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UO honored for football team's success — in academics

Some athletes credit the emphasis on tutoring and academic advising with helping them graduate

By Jacquie Bischoff
Freelance Reporter

The Oregon football program earned an honorable mention Wednesday from the American Football Coaches Association for its 1997 graduation rate of the freshman class of 1992-93.

Oregon achieved the recognition by graduating 15 of the 21 football players who began fall drills in August 1992, earning them a 71.4 percent graduation rate.

79 schools participated in the survey, combining for a 59 percent graduation rate. Northwestern won top honors by graduating all 20 members of its class, earning them the 1998 AFCA's top academic achievement award. The award had previously been won or shared by Duke nine times since it was first presented in 1981.

Washington was the only other Pac-10 school honored this year.

Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti credited former head coach Rich Brooks and his staff for the honor, as well as his own staff.



"I want to applaud my coaches because they met with these guys and really oversaw their academic progress as well as their physical progress as an athlete," Bellotti said.

He also gave credit to his players for making academics a priority aside from football.

"I think that they have made a bigger deal of academics," he said. "This group

of kids that we recruited back then obviously was very committed to the true course of a student-athlete.

"We have more kids with over a 3.0 GPA than under a 2.0, and that's very positive."

Bellotti said they also have an academic honor roll board with 25 to 30 pictures that rewards the outstanding students.

The Services for Student Athletes building is where student-athletes are provided the resources to help them manage their time between athletics and academics. It contains a small library, computers with Internet access, tutoring, and academic advising.

Damon Griffin, a senior wide receiver, said he found the resources valuable.

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BELLOTTI

SUMMER CAMPS



LAURA GOSS/Emerald

Oregon Duck players and coaches hosted a basketball camp for young girls at McArthur Court last week.

Camp draws girls from around nation

Oregon players serve as camp counselors to the girls, some of whom may be future Ducks

By Allison Ross
Freelance Reporter

McArthur Court was still breathing women's basketball months after head coach Jody Runge led the Ducks to their fifth-straight NCAA tournament appearance. Last week, the Oregon Girls Basketball Camp drew 150 girls from as far away as Alaska and New Mexico in its fifth year of existence.

The camp brochure boasts that it's "the best basketball camp in the nation," with "the best teachers in the country."

"We teach the game," Oregon assistant coach Fred Litzenger said. "We teach specific fundamentals that we teach here at Oregon. So everything that we do at camp is involved with our fundamentals here."

Oregon players take part as well, serving as counselors to the girls — an important aspect of the camp, according to Litzenger.

"A lot of the kids are back for a second or third year, so they know the system a

little bit," he said. "But they love coming because our players are the counselors. The most important thing is they love to be around our kids."

Runge has been known to focus on team play and defense, which has proved to be successful for the Ducks. Since her arrival at Oregon in 1993, Runge has kept the team in the top half of the Pacific-10 conference in both defensive categories — scoring average against and field goal percentage against. These techniques are key to the camp, as well as to the Oregon team.



RUNGE

"The games aren't the most important thing," Litzenger said. "The most important thing is to improve your skills and learn and get better. And then put those things in a game situation."

Girls as young as eight and as old as high school seniors participated in the four-day event. They were grouped according to age and ability in order to create the best possible learning experience, according to the camp brochure.

The camp does serve other purposes, however. It's a chance for girls to see the Oregon campus when they are still young, and it puts the University's name out in front of people all over the western United States — Oregon's primary recruiting zone. Campers — including the prospects — experience University life first-hand by staying in residence halls and eating meals at the dining hall.

"We've gotten one or two girls that we try to recruit that come to camp," said Litzenger.

For the girls, it's a chance to play with top athletes and coaches. The camp brings high school coaches from Washington, Oregon, Idaho and California, as well as junior college and college coaches.

"We teach the camp with master teachings, so all the coaches that come in and work, we teach all of our concepts," Litzenger said.

Runge, who has led the camp since she arrived at Oregon five years ago, was on hand until Wednesday when she left for the U.S.A. basketball tryouts, where 6-foot-3 Duck sophomore forward Angelina Wolvert is trying out.

Eugene Em's Comeback Kids steal a victory

The Emeralds' Greg Strickland scored from second on a Junior Brignac single in the eighth to beat the Everett AquaSox 5-4

By Matt O'Neill
Freelance Reporter

The "Comeback Kids" have done it again. 1,859 fans witnessed another come-from-behind win by the Eugene Emeralds, who beat the Everett AquaSox 5-4 when Greg Strickland scored on Junior Brignac's single to right field in the bottom of the eighth Monday night at Civic Stadium.

With one out in the inning, Strickland singled to center field to start the rally for the Ems. He then got himself into scoring position by stealing second.

Eugene manager Jim Saul said he gave Strickland the OK to steal.

"He has the green light. If he gets the jump, he's going," Saul said. "I put that one on."

Strickland contradicted his manager.

"I think I stole it on my own," Strickland said. "I don't think I saw the sign."

Strickland scored the eventual winning run after Brignac's single. Everett catcher Carlos Maldonado left one corner of home plate exposed in his attempt to block Strickland's path, but Strickland managed to touch that corner just as the throw from right fielder Jake Weber arrived.

Strickland said he intended to score from second as soon as he left the base.

"I had it in my mind. I had been struggling all night," Strickland said. "I had stranded six guys, I had to do something. I had to get on and score a run."

As a team, the Ems stranded 12 runners and made three errors on the night.

Two errors in the second allowed the AquaSox to score twice and put the Ems behind early.

In typical Ems fashion, they were forced to play catch-up the rest of the night. Their comeback started when they got a run in the fourth to bring them within one.

Eugene then tied the game in the sixth when catcher Gregg Maluchnik doubled home third baseman Casey Chesler.

The seesaw battle continued when Everett took the lead again in the top of the seventh, as Carlos Maldonado scored from third on a sacrifice fly by Domingo Pacheco.

Eugene tied it up again in the bottom of the inning when Brian Cox scored from third on a wild pitch.

The Ems held the AquaSox scoreless in the top of the eighth by turning an inning-ending double play to end Everett's hopes for a rally.

