

Thursday
April 22, 1999

Oregon Emerald SPORTS

Best Bet
NHL Hockey Playoffs
Conference Quarterfinals, Game One
4:30 p.m., ESPN



UO catcher tough to stop

Freshman Missy Coe
leads the Oregon softball
team on offense

By Tim Pyle
Oregon Daily Emerald

Perhaps freshman Missy Coe has had no problems adjusting to the nation's toughest conference because she has faced tougher situations.

Playing consecutive double-headers against No. 1 UCLA and No. 4 Washington, as the Oregon softball team did last weekend, does not seem quite so difficult to someone who has been the only girl on an all-boys team.

"I played baseball and I was the only girl in the league for two years," Coe said of her third- and fourth-grade introduction to softball, or at least the male version of it.

Perhaps Coe, the Ducks' starting catcher and leading hitter heading into today's 3 p.m. doubleheader at Portland State, has always been ahead of the game because of that experience.

After a prestigious prep career at North Medford High School that included first-team all-state honors three times and All-American honors twice, Coe is simply continuing to excel.

"At first, I was surprised at how well she was going early in the season," Oregon head coach Rick Gamez said. "But as the season's progressed, she's just continued to play well in all ar-

eas."

She may now be calling pitches and hitting line drives in the Pacific-10 Conference — all eight of whose teams are among the nation's top 17 — but it is still the same game Coe's father enthusiastically pressed upon her as a child.

"He knew I had the competitiveness in me," said the 5-foot-7 Coe, "so he just got me into the sport because he loved it."

Gamez loves the way Coe has sparked the Duck offense from the second spot in his batting order, tallying team highs in batting average at .381, doubles with 14, total bases with 100 and runs scored at 39.

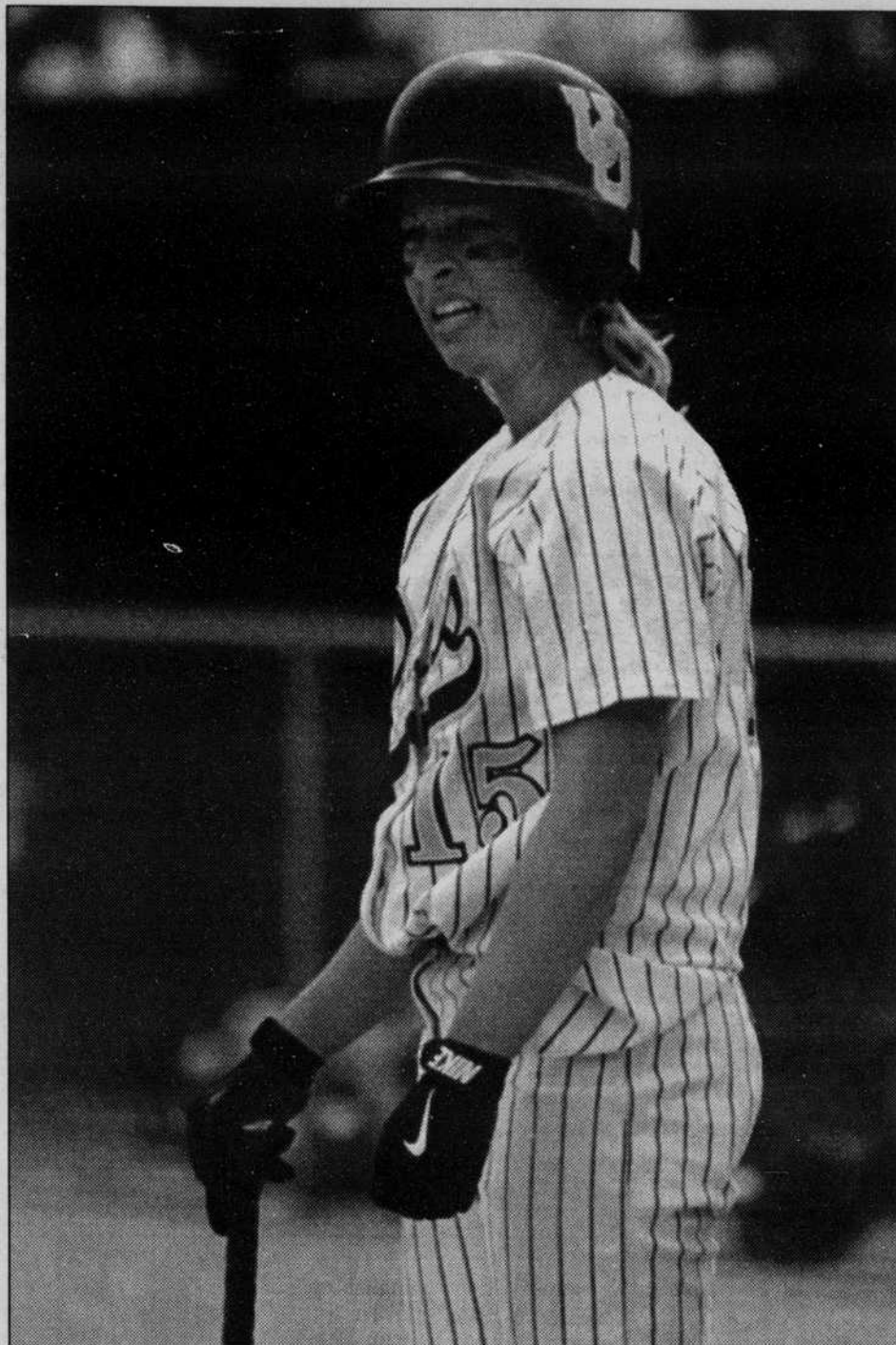
"We knew she was gonna be a good ballplayer," Gamez said. "We didn't expect her to hit where she's hitting right now, but it's a pleasant surprise, obviously."

Despite being a "gap-to-gap" hitter as Gamez defines her, Coe has also displayed power from her left-handed batting stance, blasting nine home runs. According to Coe, that is the most shocking trait she has developed so far at Oregon.

"I never could hit home runs," said Coe, who throws right-handed. "In high school, there's not even fences, and I couldn't hit it over their heads. If I hit a home run, I was like, 'Woo.'"

"But now my stroke is com-

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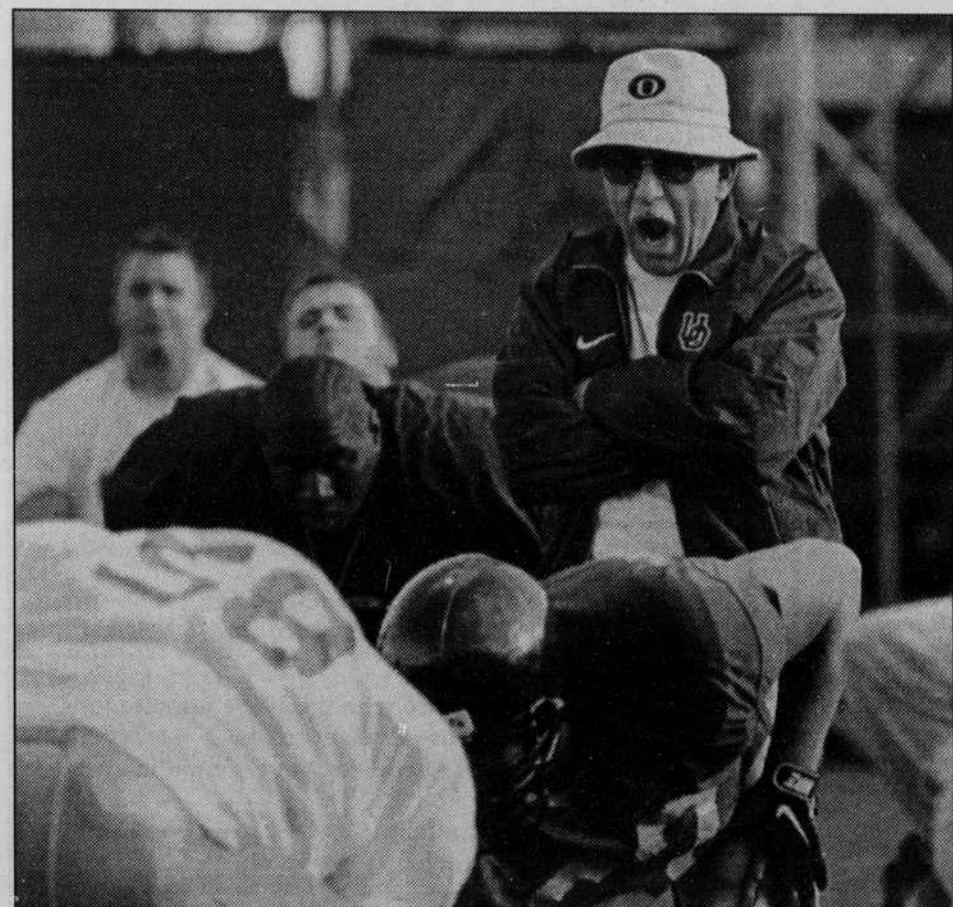
"She wants to succeed regardless of who she's playing against."

Rick Gamez
Oregon softball
head coach

Freshman Missy Coe, the Ducks' leading hitter, with a .381 batting average, looks for signals from head coach Rick Gamez during last Saturday's matchup with UCLA.

Nick Medley/Emerald

Offensive line digs for new identity in the trenches



Assistant head coach Neal Zoumboukos coaches the offensive line during practice Tuesday afternoon.

Nick Medley/Emerald

Inexperience and a lack of communication have plagued the offensive line in scrimmages

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

Many positive things can be said about the defense of the Oregon football team. The return of defensive coordinator Nick Aliotti and a modified scheme worked well in the Ducks' first two spring scrimmages.

However, the offense told a different story in the intrasquad contests.

Gone from the offensive line are Michael Klews, Stefan deVries and Marco Aguirre. Gone is a core group that enabled Oregon's total offense to climb to 10th in the NCAA with more than 478 yards per game.

The Ducks must now construct an offensive line from one returning starter, another player who has started and others who have limited experience.

And the result?

In Oregon's first scrimmage earlier this month, the offense finished without a single touchdown. The only points came from three field goals, as the offense struggled to 195 total yards while committing three turnovers.

The offense performed better in the second scrimmage, but it still did not meet head coach Mike Bellotti's standards. The defense repeatedly shut the offense down,

including three third-down quarterback sacks and a one-yard loss on a third-down completed pass.

The offense's first touchdown of spring practice did not come until the eighth drive of the second scrimmage.

However, assistant coach Neal Zoumboukos is not worried about his offensive line. He attributed some of the offense's faults in the scrimmages to the cunning defense, but he said the line is still in the process of learning.

"We have a young offensive group, and we're giving the offense a tremendous amount of plays to absorb at this time," Zoumboukos said. "When you have a disjointed group, you don't

always have starters with starters. You're mixing people up so that continuity and communication isn't typically what it would be in the fall.

"If this type of thing were occurring in the fall, I think there would be some concern, but this happens every spring."

With the graduation of key players, Zoumboukos has made some adjustments to the line. Josh Beckett moved from right to left tackle, and Deke Moen moved from center to right guard.

Beckett said the moves have been hard to deal with and are a key source of the Ducks'



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