

NBA Playoffs
New York at Indiana,
TNT (27), 4 p.m.

The putting Pioneer

Ben Crane, who qualified for the NCAA Championships as an individual in 1997, hopes his teammates will join him for a return trip

By Tim Pyle
Sports Reporter

Ben Crane has been to the promised land of collegiate golf. He embarked on the trip that all college golfers dream of to top their seasons.

He earned the right to battle the best for a chance at a national championship — albeit an individual national title.

Crane's teammates on the Oregon men's golf team were not able to join him in enjoying the view from the pinnacle of college golf that is the NCAA Championships.

Oregon was eliminated a step before Crane.

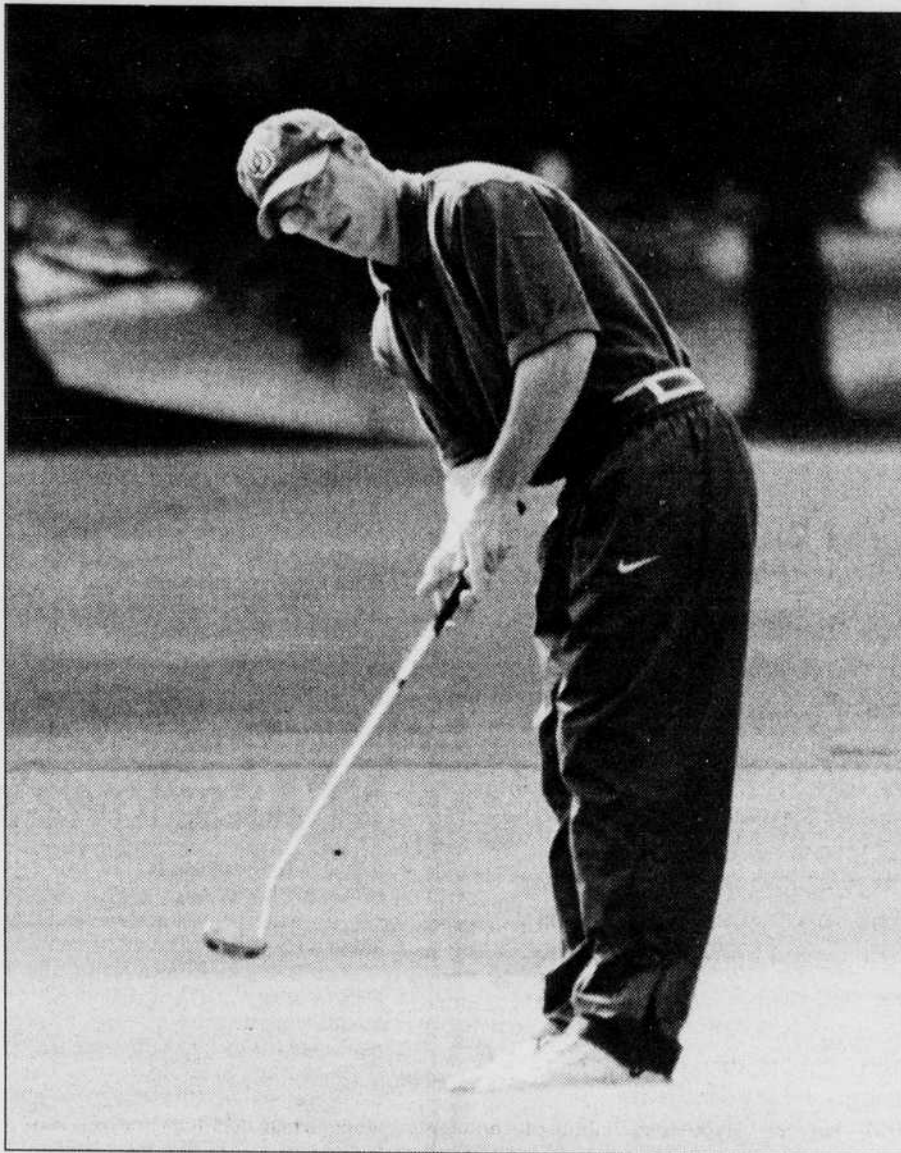
While he birdied the final hole at the 1997 NCAA West Regional in Santee, Calif., to tie for 16th and capture one of two individual berths at the championships, the Ducks finished tied for 12th and missed the nationals cut.

That individual accomplishment is considered perhaps the biggest highlight thus far in a stellar career on the Oregon men's golf team by both Crane and head coach Steve Nosler.

"That was a great moment for me," Crane says. "There's been a lot of them, but I look at that as just as good as any."

Many of those other prominent achievements have occurred this season for Crane, who is ranked No. 61 in the MasterCard Collegiate Golf Rankings.

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EMERALD

Career highlights

- **1997-98:** Eight top 20 finishes in 12 tournaments ... Named second team All-Pac-10 ... Tied for first at Pacific Invitational
- **1996-97:** Tied for 16th at West Regional to earn individual berth to the NCAA Championships

Crane, shown here at the 1997 Pac-10 Championships, looks to help the Ducks secure a nationals berth with a strong showing at the West Regional. The regional begins Thursday in Tempe, Ariz.



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Jennie Cook will need to come through at the plate and on the mound Friday as she will start against Iowa in the first round of the NCAA Tournament

Hawkeyes up first for Ducks

Iowa ranks near the bottom of the Big Ten in home runs and RBIs but beat No. 2 Michigan to finish the regular season

By Joel Hood
Sports Reporter

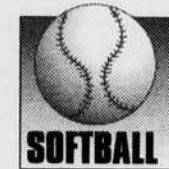
It must have been quite a scene.

Nearly two dozen softball players nervously huddled around each other Sunday night waiting for the announcement that would decide their postseason fate. The place: a small sports bar adjacent to the Stanford campus. The mood: "hysterical."

It was fortunate for the Oregon softball team that the announcement came quickly. There were no injuries to report — just a lot of screaming.

Oregon matches up with Iowa on Friday in Lincoln, Neb., to kick off the opening round of the NCAA's 32-team postseason tournament, but that's where the similarities between these two teams end.

The Hawkeyes (37-18 overall, 14-9 Big Ten Conference) finished third overall in the Big Ten but finished the regular season strong by beating No. 2 Michigan and securing second place in the Big Ten Tournament. The Ducks finished their regular season with five straight Pacific-10 Conference losses and just two wins in their last eight games.



Oregon ranked second in the Pac-10 — arguably the most prolific scoring conference in the country — in team batting for nearly the entire season.

Iowa's power numbers ranked near the bottom of the Big Ten standings with just 14 combined home runs and just 143 runs batted in.

In their 38 victories this season, the Ducks outscored their opponents by an average of 4.5 runs per game. By contrast, 22

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Saraceno battles back from bicycle accident to win triathlon

Matt Saraceno will compete in the World Championships in Switzerland on the road to the Sydney Olympics

By Eric Collins
Freelance Sports Reporter

Rolling swiftly down the cold morning streets of downtown Portland on an overcast, drizzly December day in 1995, his mind wandered as he pedaled his bike to work in 1995.

With the go-ahead green light, he monotonously spun through another intersection like a million times before.

But an armored truck didn't stop for the red light this time. Matt Saraceno, an Oregon senior triathlete, was no match for the monster that tossed him about 40 feet across the intersection. Bloody and broken, fading in and out of consciousness, the distinct taste of oil from the pavement in his

mouth, an emergency vehicle whisked him to the hospital. Saraceno remembers thinking to himself, "Today is a horrible day to die."



Despite the broken ribs and wrist, concussion and collapsed lung, Saraceno lived. The accident left no

damage to his spine or legs. It would take much more to kill the competitive nature of this triathlete.

He had competed in some form of running, swimming or bike racing since he was 16. Without the daily tests of his body, Saraceno knew he would go crazy. Six

months after the crash he was training again. By the end of 1996, he was back to full strength.

The biggest leap came in the spring of 1997, back at his first triathlon in years, the men's Collegiate National Triathlon Championships. Expecting little, Saraceno came across the finish line in fifth place, unable to believe his progress.

Devoting the next year to the 1998 collegiate championships, Saraceno wanted nothing short of first place.

Last weekend, he got his wish. With a late kick, he easily cruised past his final challenger in the six-mile run, fin-



SARACENO

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