



HOME RUN QUEEN



Teammates swarm Munson at home plate after she hit a record-breaking home run.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JACOB THOMPSON
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Freshman catcher Natalie Munson made Clackamas Community College softball history Friday when she hit home run No. 17 of the season, passing third baseman Kylie Gonzales (16 HRs in 2016) for the single season home run record.

Munson wasn't known as a HR hitter during her career at Westview High School, hitting four HRs in her senior season; she credits her offseason regimen to her increased power.

"I've been doing more in the weightroom," Munson said. "Building more muscle has helped me hit the ball farther."

So far this season, teammates have had a lot of confidence in Munson's ability at the plate. Freshman infielder Peyton Elliott wasn't surprised at the season Munson's having.

"[Munson] is a power-hitter," Elliott said. "I've never seen anyone hit 18 home runs in one year. I feel a lot more confident when she's up to bat."

The record breaking HR came in the first game of two against Chemeketa Community College in the bottom of the third inning. Munson had struck

out in her first at bat, but knew what she was looking for in her second.

"I was just looking for my pitch," Munson said. "I wanted a strike over the plate, I swung and it was gone."

When Munson took that swing, Head Coach Jessica Buel had no doubt it was leaving the park. Buel added that she isn't surprised Munson broke the school record.

"[Munson's] always had a great swing," Buel said. "She's really been known to be a great hitter throughout the state of Oregon, so we knew coming in she had the potential to do it."

Munson was nothing but smiles after breaking the record in Clackamas' 8-0 win over Chemeketa.

"It feels amazing [to break the record,]" Munson said. "I'm not surprised, but it's a lot of emotion to take in."

Two hours after setting the new school record, Munson added another HR during game two versus Chemeketa, pushing her HR tally to 18—tying her for the Northwest Athletic Conference lead for HRs hit so far this year. Munson is in a three-way tie with North Idaho

College's sophomore infielder Kalyna Korok and Treasure Valley Community College's sophomore catcher Jordan Henley who have also hit 18 HRs. Buel thinks Munson has a chance of ending the season leading the NWAC in HRs.

"We've got some good pitching to face and she usually hits the better pitching better," Buel said. "It will be good for her to get out there and compete for that."

Munson has been a big part of the Cougars offense this year, with a batting average of .391 and giving Clackamas 52 runs batted in.

"[Munson's] been very consistent this year," Buel said. "It's not only home runs. She comes in with some good consistent at bats for us and it's really sparked the team when we've needed it."

Munson is on pace to hit 21 HRs by season's end but said she'd be happy with 19.

CCC ALL-TIME SINGLE SEASON HOME RUN LEADERS

1. NATALIE MUNSON 18
2. KYLIE GONZALES 16
3. KIARA VASQUEZ 14
4. RASHAUN SELLS 13
5. KATIE KING 11



Munson hugs coach Katie Aden