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UO waits till end to beat the Clan

■ In its first home game, Oregon needs a sixth-inning rally to win 4-1

By Mirjam Swanson
 Oregon Daily Emerald

Not quite the performance that head coach Rick Gamez wanted from his Oregon softball team (23-11) Sunday afternoon.

Not with the Ducks' first Pacific-10 Conference opponent, No. 2 Arizona, lurking at the end of the week. Not in front of 223 fans in its first home game of the season at Howe Field.

And certainly not against Simon Frazier, a scrappy but over-matched NAIA team.

"The performance was a little lackluster," Gamez said. "We didn't play to our capabilities."

The Ducks — who were playing their 11th game in 10 days — came out flat. And they stayed that way — until nearly the last moment, eventually winning 4-1.

Oregon's usually explosive offense disappeared for the first five innings, and the Ducks found themselves down one as they went to bat in the bottom of the sixth after Clan pitcher, Kathy Iggulden,

hit a solo shot in the fourth.

"When the sixth inning comes around and you're losing by one, it's scary," said senior center fielder Jill Robinson, who came through with a bloop single that drove in the go-ahead run. "Thank God we pulled it out and came up with some clutch hitting — although my hit wasn't very clutch."



Actually, it was very clutch, if not pretty.

Amber Hutchinson led off the sixth with a double into left. Then Andrea Gustafson reached safely and Hutchinson advanced to third when second baseman Lindsay Brooks couldn't handle a hard grounder.

Missy Coe struck out and Robinson stepped up and knuckled a two-strike pitch into shallow left, driving in Hutchinson and Gustafson. And the Ducks suddenly looked like themselves.

Triawn Custer made sure of it, clocking a home run over the right field wall, putting Oregon securely in front.

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Track struts at Stanford

■ Niki Reed, Karis Howell, Andrew Bliss and Jason Boness all earn NCAA-qualifying marks

By Scott Pesznecker
 Oregon Daily Emerald

The outdoor track and field season is barely underway, and already the men and women Ducks are beginning to flex their NCAA muscles.

Competing at the Stanford invitational on Saturday and Sunday, four Ducks came away with NCAA qualifying marks.

Pole vaulter Niki Reed's clearance of 12 feet, five inches put her in contention to win a third All-American honor. The sophomore's vault tied her for first place with Washington State's Janette Martus, and Reed won the jump-off.

Karis Howell scored her second qualifying mark of the season with a 166-4 throw.

Also in the pole vault, junior Holly Speight equaled the NCAA provisional standard of 11-11 3/4. Junior All-American Karina Elstrom struggled at the meet, finishing 12th with a height of 11-5 3/4.

On the men's side, Andrew Bliss ran a 17-second personal best in his first track race in more than a year, finishing 19th in the 5,000 meters with a time of 14 minutes, 6.49 seconds, edging the NCAA provisional standard or 14:07.00.

Jason Boness notched his first NCAA mark of the outdoor season, equaling the NCAA provisional standard of 7-1 3/4 and finishing in second place.

The Ducks' next meet is the Hayward Relays on April 8.

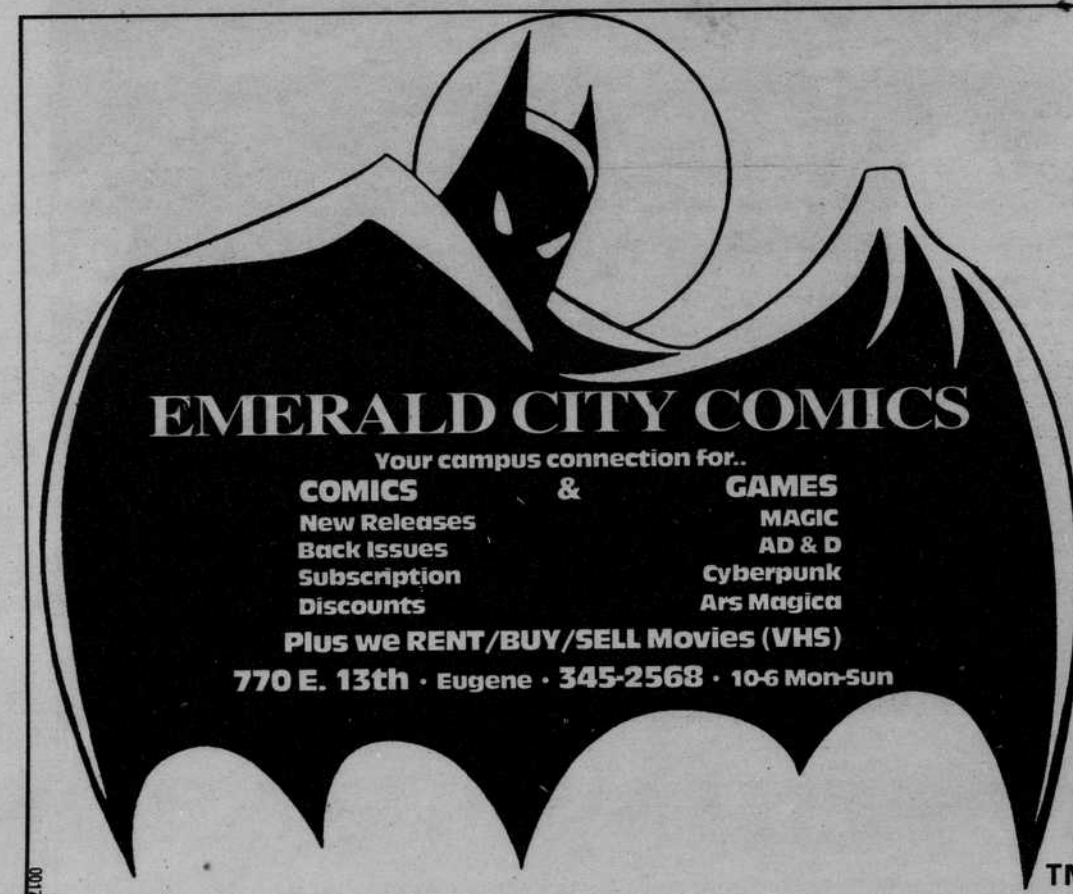
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