

VOLLEYBALL IS ON FIRE

CCC VOLLEYBALL WINS FOUR STRAIGHT GAMES; CLIMBS INTO SECOND PLACE IN THE SOUTH REGION

STORY AND PHOTO BY JACOB THOMPSON
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Clackamas Community College's volleyball team defended their homecourt last week with a pair of wins versus Mt. Hood Community College and Clark College, sweeping Mt. Hood and winning in five sets versus Clark.

The Cougars now sit in a two-way tie with Lane Community College for second place and believe it's just the beginning.

"So far so good, [the season] is going well and we're excited," Head Coach Sarah Hoeke said after the Cougars' win.

Clackamas is currently 17-13 overall and their 4-2 record in league play is one win short of last year's total of four wins. The Cougars are tied with Clark College for third place in the South Region and have high hopes for where their season is headed.

"Our goal is to go all the way [to the NWAC Championship]," Hoeke said. "That's what we push for, that's what we practice for, that's why we play

hard, that's why we do what we do."

If the Cougars make the NWAC tournament, it will be the first time since 2014 and the first postseason appearance with Hoeke at the helm. Hoeke feels the team has a certain chemistry that could help send them back to the playoffs.

"[The chemistry] is good, it's really good," Hoeke said. "It's probably better than I've had in several years. It just feels good out there, they're playing well together, they're meshing well together and it shows when we play."

Sophomore outside hitter Hanna Yamashita is leading the way for Clackamas in the kills department with 274 — the second most kills in the NWAC — but Yamashita gives credit to her teammates for her success.

"Honestly, it's my team," Yamashita said. "Without my team behind me and talking to me, I wouldn't be able to be successful in the front row. All the girls work hard in practice and it helps in our matches."

The Cougs' defensive efforts are led by their gritty sophomore libra Rachel McCoy. McCoy currently has the second most digs in the NWAC with 392 and is averaging 4.72 digs per set. McCoy is hoping to continue to be a league leader in digs and aims to finish NO. 1 in digs in the NWAC.

"I look at the stats every day and I'm edging on those other girls," McCoy said. "I'm keeping track and I really want to end as number one so it's always in the back of my mind. I want to do it for the team."

With such a tightly contested race in the South Region, Clackamas can't afford to lose many games.

"Having an off night can cost us in conference, but I trust my team and trust that we'll be successful when we need to be," Yamashita said. "We need to play together, work hard and execute every single play."

Clackamas hits the road to Salem today to face Chemeketa Community College (9-15, 3-3.) The match starts at 6:30 p.m.



Clackamas Community College's volleyball huddles during a stoppage in the Oct. 3 match versus Clark College.