

Olympians visit Clinton, White House

■ **MEDALISTS:** President Clinton gives thanks for achievements to 500 members of the U.S. team

By Sonya Ross
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Cavorting on the White House lawn with medals — and cameras — around their necks, members of the U.S. Olympic team visited President Clinton on Wednesday to receive a personal thanks.

Clinton, Hillary Rodham Clinton and their daughter Chelsea greeted about 500 members of the 654-member U.S. team. High jump gold medalist Charles Austin and synchronized swimming gold medalist Becky Dyroen-Lancer presented Clinton a set of commemorative Olympic pins.

"I had very high hopes for all of you and for our country. They were exceeded

not only by the medals you won but by the way you won them," Clinton told the athletes. "You gave something very special to the American people."

Team members, clad in red, white and blue team jackets and

shorts, milled about on the South Lawn, laughing at the adventure like school children on a field trip. Many snapped photos of each other with the White House as a backdrop.

After posing with the Clintons on the steps of the south balcony, the athletes resumed their high jinks. Massive Matt Ghaffari, wearing the silver he won in Greco-Roman wrestling, came over to a bank of television cameras carrying diminutive gymnast Kerri Strug and declared: "This is the real hero of the Olympics."

The president ranked Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Games among the greatest in history. He cited the largest ever number of participating nations, the stellar performances of U.S. athletes and the positive way athletes, officials and fans dealt with and responded to the bombing in Centennial Olympic Park that killed a Georgia woman and injured 111 other people.

Officials of Atlanta and the Games were troubled that Juan Antonio Samaranch, head of the International Olympic Committee, failed to use the traditional phrase "the best ever" in describing the 1996 Games in Sunday's closing ceremonies. He referred to the Atlanta Olympics as "most exceptional."

U.S. medalists, awed by the White House, came up with their own descriptions of Wednesday's visit.

"It's great," said silver medalist Jair Lynch, 24, a silver-medal gymnast and native of Washington. "I thought I would never get a chance to get back to the White House. It's sunny and beautiful."

"Awesome," said Dot Richardson, shortstop and team leader on the gold-winning women's softball team.

She gave the president a softball signed by all the team members for the president.

"It's like being on top of the world," Richardson said of her first trip to the executive mansion. "I can't think of a better place for the Olympic team to be."



Eugene wins 7-4, ready for division leader

By Chris Hansen
Freelance Reporter

After pitching six solid innings of two-hit baseball Wednesday night, Eugene Emeralds' pitcher Andrew Cochran still had one critic: Himself.

"I wasn't very pleased with my performance," admitted Cochran. "My off-speed pitches were not going for strikes when I needed them and I was to dependent on my fastball."

Maybe so, but Cochran still pitched well enough to earn his fifth victory of the season against zero losses and helped the Ems to its fifth consecutive victory with a score of 7-4. The win also completed a three-game sweep of the Southern Oregon Timberjacks.

The win, coupled with a Boise loss to Portland Wednesday night, brings the Ems within two games of the division lead and sets up a showdown at Civic Stadium the next three nights as Boise comes to Eugene.

Cochran's performance, while not as sharp as he may have liked, was crafty. He was able to work himself out of trouble in the top of the fifth inning, after loading the bases with the first three hitters on two walks and an error by third baseman Brian Rust.

But Cochran got Terrance Freeman to ground into a double play that scored Todd Mensik from third and then got MacGregor Byers to pop out to center to end the inning.

"I felt I made the pitches I needed to when I was in jams," Cochran said. "I was able to locate pitches and I had good control of my fastball."

That was the only run Cochran allowed during his stint on the mound. The same cannot be said for Timberjack's starter Ray Noriega, who didn't fare nearly as well.

■ BASEBALL:

Ems sweep Southern Oregon, prepared for weekend battle against Boise



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Emeralds' shortstop Mark DeRosa left his life of being a two-sport star at an Ivy League university to come to Eugene and live out his dream of playing major league baseball.

Emeralds' DeRosa living out life dream

■ **SHORTSTOP:** Mark DeRosa is in his first year of professional baseball, and loving every minute of it

By Chris Hansen
Freelance Reporter

The Ivy League's defending football champion Pennsylvania University usually doesn't have the same difficulties retaining its student-athletes as do big name Division I universities.

But this year, when the Quakers gear up to defend their title, they will be without their offensive leader. Quarterback Mark DeRosa, after his junior year, chose to leave college ball behind, opting for life in the professional ranks. Of baseball, that is.

Drafted in the seventh round of Major League Baseball's amateur draft by the Atlanta Braves this past spring, DeRosa was lured away from the academic security of Penn, where he excelled as a two-sport star, choosing instead to live out his dream of playing professional baseball.

The Eugene Emeralds, a single-A affiliate of Atlanta, is DeRosa's first stop.

Ironically enough, the decision to leave school early did not weigh heavily, as one might expect, on an Ivy Leaguer.

"What it came down to was," claims DeRosa, "was I ready to give up football. But I was drafted in an early enough round where it made sense to leave early. It's been my dream since I was a little kid playing t-ball."

DeRosa has not given up on his education. Far from it, in fact. Come the end of the

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Two Ducks to play on Pac-10 touring squad



BOYER

■ **BASKETBALL:** Mike Carson and Arianne Boyer will tour Japan, as part of a Pac-10 all-star team

By Mark McTyre
Sports Editor

Oregon basketball players Mike Carson and Arianne Boyer have been traded to Japan.

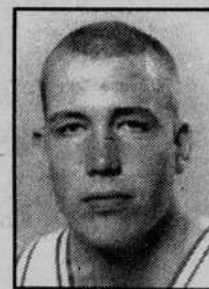
Not exactly, but the two will travel from Eugene to Japan Thursday as members of the men's and women's Pacific-10 Conference basketball teams that will take part in the conference's tour against various Japanese colleges. Oregon assistant coach Mike Turgeon will also make the week-long trip and serve in the same capacity for the men's squad.

"This is a great opportunity for these

players," said Jody Runge, head coach of Oregon's women's basketball team. "They'll have the chance to meet other players from the Pac-10, see Japan, and grow and learn."

Carson, a 7-foot center, saw action in 29 games last season and averaged 3.4 points and 3.4 rebounds per game. Boyer, was a 1996 all-conference selection and the Ducks' co-MVP last season. She led Oregon in scoring with a 15.3 average and also averaged eight rebounds a contest. Turgeon, entering fifth year as an Oregon assistant, was a player and assistant at Kansas. He appeared in three Final Fours, included two as a Jayhawks' assistant.

Both teams will play four games beginning Sunday, Aug. 11, in Fukuoka and ending Saturday, Aug. 17, in Fukui.



CARSON