Vandomelen has been automatic

all season long and gives the Cougars leadership they can depend on.

"I think it helps to have a consistent person on the mound to be reliable," said Vandomelen. "It's just good to have a leader and I think I do a pretty good job at that."

Vandomelen has been able to double her wins this season and cut her ERA in half.

"Being more poised and not as nervous, thinking you know if people get hits they're going to get hits," said Vandomelen on what has changed since last season. "Keeping the ball off the plate has helped me be more successful this year."

With only one week to prepare, Buel's experience in the postseason it allows her to help her players with last minute fine tuning and making sure everything is on point.

As a leader on the team and with having been on last year's fourth place team, Vandomelen can help her teammates with adjustments that need to be made for NWACs.

"We need to do the little things right,

being more consistent with our attitudes, with our hitting and not being so up and down all the time," said Vandomelen. "I have high expectations."

CCC's softball team is a program that always has success in the NWAC tournament placing top four in each of the last three seasons including an appearance in the championship in 2014. Like any other year, the Cougars look to do the same and are bringing confidence to the tournament.

Clackamas finished second in the NWAC South Region. The Cougars will continue their season on May 19 in Spokane, Washington for the NWAC softball championships. They will play their first game against Highline Community College.