

wheelchair games

Wheelchair games held; Kamikazes whip hoopers

By NEIL GRUENFELDER
Of the Emerald

Okay Oregon basketball trivia freaks, name the last time center Dan Hartshorne blew three straight layups, Bulldog Mike Drummond shot an airball and the Ducks lost 47-19.

If you answered in the May 5, Eugene Kamikaze-Oregon Duck game, pat yourself on the back and consider yourself worthy of an athletic pass.

The event was basketball played in wheelchairs, matching most of the basketball team against 19 disabled players. Even though the Ducks had an advantage by using lighter and faster chairs donated by the Eugene Medical Services, they were no match for the Kamikazes.

The bearded Hartshorne expressed concern early in warm-ups saying, "My arms are getting tired." Five minutes before game time he reiterated his por-

tent. "My arms are so sore now, I can hardly push."

Replied teammate Kelvin Small, "This is the doctor saying, the bigger the headache, the bigger the pill."

The Ducks started the game smoking and looking to pull off an upset, or at least make a game of it. They controlled the tip and led after John Murray canned a 20-footer. The Kamikazes were not to be denied however, and reeled off eight unanswered points while the ducks could only muster up three airballs.

The rest of the evening was frustrated farcicality for the Ducks characterized by Rob Closs waving helplessly at a close pass and Mike Clark propelling his chair at turtle-like speeds. Meanwhile, Kamikaze captain Chester Faller was having a field day, scoring 24 points, mostly on layups through the porous defense and on breakaways.

Highlights of the game included a halftime obstacle race and Faller crashing under the scorers table retrieving an errant pass but causing the scoreboard to go haywire in the process. Darrell Rey won the obstacle race in 29 seconds but Drummond picked up most inspirational honors with his try. He was elected and forced to compete by his teammates and finished in two minutes and 20 seconds.

Although the Ducks were handily defeated, it was perhaps their best game. The crowd of 300 watched intently at the skill of the Kamikazes and humorously at the ineptness of the Ducks. The \$2 ticket price was well worth the entertainment, especially considering the proceeds were diverted back to the needy wheelchair club.

Surprisingly, the game almost didn't take place. According to Faller, he had met much difficulty in arranging it.

"It has taken me literally two and a half years to get," he said. "I came up here in '75 and talked to Dick Harter. I asked him if we could have a wheelchair game against his players. He said sure,



Photo by Neil Gruenfelder

The Oregon basketball team found out Friday night that playing UCLA might be easier than playing wheelchair basketball against experienced and talented, wheelchair athletes. The Eugene Kamikaze-Oregon Duck game was held in conjunction with the Fifth Annual Oregon Wheelchair Games. Competition was held in a number of events including swimming, weight lifting and track and field.

as long as the athletic director agreed," said Faller. "Last April 15 (1977), I had a game scheduled and (associate athletic director) Lew Cryer cancelled it. He said it would not make money. I said we only wanted \$150 or 50% of the gate, which ever was more. Harter was going to offer us \$1,200. He thought we could sell it out."

"Throughout the games, the higher echelon of the athletic department have been far from helpful in promoting us, whereas the coaches and trainers helped improve the quality of the meet. People into sports see the wheelchair athletics as another event in wheelchairs. The higher administration, however, is blinded by dollar signs."

Following the basketball game, the wheelchair entrants furthered their athletic activities in the Oregon Wheelchair Games at Hayward Field. On Saturday, 60 competitors participated in swimming, table tennis, archery,

weightlifting and cross country wheeling. Faller, a junior at Oregon, won the Class 4 table tennis and weight lifting with a bench press of 260 pounds.

The true spirit of wheelchair athletics manifested itself in the mile race Sunday, one of the events of the track and field day. Jim Hernandez, of Seattle, won it in 6:34.7 but the crowd of 100 cheered just as loud for the last place finisher, Jean Knight. Knight, who injured herself in an accident in Deady Hall last year, will one day walk again, probably with a limp.

Other university winners were graduate student Larry Craig with a 3:23.4 time in the 880 yard wheel, Naranjo Alberta in the 25 yard freestyle swim with the help of an intertube, Knight with 2:12.0 in the 440 yard wheel and Faller with a Class 4 mark of 21.0 seconds in the 100 yard wheel. Also, Mike Jones won the Class 5 100 yard hurdles in 22.7. The hurdles consisted of 2x4 lumber laid flat.



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