

baseball

Hard hitting Elam is doing a good job on defense also

By MIKE GRADY
Of the Emerald

There's no doubt about it. In the span of only one year, things have turned completely around for Oregon baseball.

There's a newly planted infield at Howe Field, the Ducks are out of the cellar and the big red-headed kid with the ugly socks doesn't stand by third base, waving at ground balls anymore.

Instead, that red-headed kid, whose name happens to be Steve Elam, stands on the other side of the diamond at first base. And he's doing a lot more grabbing this year than waving.

"It's a combination of things," explained Elam to the question of why his defense has remarkably improved. "Last year was the first time I played third base. I know I sound like I'm making excuses, but our pitching staff wasn't the greatest last year. Third base was kind of a hot-box."

Elam sat in his apartment living room, dividing his concentration between baseball and the television. Since he'd just gotten off of practice he was wearing sweat clothes. He held a bat and occasionally took a swing at an imaginary pitch somewhere between the couch and television set.

"I like first base quite a bit more," he said. "At third you have to make the long throw, but at first you've got a lot more time to field a ball that's hit at you."

If first base is a defensive relocation for the 6-2, 195 pounder, then it's obvious things haven't changed much at the plate for Elam. Since arriving at Oregon via Linn Benton Community College

two years ago, there has never been any doubt that his bat should be in the line-up somewhere.

Named a Junior College All-American both years at LBCC, Elam's biggest boast is of hitting 13 home runs in one season at that level.

And the step up to Pac-8 pitching hasn't been too tough a test for the Winston, Ore., native either. As a junior Elam finished with a .293 average, clouted five home runs and had 22 runs batted in.

After 33 games this year, Elam is right on schedule with last year's average, but quite a bit ahead of the power statistics. He's currently hitting .292 with six homers and 26 RBI's.

Watching the right-handed hitting Elam take a cut at the ball, you get the feeling he's one of those guys who believes if you're going to pull a muscle, it's better to do it swinging a bat than running out a cute little drag bunt.

And while he happily admits to trying to hit the ball hard, it displeases him that people interpret it to mean he tries to hit a home run every time up to the plate.

"No, I really don't try to hit home runs," he said. "They just come. Home runs are about half luck and half skill. Sometimes I'll hit the ball as hard as I possibly can and it won't even come close to going out."

"It's always in the back of your mind though," he added as an afterthought. "Actually I was hitting better last year at this time; I wasn't striking out as much last year."

The mention of a season ago brought back memories of Elam's low-cut socks. When looking at him one got the impression that he

was either extremely partial to the Cincinnati Reds, or that the most well-read book in his possession was a program from the 1939 all-star game.

Saying he demanded attention doesn't give the picture justice. Elam just shrugged and smiled at the mention of the socks.

"I don't know; ballplayers do crazy or different things sometimes," he said. "I just found 'em under some lockers one day. I was in a slump so said 'fuck it, I'll try 'em'. I got a couple of hits too."

While the socks are gone this year, the hits aren't. And more importantly according to Elam, something else is around this year that was rather scarce for Oregon last season — an attitude.

"This year there's a feeling of confidence," he said. "We feel that we can score any time we have to. If we're a few runs down, it's not as much a problem to come back as last year."

At the moment, the future for Elam is a question mark, but one he sees with no pressures attached to it. A senior in telecommunications, Elam will have a term to go after this one.

If he's drafted, something he doubts will happen, he'd like the chance to play professional baseball. And if not, he'll finish school and then take whatever comes his way.

"I know I can play pro ball," he said. "It's just the question of whether or not I'll get the chance."

"Actually, it's gonna be nice to get out and take it easy. There has been a lot of pressure on me with baseball the last couple of years. After I'm out I'll probably just bum around for a few years and get my golf swing down."



Photo by Steve Schneider

Steve Elam (7) was greeted by his teammates on the third base line after he socked a home run against Willamette earlier in the season. Elam has six homers on the year.

Women netters hammer Beavers behind strong play of JV regulars

By TIM LEONARD
Of the Emerald

Ann Thompson and Kim Jessup played a strong third set to erase any hope for Oregon State yesterday afternoon as they took a 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 decision in number three doubles to give Oregon a 9-0 win over the visitors.

"I'm real excited to play on the varsity," a smiling and somewhat tired Jessup said after the victory. "I like the quick play and the idea of working together with someone," the freshman added.

Thompson and Jessup, who also compliment each other on the Oregon volleyball team, were the

only ones to play three sets on a partly cloudy afternoon.

Patti Marihart at number four was convincing in her 6-2, 6-3 singles contest. She moved well, hitting strong groundstrokes alternating corners and, when necessary, changed the pace to keep her opponent off balance.

After attending a two-year college last year, the junior in accounting was happy to be getting the chance to play against some competition. "Those cross-court shots have always been my shot," she said, adding, "my game is coming around again and this play will be good preparation for regionals."

Patti Layton won handily as did the other players. Layton showed signs of strain however, due to her sprained anterior talofibular, which translates to sprained ankle. Given heat before play and ice after, she managed to get through both singles and doubles competition.

Singles — Helen Vozenilek, Oregon d. Caroline Moseley, OSU, 6-3, 6-3. Patti Layton, Oregon d. Julie O'Hearn, OSU, 6-4, 6-2. Debbie Borchers, Oregon d. Liz Toole, OSU, 6-0, 7-6. Patti Marihart, Oregon d. Joan Price, OSU, 6-2, 6-3. Ann Thompson, Oregon d. Peggy Steinbrugge, OSU, 6-2, 7-6. Sue Olsen, Oregon d. Lisa Meyers, OSU, 6-3, 6-3. Doubles — Vozenilek-Layton, Oregon d. Moseley-Price, OSU, 6-1, 6-2. Borchers-Marihart, Oregon d. O'Hearn-Toole, OSU, 6-2, 7-6. Thompson-Kim Jessup, Oregon d. Mary LaFountain-Brenda Hiatt, OSU, 6-2, 2-6, 6-4. Team score — Oregon 9, Oregon State 0.

Ducks get two wins

Oregon's baseball team got back on the winning track after having dropped five straight games by pummeling Lewis and Clark twice in Portland yesterday.

The Ducks rode the two hit, ten strikeout performance of Glenn Fisher to the win. Fisher walked only one in the seven inning game, improving his record to 3-4 on the year.

Steve Elam hammered his seventh homer of the year to account for all of Oregon's three fourth inning runs. Jerry Rinella

scored the other Oregon run by rapping his second homer of the year in the seventh.

In the second game, Oregon benefitted from six Lewis and Clark errors to score five unearned runs in a 9-3 victory.

Oregon 000 300 1 — 4 5 0
Lewis and Clark 000 000 0 — 0 2 0
Fisher and Nelson, Sitner and Re. W — Fisher (3-4), L — Sitner (1-2). HR — Oregon-Elam (7) and Rinella (2).

Oregon 011 040 3 — 9 8 2
Lewis and Clark 002 010 0 — 3 4 6
Berlin, Jordan (5) and Wilkinson, Cochran, Sitner (5) and Namie W — Berlin (2-2), L — Cochran (0-2).

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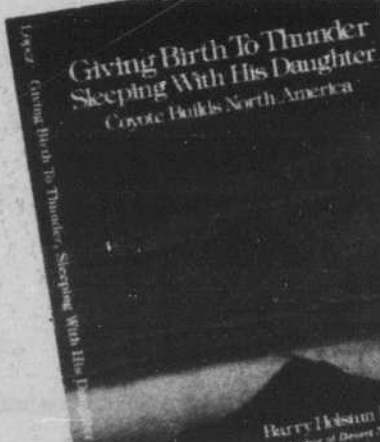
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