

Still fall short of return to NWAC playoffs

in single by Parker, a RBI double by sophomore outfielder Grant Horwitz and a two-run RBI double by sophomore first baseman Jacob Kaady.

Sophomore second baseman Berry Hunt made his ninth appearance as a pitcher for Clackamas. Hunt struckout three, 10 hits and five runs, his fifth win of the season.

The Cougars added five more runs and would snap their nine-game losing streak with a 9-5 win. Sophomore pitcher Grayson Fenwick would earn his fifth save of the season.

Trailing Chemeketa 8-2 in the final game of the season, Clackamas refused to quit with the help of back-to-back HRs by Parker and Horwitz.

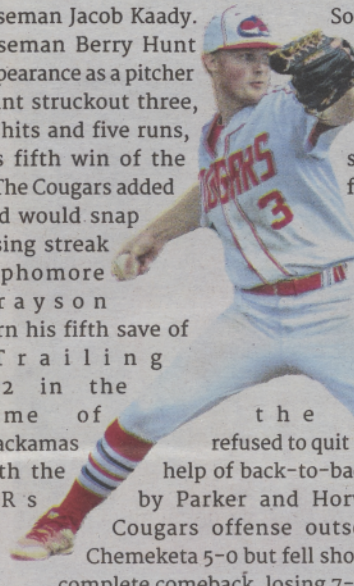
The Cougars offense outscored Chemeketa 5-0 but fell short of the complete comeback, losing 7-8.

“It was a rough way to go out,” Horwitz said. “Up until [Friday] we had a shot to make the playoffs and once you make it there, anything can happen. We battled, everybody had us crossed off from the beginning, but we still battled until the last day.”

The goal from day one this season was to make the playoffs to end the streak. Clackamas had a group of sophomores who felt like the program’s culture needed to be turned around, so they focused on making this year’s freshmen class feel welcomed, something they as freshmen felt was lacking.

“It felt like last year the sophomores gave us the cold

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Left: Renner Stecki pitching in game three of the series versus Chemeketa.

Freshman shortstop Kyle Nowoj slides into third base.

shoulder,” sophomore catcher Brayden Bafaro said. “This year we took the freshmen in and treated them like our brothers; we wanted it to be one team not freshmen and sophomores.”

Although the chemistry the Cougars worked on this season didn’t result in the necessary wins for a playoff berth, Head Coach Jim Hoppel liked what he saw from this group.

“The sophomore guys changed the ways from last year,” Hoppel said. “They didn’t want to see it happen again so they made sure the freshmen were involved with everything, felt like they were part of the team and everyone worked together.”

Hoppel believes the chemistry the sophomores were able to build will help the program in years to come.

“I think [the chemistry] is going to be big [for the

future],” Hoppel said. “I think these freshmen will be the same way as sophomores next year helping the team be one big clique and let the incoming guys know this is how we play the game here, not the old way.”

Clackamas ended the season 11-19 in league and will have a lot to replace this offseason with talented players like leading HR hitters Parker (nine HRs) and Horwitz (six HRs), as well as pitchers Hunt (five wins), Anderson (three wins) and Stecki (two wins).

“It’s going to be hard to replace those [sophomores],” Hoppel said. “We need to go get some freshmen guys to come in, get a lot of innings under their belts and hopefully be winners and do that the year after that and the next year after and hopefully keep doing that.”



Sophomore outfielder Grant Horwitz sprints around the base path.



The Cougars in the dugout

Left: Freshman first baseman Cedric Ada prepares to field a groundball.