



NBA
New York at Houston,
TNT (27), 5 p.m.

Saying bye to Johnson could prove costly

At 6-foot-10 and 230 pounds, Seattle Mariner ace Randy Johnson is a sight to behold on the pitchers' mound.

With his powerful left arm cocked, his face chewed and gnarled like some sort of cheap leather, Johnson has become the working man's athlete. His lizard-like features and scruffy personality have become as recognizable to Washington residents as Seattle's famous skyline.

OPINION



Joel Hood

However, Johnson continues to be one of Major League Baseball's most misunderstood and under-appreciated stars.

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported last week that the Seattle Mariners' front office decided not to offer Johnson a contract extension this off-season. His current contract runs out after next season, and so 1998 could become Johnson's farewell tour in the city of Seattle.

The reason, according to Johnson's agent Barry Meister, is that Seattle will pay the lefty \$6 million this season and the front office fears that Johnson's next deal will approach the deal signed by Atlanta's Greg Maddux last season. Maddux's deal, which is the highest average salary in baseball, pays him \$57.5 million over five seasons.

But Johnson is every bit the pitcher that Maddux is. In a sport awash with chiseled physiques and rock-hard personalities, Johnson's workman-like attitude and professional demeanor stand alone. Last season, Johnson was 20-4 with a 2.28 ERA and 291 strikeouts. He was a close second in the American League Cy Young Award and garnered consideration for the AL MVP Award.

Johnson has had as much to do with the Mariners' success the last three seasons than any player on their roster, but he never seems to receive the credit he is due. Last week's contract squabbles are a perfect example of that.

Johnson has never led the league in All-Star votes like Ken Griffey Jr. He has never been a batting champion like Edgar Martinez. He can't hit a baseball 500 feet like Jay Buhner. What he is, is the most intimidating presence in baseball and more Seattle than Starbucks or the Space Needle.

He was grunge before the city of grunge knew it was cool. The guy looks more like the bassist for Alice in Chains than he does a future Hall-of-Famer, but his numbers speak for themselves. Johnson has the AL's best win percentage the last four seasons. He won the AL Cy Young Award in 1995 and has gone 75-20 since 1993.

Like all great pitchers of our generation, Johnson came through the Atlanta Braves organization. He was selected by the Braves in the third round of the 1982 free-agent draft, then dealt soon after to the Montreal Expos, where he pitched in and out of the major leagues for seven seasons. In May of 1989, Johnson was one of three players traded to Seattle for veteran pitcher Mark Langston and Mike Campbell.

Since that time, Johnson has been Seattle's most dominating pitcher and has been on the mound during the Mariners' greatest moments.

Johnson was called in to pitch the one-game playoff in Seattle against the California Angels in 1995. He shut down one of baseball's most potent lineups for nine in-

Turn to **HOOD**, Page 12

Manlove leaves team for academics

Guard Tyron Manlove became the second Oregon player to leave the team because of academic reasons this year

By Rob Moseley

Sports Reporter

Oregon men's basketball head coach Ernie Kent announced late Monday night that guard Tyron Manlove has requested time away from his athletic responsibilities to focus on academics.

"We will grant him permission to do this since academics is the top priority," Kent said in a released statement. "His time away from basketball will allow him to stabilize his academics here at the University of Oregon. His grades are not below the NCAA guidelines but he feels and we feel he could be doing better academically with-

out the presence of basketball responsibilities at this time."

This is the second such incident involving Manlove, a redshirt freshman from Portland who was expected to contribute valuable minutes on the perimeter this season.



It is the second such occurrence for an Oregon player this season.

Forward Andre Larry was removed from the team over the summer because of academic reasons.

Manlove was suspended from the team by former head coach Jerry Green on Feb. 8 of last season and was forced to attend study hall sessions during the team's practice time after his fall term grade-point average fell below the 2.0 minimum required by the NCAA for participation in intercollegiate athletics.

"At this time it is more important for Tyron to be concentrating on academics than basketball," Green said in the Feb. 10, 1997 edition of the Emerald.

Manlove may not be the only Duck who has to take time away from basketball to focus on academics.

Kent, held forward Jonathon Nelson out of all but two minutes of the Ducks' exhibition game with the Outback All-Stars on Nov. 12 of this season.

"All aspects of basketball are very important to this program," Kent said following that game. "That is on the floor and off the floor. There are some things that are very important to his success and very important to this program's success that have to become a priority."

Both Manlove and Nelson are being evaluated on a week-by-week basis and are expected to return to the team this season.



EMERALD

The Ducks need a victory against Oregon State to secure a winning season and keep alive bowl chances, the same situation they faced in last year's Civil War game when Reggie Jordan and the Oregon defense dominated in a 49-13 win.

Bellotti: Focus is now a winning season

A win this Saturday will make the Ducks bowl eligible, but coach Bellotti says his team needs to get back to playing with emotion and intensity

By Chris Hansen

Assistant Sports Editor

That noise you heard late Saturday afternoon wasn't a truckload of two-week-old pumpkins being dropped from the roof of the EMU; it was Oregon's defense being flattened, floored and squished by the Arizona State running game to the tune of 405 yards.

Granted, going into the game the Ducks did have the worst run defense in the Pacific-10 Conference, but that was at 170.9 yards per game. Sun Devil tailback Michael Martin nearly ran for that much himself with 158 yards, with tailback J.R. Redmond not too far behind with 127 yards. As a team, the Sun Devils averaged 9.2 yards every time they ran the ball.

In fact, in the conference, nine of the 10 teams don't give up 400 yards a game in total offense, let alone on

the ground. The 10th, of course, is Oregon.

In a word, Saturday's performance was embarrassing.

"I would hope that they wouldn't take it in stride," head coach Mike Bellotti said of his players. "I don't think that's the type of pride I want associated with my football team. Right now we have got a black eye, and we have got to step up and get our tails off the canvas and be ready to fight again."

They better because this Saturday's Civil War contest has a lot more riding on it than in-state bragging rights.

With a win, Oregon will have its fourth winning season in as many years, the first time that has happened since 1935.

Oregon also needs this win to become eligible for a bowl game. Any team without an above .500 overall record is automatically disqualified from bowl-game

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Mike Bellotti
Oregon head coach

Turn to **DUCKS**, Page 12