

Remembering the Ducks: SOFTBALL



The Oregon softball team opened the year with a new field and high hopes. But through their season, the Ducks endured countless rainouts and the stiffest of competition while playing in the nation's top conference. The most significant moment came after the season when head coach Tami Brown resigned for personal reasons after eight seasons of leading the team. Also gone next year will be shortstop Kathy Stahl (shown above receiving congratulations after a game-winning double), the most prolific offensive player in Oregon history.

MATHEW STIFLE/EMERALD

Kearney: Freebies will be missed

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me," ribbing me about a headline miscue or asking a fiery question at the beginning of a press conference that left the interviewee less than apt to talk, Friedman was entertaining.

A casualty of the ratings war, I would estimate, Friedman was fired from KMTR last month. He will probably resurface in a small town in Idaho or Montana and do it all over again, but I will not be there to witness it.

So good luck, fair Friedman, and maybe I will see you in line buying nachos at an Ems game. (Some things never change, only this time he will have to go to the concession stand and get it himself.)

On freebies ...

As a sports journalist, I have been treated to some of the best perks a college student could ever want.

We are talking about the chance to cover the Rose Bowl, a free trip to Dallas (which included but was not limited to four pounds of crawfish, a 22-ounce steak, unlimited gin and tonics, a chance to flip Rick Neuheisel the bird and a free Cotton Bowl bag), numerous pre-football game lunches, free pop at basketball games (a priceless commodity) and about a million "Napoleon Kaufman for Heisman Trophy Candidate" postcards.

Just when I had no money to eat, there would be some team awards banquet that would put food in my belly and give me a reason not to do homework.

What am I going to do next year?

The Heart and Soul ...

I would not have been able to do my job without the dedication and support I got from my

sports staff.

Andrea DeYoung, Ryan Frank, Chris Hansen, Jason Lewis-Berry, Mark "Mark" McTyre, Pete Schneider and Chris Stewart were the heart and soul of the *Emerald* sports section this year, and they worked their butts off for me. For that I am grateful.

The end ...

Others I would like to thank for helping me along the way (in no particular order): The *Emerald* staffers I worked with (you know who you are, dammit); Chris "Mötz" Metz, Kris "Red" Henry, Dave "Murray" Charbonneau and Steve "Transactions" Mims; Charlie Fiss, Scott Simpson and the Laquinta Inn East for disposing of all the empty (and not empty) beer cans during my Cotton Bowl stay; Wayne Wanta and Ken Burton; Ron Bellamy, Bob Baum, Bob Clark, Ken "Scoop" Goe and Ron Richmond; Mike Bellotti, Charlie Waters, Troy Bailey and Justin Wilcox (my faithful reader); Jerry Green, Bobby Braswell and Brian Williams; Ben Andrews, Karl Keska and Matt Davis; Dave, Jamie, Steve, Emmy, Joe, Chad and Paul from Sports Information (for putting up with me); Raswan Sockol and Chris Hayashi (again, for putting up with me); Tim Resnik and Jibliminis (thanks for the gin); Bill "Cracker" Campbell, Dan Painter, Brock Billings, Mike McGuirk and, of course, Nancy Hay.

Okay, maybe I did have the energy and will to fill 26 inches of copy. So there, Charbonneau.

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Baseball: LSU perfect with Morris in lineup

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LSU got a two-run homer from Morris to beat Miami 9-8 Saturday for the championship of the College World Series.

It was the most dramatic finish in the 50-year history of the CWS.

"It still seems like it happened to someone else and not me," said Morris. "Coach has talked about seeing yourself winning a game, dreaming about it, and if you do it enough, it will become

real."

LSU coach Skip Bertman had faith in Morris, a preseason All-American.

"He was the best guy to have up there for a base hit," Bertman said. "I didn't figure on a home run."

Morris missed 40 games after breaking his hand in April, then came back to play in the NCAA regionals. The Tigers were 22-0 with him starting at second base.

As Morris' line drive cleared

the right field fence, Miami players were stunned. Shortstop Alex Cora, who tripled home two runs in the fifth and put Miami ahead 8-7 with a two-out single in the top of the ninth, crumpled to the ground in disbelief.

"I got my hit to put the team ahead. I thought, 'I'm going to be a hero,'" Cora said. "I kept thinking, we are so close, so close, one hitter away, and we just didn't do it."

Avalanche in line for playoff sweep

HOCKEY: Colorado could take the series on Monday night

MIAMI (AP) — Who are the Colorado Avalanche anyway?

They don't have a great tradition or a marquee scorer. They do have a solid defense and a spectacular goalie. On Monday night, they could have a Stanley Cup.

A win would complete a sweep of the Florida Panthers and end a season that began after a franchise move from Quebec with a jubilant skate around the rink with the cup held high.

The Panthers, though, don't think a victory in Game 4 and a return to Denver for a fifth game Thursday night is that unlikely.

"I don't think there's a guy on this squad that's going to roll over," Panthers captain Brian Skrudland said. "We've come this far. What the heck. A couple of more plane rides is worth it."

Colorado would like just one — a return home with the cup after 16 years without a title in Quebec. Not long ago, even the Avalanche weren't overly confident that would happen.

"A lot of players probably questioned how good we are," Colorado's Claude Lemieux said. "Then, once we won the first round, everyone thought, 'hey, we beat a good club.'"

That six-game series against Vancouver in which the Avalanche won the last two by a goal each boosted their confidence. They followed that

with six-game wins over Chicago and Detroit.

After Saturday night's 3-2 comeback victory in Game 3, they can finish off Florida in four but they're not celebrating yet.

"We're not thinking beyond getting ourselves prepared for the first shift of the game," Avalanche coach Marc Crawford said.

In the regular season, Colorado had the league's second best record but was overshadowed in the West by the Red Wings, who set an NHL record with 62 victories.

And the Avalanche didn't have household names like Mario Lemieux or Wayne Gretzky to draw attention, although unassuming Joe Sakic was the league's third leading scorer.

Quietly, they kept winning with the NHL's second highest scoring team, a disciplined defense and goalie Patrick Roy, who is three wins shy of Ken Dryden's record of 10 straight finals victories with Montreal.

"We were in a new market, a smaller city than Detroit and New York," Lemieux said. "We didn't have the (wide) coverage all year that we could have gotten."

"With the run we had this year, if we can close it and win it all, we're going to get that sort of recognition."

The Panthers certainly know how good Colorado is.

Colorado has outscored Florida 8-0 in the second period with eight different players scoring.