

So far, a roller coaster season

Ems shoot for smoother ride this half

By MICHAEL CONNELLY
Of the Emerald

As the Northwest League passes the halfway point in scheduled games, the Eugene Emeralds have found the season to be more like a roller-coaster ride than a magic carpet. It's been a series of ups and downs for the hometown Ems thus far this summer, as they have sputtered to a mark of 18 wins against 17 defeats, while remaining within striking distance of the league leaders, just four games off the pace.

Aside from outstanding individual performances by pitcher Jose Brito and first baseman Greg Jackson, about the only consistency the Ems have displayed has been their ability to be inconsistent.

In the recently completed home stand against Bellingham, for instance, the Ems might well have swept the Mariners in three straight had they been able to hit the ball with the same gusto they generally show. However, they had to settle for two wins when they failed to duplicate previous hard-hitting performances.

Victim of non-support was young Brito, as he was forced to absorb his second heart-breaking setback of the campaign, this one a 1-0 decision to close out the

most current homestand against Bellingham. Brito's record is now 4-2, the other defeat being a 2-1 loss to the same Mariner team.

Among the hurlers, Brito stands head and shoulders above the rest of coach John Underwood's starting corps, possessing a stingy 2.38 Earned Run Average while striking out 26 batters in 53 innings. No other Em starter has an ERA of less than three-and-one-half runs per nine innings, while the overall staff ERA hovers around the 4.81 mark.

Yet, the batters must shoulder as much of the blame for the Ems' mediocre first half showing, as Jackson and third baseman Tom Kotchman are pretty much the heart of the Em attack. Jackson, who stands an excellent chance of breaking the NWL short-season record for round-trippers, has blasted ten home runs while driving across 43 runs in the first 35 games. To go along with his RBI total, Jackson has also scored 28 runs and is batting a lousy .353.

Kotchman, the other half of the Ems hitting tandem, is currently working on a 17-game hitting streak while steadily raising his average to the .336 level. However, the 22-year-old native of Seminole, Florida, has shown little power (two home runs, 21 RBI's)

or speed (one stolen base). In fact, when it comes to power, Jackson has twice as many home runs and RBI's as the next nearest Em, who is second baseman Tom Norko with five four-baggers and 22 RBI's. Norko is batting a measly .236.

If the Ems are to make a realistic run at the NWL crown this year, they are going to have to assure themselves of more balance in their attack, as was painfully evident in their 1-0 loss to Bellingham.

With one out in the last frame, winning Mariner hurler Ron Musselman was able to walk Jackson and gamble that the telling run would never cross the plate. As it turned out, his gamble was a safe bet as he retired the next two batters without the ball getting out of the infield.

Yet all this is not to say that Underwood and the Ems have not made some smooth strides toward becoming a well-tuned ball club, for it is evident with each game that the potential is there, waiting to be tapped.

Jose Pimentel, who started out the year as if he was scared of his own shadow, has suddenly blossomed into a first-rate baseman,

having raised his average to a respectable .316 while pacing the squad with 10 stolen bases. In addition to his progress at the plate, he is learning to handle the tough left field sun at Civic Stadium.

For the Ems, the second half of the season should prove as exciting as it is challenging. For one thing, they have a solid nucleus of hitters in Kotchman and Jackson; they have a reasonably solid defense and good depth in the catching department.

Their outfield has been hampered by injuries, but both Pat Ingraham (who was hitting .372 be-

fore a sprained ankle rendered him inoperable for nearly two weeks) and George McPherson, the veteran centerfielder, should return soon to bolster the Ems in their second half seige on both Bellingham and Walla Walla. Also, Underwood has gotten to see his hurlers under all conditions and knows upon whom he can rely in tight situations.

All of this experience, when blended wisely with the apparent abilities of these two dozen, young Cincinnati Reds farm-hands, should produce a three-way dog-fight for the right to wear the NWL crown for 1977.

New field book makes Western area tree identification easier

By E.G. WHITE-SWIFT
Of the Emerald

Pseudotsuga menziesii is not a communicable disease, it is Oregon's most important tree species.

Indian tribes in Oregon used it in many ways. Bark was boiled into a dye; pitch was used on sores; pitch-tea served as a cold remedy. Boughs were used to make steam in sweathouses, and one Northwest tribe ceremoniously burned the cones to stop the long winter rains.

Insects, squirrels and birds feast on its seeds. Explorer David Douglas discovered it, and mistakenly identified the fir as a hemlock. (Hence the scientific name *pseudotsuga* — false hemlock. *Menziesii* is in honor of Archibald Menzies, a noted 19th century Scottish botanist.)

Commercial foresters recognized that this fast-growing conifer had the potential to feed the sawmill stomachs of the Northwest. They cultivated the Douglas Fir for its use as a structural timber, plywood, paper, pulp and particleboard.

Almost overnight, the Douglas Fir became the standard tree of Oregon's horizon-to-clearcut-to-horizon forest. But as the average weekend naturalist knows, there are other types of trees in the forest.

The problem is learning to identify or separate the vine maples (*Acer circinatum*) from the red alder (*Alnus rubra*). My bookshelf is littered with field guides that are either written in a technical language that intimidates all but the hard-core naturalist, or weigh so much that a pack horse is needed to carry the book on weekend hikes.

For years I have waited for a fail-safe fieldguide on western trees. Apparently, I have had company in my wait.

Portlanders Martha Stuckey and George Palmer, outdoor enthusiasts who "simply got mad" because they could not find a simple, compact tree identification book to carry on hikes or camping trips, have published one. Of course, it helps that they own the Victoria House book publishing firm.

Their "Western TreeBook: A Field Guide for Weekend Naturalists" (Victoria House, Portland, Ore; softcover, \$5.95, 145 pages) identifies and describes 100 major native tree species found from the Pacific Ocean east to Wyoming. In addition to the botanical basics, it includes information on forest ecology, commercial values of individual species and Indian folklore.

It was designed and organized to make tree identification easy for amateurs. Outline drawings of leaves printed at the upper right-hand corners of the pages serve as a quick index for non-scientists. Text materials and full-page illustrations of the leaves, cones or seeds are succinct aides for the novice tree finder.

A unique graphic technique in Western TreeBook is that toned, illustrative tree shapes are super-imposed over the text descriptions of individual species. Although an expensive printing technique, it is by far the best innovation in field guide graphics in years.

Other guides designed into the book are scales and explanations to measure height and width of trees in the field. Other aides include a glossary of "Scientific Vocabulary for Ordinary People," a bibliography of additional tree books and a chapter on how, where and why trees grow.

"Western TreeBook" is the fourth non-fiction publication from Victoria House, which Stuckey and Palmer founded two years ago. Previous publications are "Green Plants for Gray Days," "The Well-Fed Backpacker" and "Drought Gardening."

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