

COUGARS UNABLE TO UPSET NORTH IDAHO

BY JACOB THOMPSON
SPORTS EDITOR @SPORTSEDTHOMPS

Head Coach Clif Wegner knew going into Thursday's matchup with North Idaho College (27-2, 16-0) that it would be a big test for Clackamas Community College. The Cougars came into the NWAC Playoffs as a No. 4 seed and drew the strongest No. 1 seed in the tournament in the Cardinals.

"It's always a challenge when you get picked to play the top-ranked team in the NWAC," Wegner said three days before the game. "They are obviously the best, they've been the best from start to finish. I've never seen a team have so many 40-plus point wins."

Wegner said to upset North Idaho, Clackamas would have to play a near perfect game.

The Cougars came out firing early, and behind strong shooting beyond the three-point line, Clackamas had an eight-point lead five minutes into the contest, 16-8.

North Idaho was able to get on a run to even things at 17-17 with 12:17 left and for the rest of the half the Cardinals outscored Clackamas 34-14.

Despite the Cougars hot start shooting, Clackamas finished the half shooting just 28.9 percent from the field while North Idaho shot 48.8 percent.

The Cougars started clawing back into the game with less than 14 minutes left in the second half and a layup by freshman post Matt O'Brien with 13:12 left in the game brought Clackamas within 14, 50-64, but the No. 1 ranked Cardinals turned it on and outscored the Cougars 41-18, clinching a 105-68 first round victory.

Freshman swingman Clay Sullivan led Clackamas in scoring with 19 points on 7-14 shooting from the field and 5-12 from beyond the arc.

Sophomore wing Adam Gehrig finished with 17 points and eight rebounds in his final game with Clackamas. Gehrig scored 733 points and grabbed 319 rebounds during his career at Clackamas.

Clackamas finishes the season with an overall record of 20-9.

USA wins rugby 7s

STORY AND PHOTO BY COLE SOWDERS
STAFF WRITER

Before Mike Friday took the helm ahead of the 2014-2015 season, the USA rugby team had played just one tournament final. Under him they've reached seven, including all four this season. Unfortunately, the Eagles have come up short in each of those championship matches. That changed the weekend of March 1 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Eagles, led by Folau Niuu, captured their second straight cup on American soil. Niuu is the most important cog in the best restart-winning team in the world. Niuu also directs the attack with ball in hand. The two-time World Rugby 7s Player of the Year, Perry Baker, was out with a broken jaw he suffered in the Hamilton, New Zealand tournament. Replacing Baker was Carlin Isles, who led the world in tries last season, banking most of them when Baker was out with injury. Isles is two tries short of world-leader Alasio Naduva this season, but has set the mark for clean breaks with 18.

Historically the top eight played for the cup (1st Place), and the bottom eight, or bottom four for the women, vied for the bowl (9th). The consolation trophy in the cup bracket was the Plate (5th), and the consolation trophy for the bowl bracket (only for the men) was the shield (12th). Now there are no more dinnerware related consolation trophies. As in tradition in rugby as a whole, the top trophy will still be a cup, accompanied by gold medals. Second place gets

silver and third gets bronze. There is a challenge trophy for the winner of the bottom-eight competition.

The group stage consists of round-robin play amongst four-team pools. After pool play, the 16 team field was, and still is, split into the top eight and bottom eight.

The top eight play for first place, while the bottom eight play for ninth. With four pools of four, the top two teams in each pool advance to the top eight. Pools are decided by a points system. Wins are worth 3, ties 2 and losses 1. Most often, teams who finish 2-1 or better will get into the top eight, but not always. Occasionally, three-way ties are created in particularly competitive pools, leaving a 2-1 team out of the mix or including a 1-2 or a 1-1-1 side. If there's a tie in points, seeding is based on point differential.

USA in their valiant effort went 2-1 on the first two days of pool play, losing to Argentina and beating out France and Kenya. They then had a tough road to the Cup final by beating top team South Africa the second day with their quarter-final win. The last day they had the toughest challenge facing New Zealand in semi-final action, beating them 24-19 in the final play with no time left on the clock. The Cup final was against 10th place Samoa, who the Americans handled easily 27-0 on their way to their second home cup win ever.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL HAS ROUGH SHOOTING NIGHT

BY JACOB THOMPSON
SPORTS EDITOR @SPORTSEDTHOMPS

Clackamas Community College's women's basketball team's season came to an end on Saturday, March 9, after a 71-46 loss to Wenatchee Valley College in the first round of NWAC playoffs.

The Cougars came into the tournament on a bit of a hot streak winning seven of their last eight league games led by sophomore guard CJ Buckley who averaged 23.1 points per game in league play.

The Cougars shot 41.1 percent from the field during the regular season and 30 percent from the three-point line and Head Coach Jim Martineau felt like his team needed to have another strong shooting performance to upset Wenatchee Valley.

"We have to be able to score," Martineau said. "They're probably the best

defensive team in the NWAC, offensively they're decent, but they really defend well, so we have to make sure we can score 75, 77 points like we have all year long."

Unfortunately for Clackamas, the shooting just wasn't on and they finished the night shooting 27 percent from the field on 17-63 shooting and went 0-15 from beyond the arc.

Clackamas opened the scoring with a layup from Buckley and with 5:26 left in the first quarter was tied at 8-8, but the Cougars went scoreless for the rest of the quarter and Wenatchee Valley was able to jump out to a 17-8 lead.

Clackamas' offense continued to stall for the opening of the second quarter as Wenatchee widened the scoring gap 22-8. Peyton Elliott scored a layup with 7:03 remaining in the second

quarter to end Clackamas' offensive skid at 10-22 but Wenatchee Valley answered and despite the two teams trading buckets, took an 11-point lead into halftime, 30-19.

The Knights outscored the Cougars 24-10 in the third to widen their lead to 54-29. Clackamas and Wenatchee Valley tied in fourth quarter scoring with 17 a piece, but with Knights having a 25-point lead going into the final quarter of the game it was too late for Clackamas who fell 71-46.

The Cougars finish the season with an overall record of 15-15 and will graduate sophomore guards Miranda Jensen, Elliot, Buckley and sophomore post Audrey Barden. Buckley finished the season with 543 points and 748 in her career.