

It's not hard to ignore March madness in Sequim



FROM THE SIDELINES

BY DAVE CHARBONNEAU

I spent most of my spring break in Sequim, Wash., basically out in the boonies, about two hours west of Seattle.

I was visiting my girlfriend, who lives in a house that overlooks the Straits of Juan de Fuca. A beautiful setting, but a setting deprived of cable TV, a big city newspaper and my jock friends. The lack of all these aspects that are usually so prevalent in my life led to one thing.

I did not know a damn thing about what was going on in the world of sports.

In years past, my typical spring break for was watching the NCAA Tournament and playing games of three-on-three with my friends.

This year was a different story, and I'm not complaining one bit.

Consider these facts:

I learned about the Mike Tyson sen-

tencing from my girlfriend's mom.

I saw Christian Laetner's last-second buzzer-beater against Kentucky because I just happened to turn on the TV with 19 seconds left in overtime as I was getting ready to go out.

As a sportswriter, I sometimes feel obligated to follow sports whether I want to or not. But I figured I was on a "break," so I may as well take a break from sports as well.

But being in Sequim didn't leave me much of a choice anyway.

As your basic city boy from Portland, I'm used to getting my daily serving of sports shoved down my throat. Even in Eugene, it's easy to stay atop the happenings in sports.

But in Sequim, where half of the local television stations are Canadian, you really have to make an effort to find out what's going on in sports.

I didn't make that effort.

Instead of watching Indiana run all over Pac-10 champ UCLA at the West Regional, I watched my girlfriend accidentally run over a cat at 40 miles per

hour.

Instead of watching Mike Tyson go to the slammer, I watched a giant yak slobber all over my window at a game farm in Sequim.

When I returned to Portland and then Eugene, my friends filled me in as to what big events I had missed. For instance, I know the Final Four is Indiana, Duke, Michigan and the Reds ... er, I mean Cincinnati.

My point is that my trip to Sequim showed me that just because I am a sportswriter, that doesn't mean my life has to revolve around sports, as long as there's something better to do.

But believe me, now that I'm back at school, you can be sure that my TV will be tuned to ESPN, TNT, TBS or CBS.

And don't worry, the cat lived.

One cat who didn't survive was men's basketball coach Don Monson.

Does anyone really think athletic director Bill Byrne is going to be able to get anyone in here with any sort of reputation? Look at Monson. He came in as one of the most highly regarded coaches

around and now will be lucky to land a job at the local junior high.

This is not a knock on Monson; it's a knock on history. Oregon has not been looked upon as a winning basketball school for more than 20 years. No coach can expect to build a solid program out of Oregon high school standouts.

Monson gave it a whirl with Terrell Brandon, Jordy Lyden, Orlando Williams, Jerry Reynolds, Antoine Stoudamire and others. But the problem is, no blue-chip player from another state is going to come to Oregon because it's no fun being the star of a 6-21 team.

Don't expect Oregon to get a widely known coach. The only coach that's going to come here is one who has nothing to lose by coaching the worst team in the Pac-10. Basically, a no-name.

Firing Monson silences the boosters for a couple of years until the next coach fails to make something out of nothing.

Dave Charbonneau is a sports reporter for the Emerald.

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Ducks drop 10th straight, record dips below .500 mark

The Oregon softball team dropped its 10th consecutive game with an 8-2 loss Sunday to Ohio State at the Pony Tournament in Fullerton, Calif.

The loss knocked the Ducks out of the tournament with an 0-5 record. Oregon's season record falls to 13-17.

The Buckeyes scored five of their runs in the first inning, and two Oregon pitchers could do little to stop the attack. Ten batters came to the plate in the inning and picked up four hits to go along with four walks.

Kim Manning provided the offensive power for the Ducks, pounding her fourth home run of the season.

On the opening day of the tournament, Oregon dropped its sixth and seventh consecutive games, a 10-0 loss to fifth-ranked UNLV and a 4-1 decision to Utah later in the day. The losses dipped Oregon's record to below .500 for the first time this season.

The Ducks proved to be no match for the Rebels, as UNLV was able to jump on Oregon right from the start. All nine UNLV batters took a shot at the plate in both the third and fourth innings.

Things were a little closer for the Ducks against Utah, but the extra-inning game finally ended in the 10th inning when the international run rule went into effect.

Marnie McCall provided the lone bright spot for Oregon, going four for five with four sin-

gles against Utah.

Oregon dropped its eighth straight game the next day in a 3-2 loss to Western Illinois in the tourney.

Westerwinds pitcher Veronica Wilson had a perfect game going until the bottom of the sixth inning when the Ducks got their only hit of the game. Anna Poore led off the bottom of the sixth for the Ducks with a double.

With two outs, the next four batters would receive four free passes that enabled the Ducks to score their two runs, and Oregon entered the seventh inning with a one-run lead.

Unfortunately for the Ducks, though, a mistake turned the tide. After Western Illinois tied the game in the final inning, a wild pitch by Rachelle Taylor allowed the winning run to score.

Taylor, who came in on relief in the game, has lost her last seven decisions.

Fourth-ranked Fresno State played with the Ducks for seven full innings before burying them with eight runs in the eighth inning of Oregon's 8-1 loss.

Freshman Angie Barnes, who scored the Bulldogs' first run, hit a two-out, three-run home run later in the inning, the first of her career.

The Ducks hope to end their losing streak Friday in a 1 p.m. doubleheader against Oregon State at Howe Field.



Need a break? Check out the ENTERTAINMENT section in the ODE

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For info call Erin 484-9791