Sports briefs

Oregon outside hitter leads nation in kills

Oregon senior volleyball player Madeline Ernst leads the nation in kills, averaging 5.84 kills per game, as released by the NCAA Sept. 29.

The all-American candidate from St. Paul, Ore., recorded her 1,000th career kill against UCLA on Sept. 25, only the sixth time in Duck history that this feat has occurred. Her 1,018 career kills rank her fifth all-time in school history.

Earlier this year, Ernst registered 38 kills in a five-game loss to Wake Forest. It was the second highest single-game kill total in school history and the tops by a Pacific-10 Conference performer this year. She has recorded double-digits in kills in 12 of Oregon's first 13 games this season and has had seven games with 20 or more kills.

UO men hire second track assistant coach

The transformation of the Oregon men's track and field coaching staff was completed earlier this month when new head coach Martin Smith announced the hiring of Tony Vesey as assistant in charge of jumpers, sprinters, hurdlers and multi-sport athletes

Vesey, a 45-year-old native of Compton, Calif., served as head coach of the Cal State Los Angeles women's team for the past three years.

"There were a lot of things that attracted me here," Vesey said. "But what really impresses me is the atmosphere in general. The people here love their Ducks, but they respect honest, hard work. Vesey joins fellow assistant Stewart Togher, the throws coach, under Smith.

Smith, former head coach at Wisconsin, will replace the legendary Bill Dellinger as head coach of the men's track and field team beginning in the

Ducks' Smith named player of the week

Quarterback Akili Smith was named Pac-10 offensive player of the week following his 357-yard, 4-touchdown performance against Stanford Sept. 26.

Smith, a senior from San Diego, Calif., led Oregon to a 63-28 victory against the Cardinal. Smith completed 15 of 21 passes (.714) in the first half and finished the game totaling 18 of 29

(.621) completions with touchdown passes of 37, 13, 35 and 29 yards. The Oregon offense piled up 29 first downs, 307 yards rushing and 357 yards passing for 664 yards total offense, just three yards shy of the Ducks' single-game record. Oregon's 63 points was its most ever in a Pac-10 game and the most ever at Autzen Stadium.

Duck football players among national best

The Oregon Ducks received multiple mentions in the most recent college football statistical

Reuben Droughns and Herman Ho-Ching have paced the Ducks to 10th in the country in rushing offense with 245.3 yards per game. Missouri leads the nation with 310.7 yards per

Oregon is also 26th in the nation in net punting with a 38.2yard average, 10.6 yards per punt less then national leader Kansas State.

On the other side of the ball, Michael Fletcher has led the Ducks to 13th in the country in punt returns with a 15.1-yard average. Kansas leads the nation with a 26.8-yard average.

Moseley

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off.

Besides the injuries, the closest the streak ever came to ending prematurely was at the onset of the 1995 season, when the strike of 1994 nearly carried over into the following season and provoked the owners to employ replacement players.

That didn't happen, and with a month left in the 1995 season, Ripken broke one of the longeststanding records in the game.

At the time, baseball was in the throes of one of the bleakest depressions in its history. The strike of the preceding year, when the World Series was canceled for just the second time since its inception, had cost the game a large portion of its audience. The popularity of basketball was skyrocketing, and even ice hockey was threatening to become a major force on the American sports scene.

But then, on Sept. 6 at Camden Yards, Ripken did the same thing he has for nearly 13 years and in the process helped baseball reclaim a majority of the audience it had lost in 1994.

He played ball.

By starting that game, Ripken had officially played in his 2,131st straight game, breaking

the record held by the Yankees' Iron Horse of a half-century ago, Lou Gehrig.

Ripken's timing couldn't have been better. It was as if he had known those 13 years earlier that he would be needed by the game and its fans to respark the interest that had captivated Americans for an entire century.

And by the same token, it was as if, last Sunday, before the Orioles-Yankees game, Ripken sat back, folded his arms and said, "My work here is done."

The popularity of the game was at a peak unseen in at least 20 years, with even the most casual of fans checking the evening highlight shows and the morning papers to see whether McGwire or Sammy had hit one, whether the Giants could catch the Cubs and Mets and whether the Yankees could indeed establish themselves as one of the best teams

Ripken saw all of this happening and quietly took a seat.

Not the greatest sense of drama, but certainly an uncanny sense of timing.

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Baysa

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in those first couple of games, but the hard part is to try to keep it up after that. I think her real impact has yet to be seen or felt.'

That trip to Hawaii represented a homecoming of sorts for Baysa. After being born in Honolulu, Baysa and her family moved to Japan when she was 3.

Her family lived on a small army base in Japan — her dad is an industrial engineer - until she was 9, before they moved again to Oak Harbor, Wash.

It was in Japan that Baysa says she first started playing soccer, but the sport was always a family affair. Her dad coached her when she

was younger. Her mom attended all of her games. Her older sister. Marisa, earned a soccer scholarship to Toledo, where she is now a junior.

Baysa starred as a prep at Oak Harbor High School, being named to the all-Wesco Conference first team all four years, leading her team in scoring every season and tallying 68 career goals. But Steffen did not find Baysa in

tiny Oak Harbor, which is on an island in Northern Washington about 90 minutes from the Canadian border.

"Some of our current players were on a club [soccer team] called the Royals," Steffen says, "and I managed to stay in contact with some of their coaches. In watching some of their games, I noticed Chalise - obviously, she's the kind of player that you notice."

Steffen was not alone in his pursuit of Baysa. She says her final choice was between Oregon and Virginia before she opted to become a Duck.

"When I came here, it was fun," Baysa says. "All the girls were nice to me and everything. I liked the campus, it wasn't too big, it wasn't too small. It wasn't too far from home.

"And it was Pac-10, Division I," she adds with a smile.

Now that she is in Eugene, Baysa has had a big hand in Oregon's bestever start at 3-3. The third-year Ducks won just five games in each of their first two seasons.

Goalkeeper Amanda Fox says Baysa's work ethic and aggressiveness have rubbed off on the rest of the team.

"She has a great desire to win," Fox says. "Every time in a game, she wants to score for us. And if she can't score, she's working for someone else to score."

Forward Erin Anderson, who is Oregon's career scoring leader, says Baysa has added a new dimension to the team.

"She's very fast, real quick," Anderson says. "She gets to all the free balls. She's just a spark plug. She's everywhere.

Steffen knows Baysa gets to the ball quickly, but he says speed is not the only reason why.

"A lot of the times it looks like she's just fast, but she's beyond that, she also reads things very well," Steffen says.

Teammates and coaches have no problem pointing out her strengths.

But Baysa does. She would much rather talk about all the weaknesses she says she has.

"I need to improve on heading, getting the ball out of the air and not getting pushed off the ball all the time," Baysa says. "My first touch has to be better I think, and I've got to finish better sometimes.

Weaknesses or not, the spotlight is not wandering from Baysa any

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