

CCC rules in NWAACC men's basketball

The Cougars drop Lower Columbia in OT to regain the NWAACC title

by John Denny

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file photo by JAIME VALDEZ

Canby High graduate J.C. Cook (12), pictured scoring a lay-up during a regular-season game with Portland Community College, was a major contributor to the Clackamas Community College's success story in 2008-09, as the Cougars captured their second NWAACC title in the past three seasons.

KENNEWICK, Wash. — It was a dream come true for Clackamas Community College's men's basketball team on March 8, as the Cougars held off Lower Columbia to win a 71-69 thriller in the championship game of the NWAACC Championship Tournament.

It's Clackamas' second title in the past three season and the Cougars' fourth title in school history. CCC also had men's teams win conference titles in 1987, 1994 and in 2007.

The Cougars finished 29-3 on the 2008-09 season.

The road to the title game was no cakewalk. The top-ranked Cougars won their four tournament games by a combined total of 24 points.

The Cougars survived a scare from Whatcom, winning 76-72 in their opener March 5. There were 16 lead changes in that game.

Freshman Chehales Tapscott (Century H.S.) led four CCC players who reached double digits in scoring with 21 points.

The Cougars had to rally to top third-ranked Tacoma 71-60 in the quarterfinal. It was still a one-point game with two minutes remaining, but Austin Dunn (Mountain View H.S.), J.C. Cook (Canby H.S.), Jeff Dorman (Prairie H.S.) and Tapscott hit buckets down the stretch to put the Titans away.

Dunn paced the Cougars offensively with a game-high 27 points.

Clackamas had to go to two overtimes to defeat defending champion Yakima Valley 108-101 in the March 7 semifinals. Yakima led through most of the game. Tapscott led the Cougars with a double-double, hauling down 18 rebounds and scoring 23 points. Dunn and Cook added 22 and 21 points respectively. CCC freshman Shane Fife (Canby H.S.) hit a key bucket to gain the Cougars momentum in the second overtime.

And then there was the overtime victory over Lower Columbia in the final. Dunn and Tapscott were huge for the Cougars in the title game, scoring 19 and 18 points respectively. Tapscott also hauled down 16 rebounds.

Tapscott was named the tournament MVP. Dunn was selected to the tournament's first all-star team and Cook made the second team. Clackamas was easily the NWAACC's top offensive team on the 2008-09 season, averaging 95 points for 32 games.

Tapscott averaged 21 points and 12 rebounds on the season. Cook averaged 19 points and 3.8 assists; Dunn averaged four assists.

CCC women finished sixth in their tournament, falling to Umpqua 81-68 in the third-place final. Rylee Peterson (Newport H.S.) and Dayle Powell (Skyview H.S.) scored 19 and 16 points respectively to lead the Cougar women. Shayla Fetters (Barlow H.S.) sparked the Cougars with 13 points and five assists.

Peterson was named a first-team all-star for the women's tournament.