

Sideline

TODAY IN SPORTS

Smith honored as player of the week

WALNUT CREEK, Calif. (AP) — Arizona State quarterback Jake Plummer, California defensive end Regan Upshaw and Oregon kicker Joshua Smith were named Pacific-10 players of the week Monday.

Plummer completed 21 of 35 passes for 312 yards in the Sun Devils 33-27 upset of UCLA.

Upshaw had seven tackles — five for a total of 23 yards in losses — as California defeated Washington State 27-11.

Smith, a walk-on freshman, hit all three of his field goals and added one PAT as Oregon upset Washington 24-22.

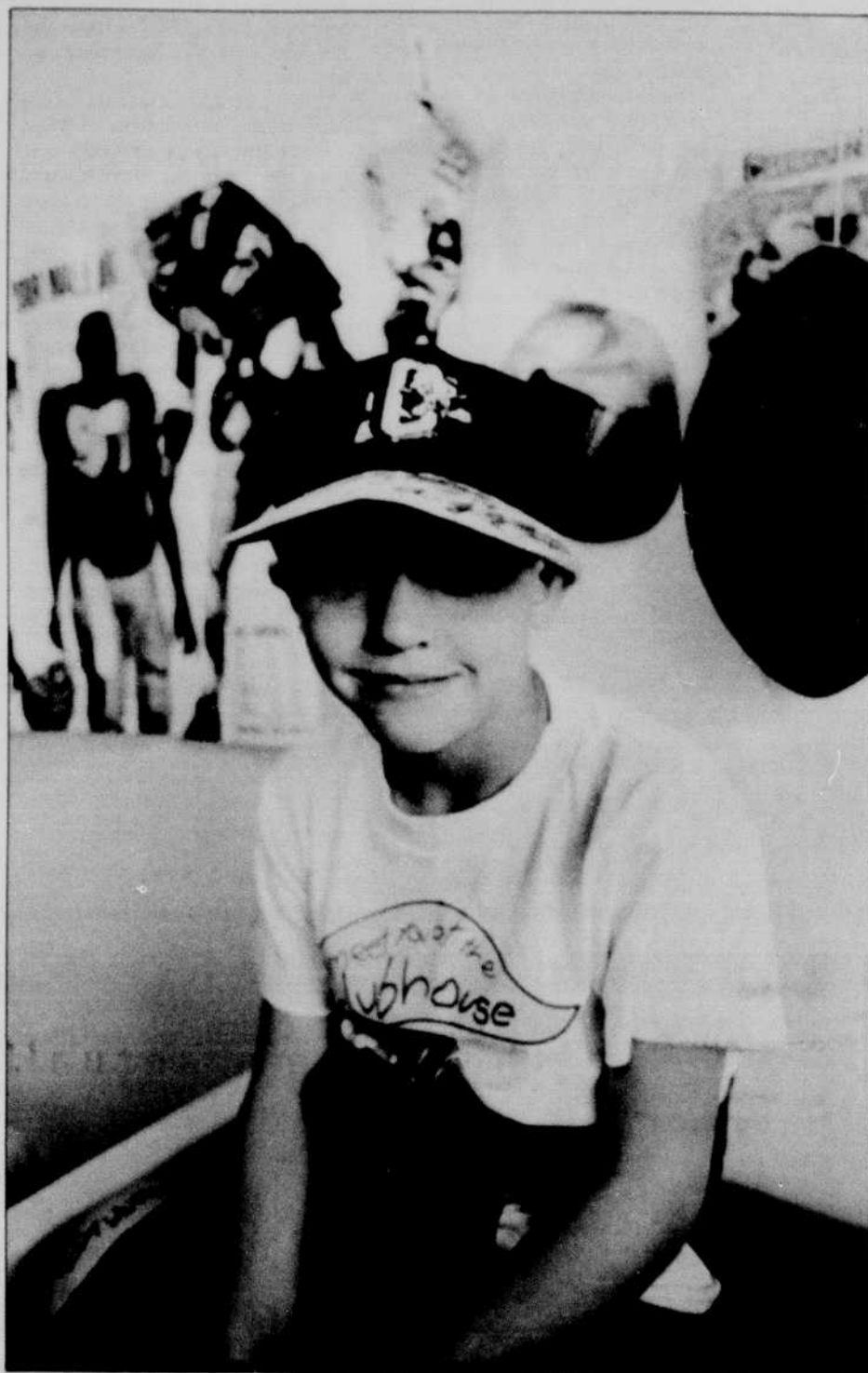
Portland Trail Blazer guard arrested

NEW YORK (AP) — Rod Strickland, the star guard of the Portland Trail Blazers, was arrested Monday for allegedly giving his former girlfriend a black eye last month at her Bronx home.

Accompanied by his attorney, Strickland surrendered at a police station where his ex-girlfriend, Judith Cruz, filed a criminal complaint, police said.

Strickland, a former member of the New York Knicks, was charged with misdemeanor assault and released, said Julio Martinez, a police spokesman. The player was ordered to return to Bronx Criminal Court. The date wasn't immediately available.

Cruz told police that during an argument Strickland, 29, punched her in the face, bruising left her eye and temple, Martinez said. She made the complaint Oct. 2.



After meeting Oregon's Ricky Whittle at last season's Arizona State game, 6-year-old Jeff Nelson became an instant fan of the tailback and the rest of the Duck players.

Whittle-water — a glass of class

Remember when you were a kid growing up? You lived and breathed your favorite sport by either playing, watching or thinking about it. And then eventually you went to see your first game, sitting there in awe of the giants that were playing in front of you on the diamond, court, ice or field. And then you finally got enough nerve to ask certain players for their autograph. They signed your ball or ticket stub and instantly became your hero. Oh, the times were great.

My experience is one I'll always treasure. I was five years old — a little kid from a small town in Maine — when my dad took me to my first of many baseball games at Boston's Fenway Park. We got there during batting practice and took our seats on the first base line, watching the players of the Red Sox and Oakland hit ball after ball over the Green Monster in left field.

After the Red Sox finished taking their at-bats, some of the players walked to the dugout and began autographing baseballs the fans rolled to them. My dad and I headed down the aisle with ball in hand ready to see the players.

I didn't know who was who, all I cared about was seeing these giants of the diamond.

When we got there left fielder Jim Rice was looking over the top of the dugout waiting for me to roll my ball to him. Not saying a word, I rolled it and watched him scribble his name. As he returned the ball he said with a smile, "There you go kid." I was in heaven.

We went back to our seats and watched the game. My beloved Red Sox were getting pounded by the Athletics entering the bottom of the ninth inning, trailing 7-0. Throughout the game I cheered for Rice every time he came to the plate — each time getting rejected as Rice either struck out or flew out. But one inning was different.

My dad wanted to leave and get an early start on our two-hour drive home, but I insisted we stay because "Jim Rice is coming up!" So we stayed, and he pulled through.

Rice led the inning off with a home run over the monster to make it 7-1. A few batters later, right fielder Dwight Evans crushed a three-run homer to

OPINION



Mark McTyre

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