

Softball falls short

STORY BY JACOB THOMPSON
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Clackamas Community College added Softball in 1986. Since their inception, the program has only missed the playoffs three times. This year's Clackamas squad was the 29th team in program history to make the NWAC playoffs, but failed to bring home any hardware.

"It was a great learning experience for our freshmen," Head Coach Jessica Buel said. "They finally understand what the tournament is all about."

Dropping game one of the playoffs to Bellevue Community College (34-15 overall, 20-13 in league), 17-8, the Cougars dropped to the one-loss bracket where they faced Treasure Valley Community College in a win-or-go-home game.

The last time the Cougars had faced Treasure Valley (19-29, 18-14), the Chukars won in dramatic fashion with a walk-off home run hit by sophomore catcher Jordan Henley that gave Treasure Valley an 8-6 victory.

Freshman pitcher Bailey Eaton graced the halo for Clackamas in the elimination game Saturday and she was dominant early, holding Treasure Valley to four hits and one run through the first four innings.

The Cougars were able to jump out with the lead in the second inning with freshman outfielder Renel Koker and freshman pitcher Miranda Jensen crossing the plate, giving Clackamas a 2-0 lead.

Eaton continued to dominate as she gave up three hits and no runs in the next three innings.

Clackamas added more runs on a run batted in flyout by freshman catcher Natalie Munson and freshman catcher Brittany Hays scoring on a passed ball, extending Clackamas' lead to 4-1.

Hays would add an RBI single to the stat book in the sixth and the Cougars advanced to the next round with a

6-1 victory of the Chukars.

In the third game, Clackamas met up with Lower Columbia College (41-13, 23-5). Lower Columbia was the champions of the South Region (the region Clackamas plays in) and in the four times Lower Columbia played Clackamas, the Red Devils won three, outscoring the Cougars 26-16.

Jensen started the game in the halo for the Cougars, but didn't pitch for long. After surrendering two runs on two hits in the first inning, Jensen gave up a two-run HR to Lower Columbia's freshman infielder Sarah Potwin in the top of the second inning. With Clackamas trailing 4-1 she was subbed out for Eaton.

"We had errors at the wrong times to help them score," Jensen said. "We left runners on base quite a few times and their pitcher was really good."

Clackamas' offense was held scoreless in the second and third innings, but was sparked by RBI singles from freshman outfielder Ashia Ensley and Hays in the fourth inning closing the gap to 5-3, but it was all the Cougars had left in the tank.

"The weekend didn't go as we would have liked," Buel said. "But the girls fought until the very last pitch."

Eaton held the Red Devils scoreless in the fourth and fifth innings, but Lower Columbia scored one run in the sixth and seventh innings and Clackamas was unable to answer. Falling 7-3, the Cougars' postseason is over.

"Our dugout was super hyped up that game," Jensen said. "So it was still fun even though the outcome wasn't what we wanted."



photo by Jonathan Villagomez