

# Pesznecker

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ball fan, and so she started talking to this guy about playing basketball. She told him about how much she admired college basketball players because they play the game for the love of the sport, not for the money.

Boy, was she wrong.

"No way!" the basketball player allegedly said to her, laughing. "I'm in it for the money, baby!"

Hmm.

When it is put so bluntly, one

has to wonder whether this particular player was merely arrogant or drunk (because they were at a party). However, I do believe that this obsession with money is the disease that plagues the NBA today.

The owners and the players of the NBA have taken the real value of the game and slam-dunked it, which is why I cannot listen to my preseason games right now.

Maybe the game's loss of focus happened because players are

now drafted at younger ages. Portland Trail Blazer Jermaine O'Neal turns 20 today, making him one week younger than I am. I consider myself to be a responsible person, but I can't have a budget of \$2,000 without going overboard and buying a stereo system.

Imagine what happens inside of these kids when they start making millions a year.

Many veteran players are angered that younger players rake in so much money, and I understand why they are upset. Why should a rookie come into the league with the assurance that his contract may more than triple after a couple of years?

So while Jordan, Kevin Garnet

and Shaquille O'Neal are trying to see who can demand the biggest paycheck, the owners want their piece of the pie, too. That is why they locked the players out; they want to limit the amount of money a player can demand so that they don't have to shell out the big bucks.

To all the NBA team owners out there: Ever heard the old saying, "Just say no"?

Today, the NBA players and owners will meet once again in an attempt to resolve the lockout situation. It frightens me to contemplate how much of basketball's future rests in the hands of these people who place the value of the dollar over the value of the game.

I can still remember the Dream Team. I still recall the atmosphere in Portland when the Blazers faced the Bulls in the NBA finals. I will never forget Magic Johnson's final All-Star game when he hit that 3-pointer at the buzzer to win the game's MVP award.

I remember a time when I could watch a basketball game on TV and see the energy and determination strained across the faces of each player on the court.

Last time I saw something about the NBA on my television, it was about the lockout.

Scott Pesznecker is a sports reporter for the Emerald.


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## Soccer

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injuries. "They're not that deep of a team, but they're very fit because every player has had to play so many minutes.

Senior midfielder Michelle French is one of 15 finalists for collegiate soccer's version of the Heisman Trophy, the Hermann Trophy. She has tallied two goals and four assists this season to boost her career totals to eight goals and 30 assists.

Forward Tara Koleski leads the team with 11 goals and 26 total points, while goalkeeper Cheryl Loveless has allowed an average of just .46 goals per game.

Despite the impressiveness of those statistics, Duck midfielder Pam Gordon said Oregon will approach today's game as it does any other.

"Right now, we just want to take each game as it comes," Gordon said after the Ducks' 3-0 win over Oregon State last Friday. "We're really looking forward to that game now. Yesterday, we were just focused on OSU."

With a Friday matchup against No. 1 North Carolina at the St. Mary's Fall Soccer Classic looming, Portland may be looking past Oregon.

Although they have not faced the Pilots before, the Ducks have experience at Merlo Field, where they went 1-1 in the Portland Adidas Invitational on Sept. 12 and 13.



BAYSA

Forwards Chalise Baysa (seven goals) and Erin Anderson (one goal, five assists) and goalkeeper Amanda Fox (1.03 goals-against average) will likely lead Oregon's bid for an upset.

Steffen knows his team has shown improvement from its first two seasons — both of which resulted in five wins — but said he is not sure if the Ducks are ready to challenge Portland for state supremacy.

"We'll know more after tomorrow afternoon," Steffen said Monday with a laugh.

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