

Both sides of the microphone

By Michael Fletcher
For the Emerald

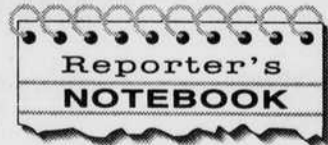
Many athletes see the media as a vacuum cleaner ready to suck out all the dirt and scum that lies on the surface of those hot rumors floating around. Others look at the media as just plain old curious people who act as detectives to seek the information the public craves.

I have mixed feelings due to the fact that I stand on both ends of the spectrum. Over the summer, I have been interning at KMTR, the local NBC affiliate, with sports director Joe Giansante. Through the internship, I have developed a great feel for what it's like being the person who dishes out the questions that athletes are somewhat reluctant to answer. I also know what it's like to be on the other end of those questions, and let me tell you, it is great when you are winning and it sucks when you're losing. But the bottom line is that the media have to give credit where credit is due. As far as athletes go, we have to understand that if we don't perform at a desired level on and off the field, then that creates room for us to be criticized whether we like it or not.

For example, this past season the Oregon football team lost to UCLA 39-31 in a game that we truly should have won. I was visibly

frustrated and mad as I drifted into the media room following the game.

I was approached by a reporter who asked, "Did you feel the defense lost the game?" I took of-



fense to that because I thought the whole team could have done a little something different to change the outcome. I eventually answered his question, but I wondered to myself, did this reporter understand that questions like this can bring out a lot of frustration in someone who is not as mild-tempered as me?

I didn't know if the reporter was really seeking information or trying to get under my skin. There are only a few different stances one can take when asked obvious questions: either take the Fifth like Chicago White Sox outfielder Albert Belle or do what guys like NBA veteran Charles Barkley have mastered and simply reply with a cliché.

Whether by working with Giansante at KMTR or taking KVAL sportscaster Walt Fox's sports journalism class, I'm starting to

understand what the pros and cons are in the media, especially when dealing with athletes and coaches. I already have an idea of what types of questions to ask someone when conducting an interview because of that experience of being on the other side of the questions, so I try not to cross that barrier that many other reporters may cross.

We have people out there like Jim Rome, of Fox Sports' "The Last Word," who constantly push people to the limit with his questions and badger those who decline to answer. The relationship between the media and the athlete has changed over the years, and I feel this is why the athlete-media relationship has become malignant.

In the '40s, '50s and '60s, reporters and athletes would hang out like buddies all the time. As players' salaries started to rise from thousands of dollars to millions, a big social gap opened between the two professions, and the media became the enemy.

On the college level, the media and athletes have had their ups and downs, but where would college athletics be without the media? Athletes have to realize when we do something wrong, it will appear in the news, and when we do something good, it might show up.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Oregon women sign pole vaulter

The Oregon women's track and field team has signed pole vaulter Niki Reed to a letter of intent, it was announced Friday.

Reed, a recent graduate of Newport High School, set the state prep record with a vault 11 feet, 9 inches in the Oregon 3A meet at Hayward Field in May.

The record was formerly held by current Duck vaulters Karina Elstrom and Holly Speight.

Elstrom, a sophomore, qualified for both the indoor and outdoor NCAA Championships this past season, as did Speight for the outdoor event.

Reed is the fifth recruit to sign with Oregon women's track and field head coach Tom Heinonen this spring.

"Niki shows great potential for the future," Heinonen said. "She's tall and athletic and has a great future in the vault. Lots of people who saw her at the state meet thought she's destined to be a 13-footer, and she'll make a great addition."

Nike Masters Games begin this weekend

The Nike World Masters Games, the largest participatory multi-sport event in the world, will be held in Oregon August 9 through 21.

While a majority of the games' events will be held in the Portland Metro area, the baseball competition will be held in Salem, the kayaking portion in Bend and the athletics, or track and field events, will be based at Hayward Field.

Held previously in Brisbane, Australia, in 1994, the games attracted 15,000 athletes in 25 sports. The athletics portion of the competition is expected to draw 2,000 athletes and their entourages to Eugene.

Although the event is run by a non-profit corporation, the World Masters Games for the first time has sponsorship from major companies like United Airlines, Visa, and the title sponsor, Nike.

The competition will feature athletes age 30 and above from more than 70 countries and is expected to include 1984 Olympic marathon champion Joan-Benoit Samuelsson in the women's 20,000-meter race.

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Horoscope by Frances Drake

For Tuesday, Aug. 4, 1998
ARIES
(March 21 to April 19)
You are poised to make a difference, and people will turn to you for resources. Your generosity and altruistic spirit will be greatly appreciated.
TAURUS
(April 20 to May 20)
You can learn by listening carefully to someone with a radically different background. If you've been neglecting a partner, make amends.
GEMINI
(May 21 to June 20)
Unless all parties concerned sit down and hash things over, rumors will continue to undermine the truth. Pay attention to recurring patterns.
CANCER
(June 21 to July 22)
Put emotional and health concerns foremost. Unless you nurture yourself first, you will be unable to help when another comes to you.
LEO
(July 23 to Aug. 22)
Love, sex, power and money are finally within your reach. Just don't let your ego explode out of control as you achieve all your worldly desires.
VIRGO
(Aug. 23 to Sept. 22)
You will be called upon to push yourself to the limit. Dragging your feet will only make a necessary task seem like more of a chore.
LIBRA
(Sept. 23 to Oct. 22)
Your thirst for new knowledge will lead you into an unsettling situation. Keep your wits, and you will

escape the adventure unscathed.
SCORPIO
(Oct. 23 to Nov. 21)
Speak your mind, and you'll be surprised how many others share your secret ambitions. Put together that business plan and catch someone's attention.
SAGITTARIUS
(Nov. 22 to Dec. 21)
Making money will be first on your agenda. While your intentions are good, you may be missing the point in your quest for success.
CAPRICORN
(Dec. 22 to Jan. 19)
Make the most of a situation that unexpectedly puts you in the limelight. An interesting invitation will be issued by an attractive stranger.
AQUARIUS
(Jan. 20 to Feb. 18)
Some emotional turmoil is just a passing phase. A little patience and perseverance will go a long way in smoothing out difficulties.
PISCES
(Feb. 19 to March 20)
Your recent hard efforts will finally be noticed and rewarded. Be sure to help a friend who comes to you during a personal crisis.
YOU BORN TODAY are cautious by nature, always taking time to mull over the pros and cons of every decision. This ability will ensure that you succeed in business matters, but bear in mind that matters of the heart cannot always be so carefully planned.
Birthdate of: Yasser Arafat, PLO leader; Roger Clemens, baseball player; Billy Bob Thornton, actor.

off the mark by Mark Parisi

I KEEP HAVING FALSE LABOR... IT'S RATHER ANNOYING. THREE TIMES IT INTERRUPTED MY DINNER, TWICE IT GOT ME OUT OF THE SHOWER...



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