

Frank: Quality of all-around play will decrease

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The Detroit Tigers' pitching staff ended the 1996 season with a world's worst earned run average of 6.38, while Cleveland led the AL with a less than impressive ERA of 4.35.

But then came baseball's two newest teams in Arizona and Tampa Bay.

The two expansion teams will bring 20 pitchers into the league, and if hitters continue to increase their production and pitchers continue their downward spiral as they have in recent years, expect the league ERA average to jump to about 8.23.

And it is not just the pitching that will suffer with expansion. Along with the 20

new pitchers who will be entering the league in 1998, come 30 players.

All together that is 50 players who will be playing in Major League Baseball in 1998 who were not playing one year before.

The quality of all-around play is going to inevitably decrease with each passing expansion, and if Major League Baseball executives continue to add teams to their realm, expect baseball fans to be taken off their team's season ticket list and added to an NFL or NBA team's season ticket list.

Ryan Frank is a sports reporter for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

Woes: Confidence needs to be found

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tle down," admitted Lawrence of the team's confidence level. "But we came out [Monday] and had a great practice. So, I think the guys might be a little bit down, but they are still willing to come out and work hard."

Part of that comes from having a veteran team loaded with seniors. Players that have seen the same sort of midseason slide happen before.

During the 1994-95 season, the Ducks started out 11-1 before losing four of their next five. That team recovered and finished strong and received an invitation to the NCAA tourney.

Last season, the Ducks started off 9-5 and got stuck in a crushing six-game losing streak that cost them a shot at postseason play.

"We are a real good team and a lot better than what our record shows right now," said Henry Madden, who, along with Lawrence, was on the 1994-95 team. "And it is frustrating to see us go out there losing to teams —

not to take anything away from Cal, Stanford, Washington and Washington State — but I felt that we should have beat them.

"We know it is still early in the season. If we get some victories we will get to where we need to go. And to do that we need to play together as a team."

Playing together as a team include not pointing fingers of blame at one another when times get bad. And to this team's credit, the only one doing any pointing is Green. And that is at himself.

"The head coach is responsible for everything," Green said. "He recruits the players, he teaches the players, and he has the ability to go with player B if player A isn't getting it done. So I am responsible for everything we do."

"At 10-0 we were a very confident basketball team. After the Temple game we felt like we could play anyone in the nation. I still think we can. It is just a matter of correcting the mistakes and getting back in line."

And the last thing the Ducks

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— Henry Madden
UO Forward

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need right now as they try to get back to that point is a coaching controversy. So if Green has an opinion about reports of Louisiana State being interested in him as a replacement for the retiring Dale Brown, he isn't saying.

"I don't want to talk about any of those things," he said. "I have enough problems of my own trying to get this team back on track. That is where 100 percent of my energy is put right now. And I'm not interested in talking about any of those other things."

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