

TUESDAY
Nov. 10, 1998

Best Bet

U.S. Soccer
U.S. National Team at
Australia
9 p.m., ESPN

Hamed is Clown Prince, nothing more

So I was sitting in a janky hotel in Tucson, ready to type a story about the Ducks' 38-3 loss to Arizona earlier that evening and about to watch HBO's enlightening and informative documentary detailing the horrible plight of the victims who are forced to labor as dancers in the adult entertainment industry, when I witnessed one of the more fascinating — and at the same time pitiful — spectacles of my sports-television viewing career.

With a well-lit ring in the background, a shrouded figure began playing an organ in a cloud of smoke surrounded by mock grave stones. Legions of cheering fans flashed signs showing support for their favorite athlete, while a laser-light show that would make Pink Floyd jealous blazed overhead.

Great, I thought. An hour of professional wrestling just before I could fully appreciate the plight of the poor exotic dancers on "Strippers," the newest edition of HBO's America Undercover series.

Just then, however, the figure at the organ turned around and whipped off his shroud. His boots looked like the average wrestler's, his pants looked maybe a little baggy, but other than that, he was a typical looking lightweight wrestler.

Except for one thing: his gloves. This joker was wearing gloves, boxing gloves, and at that moment, all the respect I had left for the sport in the wake of Mike Tyson's lobe lunch with Evander Holyfield was gone.

Some ding-dong named Prince — Prince! — Naseem Hamed made his way to the ring and flipped over the top rope to fight an unassuming Irishman named Wayne McCullough. Hamed is apparently a fighter of some esteem, as his 30-0 record showed, but he did nothing to prove it in his unanimous decision over McCullough. What Hamed did prove was that boxing is closer to wrestling in terms of athletic integrity than it is to any other legitimate sport.

Pro wrestling enthusiasts will tell you that it's not the competition but the entertainment value that sells their sport, and boxing is going down that road as well. Wrestling thrives on the grudge matches and soap operas that provide so much fodder outside the ring, but no legitimate action once the bell rings.

Considering the multi-year fiasco involved in the last Tyson-Holyfield bout and all of its subplots (rape, jail, loss of ear) or the difficulty persuading Lennox Lewis to fight first Riddick Bowe and now Holyfield, it seems boxing has decided to follow the formula so profitably exploited by wrestling. Eschew the real action, but provide the audience with all the drama it can handle in front of the camera.

Hamed may in fact one day support his claim of being the best pound-for-pound fighter ever, but he did no such thing against McCullough. Instead he proved that running from one's opponent, throwing unorthodox, no-look punches that fail to connect and displaying fancy but useless footwork can just as well earn two million dollars as can actually wading in and slugging it out.

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OREGON SOCCER



Freshman forward Chalise Baysa's team-leading nine goals equaled the Oregon record, which was set by fellow forward Erin Anderson in 1996.

Nick Medley/Emerald

Oregon greedy for winning season

By Tim Pyle
Oregon Daily Emerald

Greed is not always a vice. Take head coach Bill Steffen and the Oregon women's soccer team, fresh off their best season since the program's inception just three years ago.

The Ducks are not satisfied with their records — 6-10-2 overall and 3-6 Pacific-10 Conference — because they believe they could have done better.

But Steffen knows the appearance of greediness bodes well for his program's future.

"I want to get as many wins as we can, and I felt like we could have had more wins," Steffen said. "At the same time, I'm very aware that we've seen some tremendous improvement in our players. And

as a result, we can be happy about that. I think the greed actually comes in that when I see us play well I want us to play that well or better all the time."

Following consecutive five-win seasons, Oregon had the opportunity to finish at .500 overall and with a winning Pac-10 record until the final weekend of this season. But after taking a 1-0 first-half lead over California last Friday, the Ducks stumbled to the season's finish line with a 2-1 overtime loss to the Golden Bears and a 4-0 defeat at the hands of Stanford on Sunday.

Steffen lists that loss to the Car-

dinal among Oregon's worst performances of the season, along with a 4-0 loss at Southern California on Oct. 25 and a pair of 1-1 home ties with San Francisco and Portland State on the weekend of Oct. 2-3.

However, there were plenty of good moments as well.

The Ducks opened their new home, Papé Field, successfully with a pair of impressive nonconference victories over Tennessee and North Carolina-Greensboro on Sept. 4 and 7, respectively. Freshman forward Chalise Baysa, who wound up leading the team with nine goals and 18 total points, made a scintillating debut that weekend by scoring all five Oregon

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Bill Steffen
Women's soccer
coach

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Ho-Ching hopes to rally Ducks' running game

By Rob Moseley
Oregon Daily Emerald

With 61 yards on 32 carries, a 1.9 yard average, the Oregon running game on Saturday wasn't much of an improvement on its performances in the past two weeks.

The Ducks, who moved up one spot to No. 20 in the Associated Press poll after their 27-22 win over Washington, are now averaging 2.8 yards per carry without Reuben Droughns.

Although Droughns, who broke his leg against UCLA on Oct. 17, won't return this season, freshman Herman Ho-Ching provided 47 yards on 17 carries Saturday in his first action since Sept. 19.

"Overall, Herman played pretty well," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "That last fumble was obviously something that you never want to happen again, but overall I do think he gave us a spark in terms of the running game."

Despite Ho-Ching's last-minute fumble that allowed the Huskies to score their final touchdown and attempt an on-side kick,

which Oregon's Brandon McLemore recovered, the freshman said he was for the most part pleased with his performance.

"Right now I'm picking up speed little by little," Ho-Ching said. "I'm not explosive like I was in the UTEP game [in which Ho-Ching scored three touchdowns on Sept. 12], so hopefully by next week I'll be full speed and ready to go again."

Ho-Ching has been out since straining knee ligaments in the Ducks' third game of the season against San Jose State. He began Saturday as the fourth tailback listed on the depth chart but got more than half of Ore-

gon's carries after entering the game with just less than five minutes remaining in the first quarter.

Bellotti said on Sunday that it was still too early to tell whether Ho-Ching would start against Arizona State this week.

"That will be evaluated during the week," Bellotti said. "Certainly he'll get more work. He didn't get a lot of work last week; he kind of eased into it. Based on his performance, he'll move up, but we'll determine the starter probably Wednesday of Thursday."

True freshman Harris could miss rest of the season with torn anterior cruciate ligament.

Ho-Ching is just one of four true freshmen to see action for Oregon this season, and while Saturday was a new beginning for his season, it may have been the end for another first-year Duck.



Oregon
Football Notes