

# Cepeda aims for major league, tries to create own identity

By Dan Pearson

For the Oregon Daily Emerald

The first base dugout is crowded and uncomfortable. The old wooden bench, barely wide enough to sit on, is littered with beat-up gloves and crushed paper cups. A hot breeze blows in from left field, teasing our sweaty faces with cool comfort, and kicking dirt into our eyes. None of this seemed to bother Malcolm Cepeda.

"I love baseball," he confessed with a slight accent reminiscent of his native Puerto Rico. Cepeda wearing the Emeralds' green practice uniform, and sets, hands on his knees, elbows pointed outward, watching a Southern Oregon player take batting practice. "I never wanted anything else."

Being the son of should-be hall-of-famer Orlando Cepeda, it was not hard to believe.

Malcolm spent his early days playing ball for Lake Howe High School in Winter Park, Florida. He was drafted by the Kansas City Royals after his senior year, but elected to attend junior college in Fairfield, California where his father lives.

Cepeda began working toward a psychology degree and completed two years of schooling before being drafted again by the Royals. He was selected in the thirteenth round.

"I am very excited," said Cepeda, "to have the opportunity to play with the organization where my father finished his career."

Malcolm spent his rookie year playing in Puerto Rico where he began to feel the shadow of his father's career.

"I wasn't ready," said Cepeda, "for all of the comparisons made to my father and myself. My dad is a large man and I am not as big, so I was hassled about my ability to hit the long ball. People compare me to my father here in America but not as much as they did in Puerto Rico. It bothers me when they speak only negatives. I'm my own person. I don't try to be like my father."

He does not need to. Anyone who has attended an Ems game knows how exciting Malcolm is to watch. He is a favorite with the kids, and creates a buzz among Eugene fans whenever he steps to the plate.

"I always try to play intense," said Cepeda. "I'm not someone who just goes out there and plays the game. I have to talk and yell. My teammates say it helps motivate them as well."

Malcolm's favorite aspect of playing in Eugene is the support from the Emeralds fans; Class A ballclubs frequently have small turnouts. Average attendance at Civic Stadium is nearly 3,000 per

game. This excites the young first baseman.

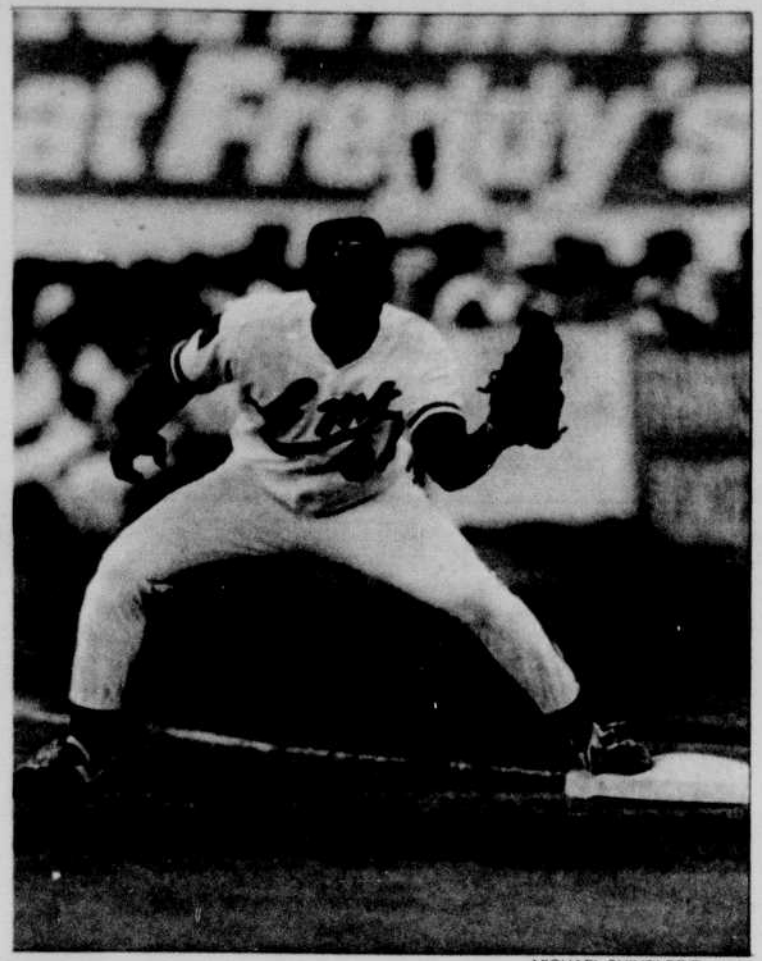
"I've actually been recognized around town," admits Cepeda. "But I don't think I'm a big shot. I'm still the same old Malcolm. You have to stay friendly because the opportunity to play ball will not always be there. My dad always told me when my career ends, people will remember the way I treated them. When the game ends, you have to come back to reality."

Public relations is not the only bit of information Malcolm picked up from his father.

"My dad used to coach me a lot," said Cepeda. "Sometimes players like Juan Gonzalez or Barry Bonds will come by the house to talk hitting. It's interesting to hear what the big boys have to say. I just keep my mouth close and try to pick up as much as I can."

Malcolm's biggest aspiration is to make it to the major leagues. It won't be easy. The weight of his father's career will make it difficult to establish his own identity.

"I haven't felt the pressure yet," said Cepeda, "but I know it will be there. I play for myself, but I also want to keep my father's name going strong. I don't want people to forget about his career."



Malcolm Cepeda, a native of Puerto Rico, longed to play baseball all his life. The Ems have helped make his dream come true.

## Missed opportunities prove costly in Ems' 2-1 loss to Rockies

By Chris Metz

For the Oregon Daily Emerald

The scoring opportunities were few and far between for the home team Wednesday night as the Bend Rockies slipped past the Emeralds with a 2-1 victory in front of 3,000 plus at Civic Stadium.

Bend first baseman Jon Mathews' provided all the offense necessary with his two-out single off starting pitcher Andres Lopez that scored Gary Jones and Pookie Jones.

The Emerald pitching managed to stabilize things after the damage in the first, scattering four hits over the final eight innings, but the Ems bats were unable to follow suit and managed to score just one run on six hits.

The sixth inning proved to be the crossroads for the Ems sticks. Second baseman Jed Hansen led off the bottom half of the

inning with a single and was followed two batters later by a Donovan Delaney single. Third baseman Sean McNally drew a walk from starting pitcher Brent Crowther to load the bases with one out.

Things couldn't have looked better for the Ems with the bases loaded and team RBI leader Scott Pinoni at the plate. Pinoni could only manage a sharp grounder, which Bend third baseman Link Jarrett fired home, catching Hansen at the plate.

The throw down to first hit Pinoni in the back, in effect, breaking up an inning-ending double play and allowing the only Emerald run to come across the plate in the form of Delaney.

With McNally on third, Pinoni surprised everyone by attempting a delayed steal of second that resulted in a run-down. McNally was thrown out trying to score while Pinoni tried to keep the

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— Brian Poldberg,  
Eugene manager

infielders busy.

"When you're not hitting well, sometimes you've got to try and trick them," said Eugene manager Brian Poldberg. "It just didn't work."

Crowther, who was occasionally wild, but effective, combined with Bend reliever Brian Rose to hold the Ems to the one earned run on six hits, and struck out 11 batters along the way.

The win was Crowther's first of the season and was only his second start of the season. Rose earned his second save, fanning seven Eugene batters in the final three innings.

Lopez suffered the loss, evening his season mark at 2-2.

The Ems have struggled to keep pace with the Southern division-leading Boise Hawks, who had won five games in a row going into Wednesday night's contest with Southern Oregon. The Ems remain in second place behind the Hawks.

"You try to keep it positive as much as possible," said Poldberg, referring to the state of the team. "Baseball's a game of negativity. Sometimes you've got to look at yourself in the mirror."

The two teams conclude their series tonight at Civic Stadium. The scheduled starting pitchers are Tim Byrdak (3-2) for the Ems and Scott LaRock (2-4) for Bend.

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## Blazers coach finds out what its all about

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Head coaches usually don't coach NBA summer league teams. P.J. Carlesimo doesn't have a choice the Portland Trail Blazers coach doesn't have any assistants.

Still, Carlesimo wasn't complaining during a series of workouts for young players and free agents in preparation for play in the Rocky Mountain Revue summer league.

"This is fun," Carlesimo said in the sweltering Salt Lake City gym Tuesday night.

The team began play Wednesday with an 84-72 victory over Denver. James Robinson led Blazers with 17 points.

"We didn't always play well, but we played hard," Carlesimo said after his coaching debut.

Carlesimo said he hopes to hire some assistants soon. Without a staff, he said he doesn't expect to put in much of the offense he will use in the regular season.

The coach has been offering a taste of his spirited and intense coaching style at the summer camp. Carlesimo's practices are closed, but he allowed reporters

in briefly during Tuesday night's workout.

Although Carlesimo has a reputation for being loud when he works with players, he didn't do any yelling while reporters were around. But he did a lot of teaching and criticizing. He often used his well-known sense of humor to get his point across.

"I really enjoy P.J.," center Kevin Johnson said. "He teaches you a lot and makes it really clear what he wants, so there's no excuses. If you don't do something right, he'll let you know."

"He's got a very positive attitude. Some guys think he yells a lot, but to me, he's got a very positive attitude."

Jaren Jackson, who played against Carlesimo's Seton Hall teams when he was at Georgetown, also appreciates his new coach.

"He can make you laugh and make his point at the same time," Jackson said. "I'm used to all the other stuff, the yelling and everything; it's nothing to me."

Usually, NBA head coaches

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— Kevin Johnson,  
Blazer center

don't coach the summer league teams. They leave that to their assistants. But Carlesimo has no assistants yet, although he says he hopes to hire some soon.

Without a staff, he said he doesn't expect to put in much of the offense he will use in the regular season.

It was sweltering in the Salt Lake City gym for Tuesday night's practice, but Carlesimo wasn't complaining.

"This is what it's all about," he said.