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Sportin' a few thoughts

Summer seems rather close on the calendar, but it feels so far away. I look outside and see rain. I go home and am suckered into doing homework. I go to class and I keep having to take those damn tests.

It's enough to make a mind wander off deep into the horizon. And more often than not, when my mind wanders, it roams directly into the wacky world of sports.

On that note, here are a few of the topics I've been thinking about of late...

First and foremost, let's talk about these NBA Playoffs. Do we really need to play these Western Conference Semifinals? It's rather ridiculous, really. The Blazers don't even look like they're trying, but I guess these days when you play the Utah Jazz you don't have to be that good.

"Blazermaniacs" aren't even that into the series. As I sat in the third level of the Rose Garden for Sunday's Game 1, I was shocked to hear the "Beat LA" chant already. The chant grew much louder in Game 2. Calm down Blazer fans, the Lakers will be here soon enough.

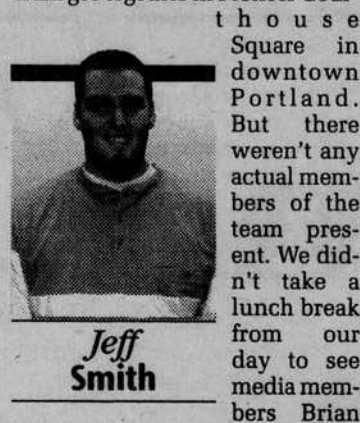
One last take on the Jazz, who disgraced themselves by falling on their faces in the first two games of the series. Utah is nowhere near good lately, but how bad must the Sonics have been to lose to these ol' fogies?

The Pacers seem to have awoken from their playoff slumber after almost embarrassing themselves against the Bucks. But Larry Bird still looks asleep roaming the sidelines. I think he's counting down the days until summer just like the rest of us.

It's kind of depressing to watch the Heat and Knicks try to score. Let's just get them all in the ring and have them duke it out to see

who advances. My money would be on 'Zo.

I went to a Blazers rally on Friday afternoon with some of my fellow sportswriters. (Even the Emerald's Kobe-lovin' Laker fan was present.) It was hyped as a team get-together in Pioneer Courthouse Square in downtown Portland. But there weren't any actual members of the team present. We didn't take a lunch break from our day to see media members Brian Wheeler, Mike Rice and Pete Pranica get all riled up.



I was reminded the other day of former NBA great Willis Reed limping onto the floor in Game 7 of the NBA Finals. His gutsy performance helped his Knicks knock off the Lakers on May 8, 1970. But then I thought about that date. May 8?? Man, David Stern barely ended the first round of the playoffs by May 8.

One last thought on the NBA Playoffs: Enough of Bill Walton behind the mike. Walton, thanks for bringing the championship to Portland in 1977, but your act is wearing thin.

Do you notice how Walton always uses three long adjectives to describe a play or a player? Bill, I feel you're announcing is lackluster, monotonous and tiresome.

Last year on May 15, the Boston Red Sox unveiled plans for the "New Fenway Park." It led people to believe that the current Fenway was near extinction. Wrong. They even have yet to break ground on

the park, and the financing and location are problems far from being remedied. So there's no need to hurry over to Boston to say goodbye to the Green Monster. Dan Shaughnessy, award-winning columnist and author of "Fenway: A Biography in Words and Pictures," summed it up best: "We'll probably all be dead by the time the Red Sox complete the alleged New Fenway Project."

I was searching on-line and found pro golfer's David Duval's replica sunglasses for "as low as" \$120. Wow. If \$120 was low for a round of golf, I'd be rich.

NBC Sports President Dick Ebersol has already flown to Sydney, Australia, 15 times in the past 18 months in preparation for the Olympics. My only advice to Mr. Ebersol is show more real live action and less mushy-mushy features. Too late though. By the time the Opening Ceremonies start on Sept. 15, NBC plans on having 100 athlete profiles complete, with more to come. Grab that Kleenex...

That was some pitching match-up last night between the two best pitchers money can buy: Randy Johnson and Kevin Brown. (I may be writing this before the game starts, but I guarantee it was a duel worth watching...)

And my final thought of the day comes from New Orleans Saints running back Ricky Williams. Marijuana paraphernalia was found in Williams's house when police came to help an unconscious "friend of a friend." Ricky, this is not the way to regain your Heisman Trophy form. What a dope...

Now, get back to your schoolwork!

Jeff Smith is a sports reporter. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached via e-mail at Smittside@aol.com.

Tennis

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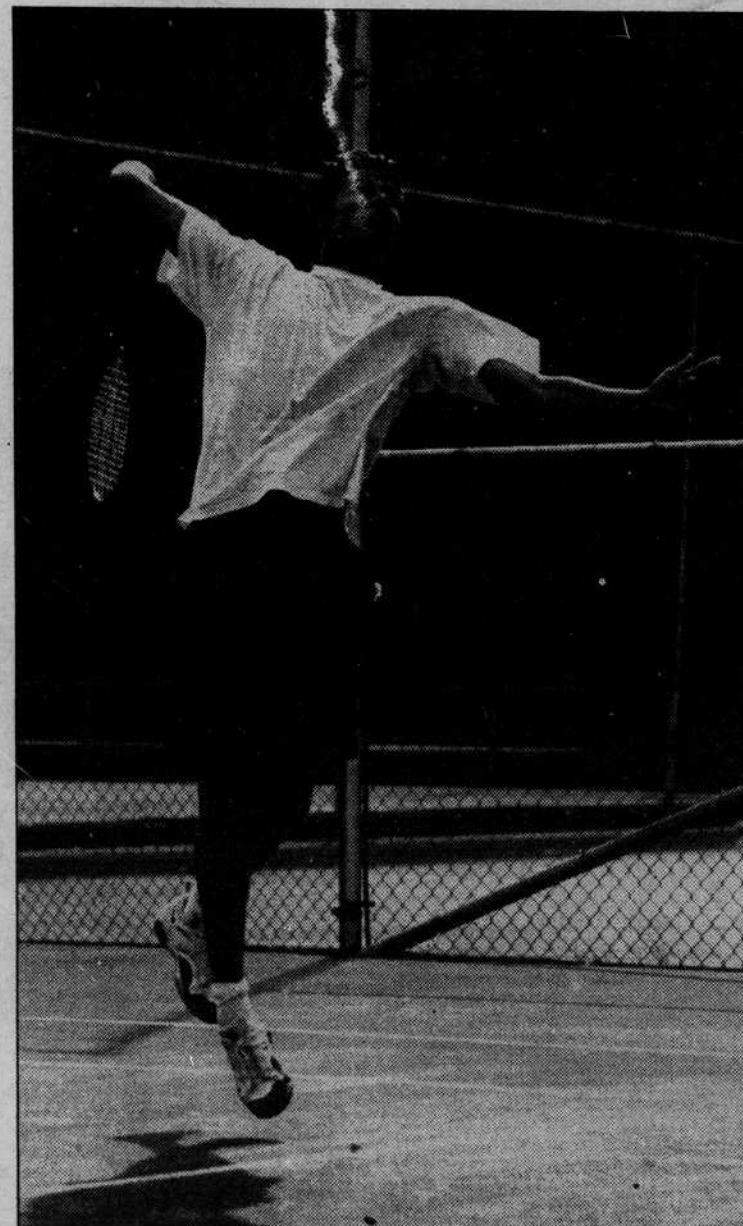
record is 17-16, went on to win his next six singles matches and his next four doubles matches with Carter.

"Memo has helped me out a lot." Eisinga said of the nicknamed Carter. "He's a leader. He has a lot of experience being a senior. In doubles, he tells me what to do in the important moment. It really helps."

According to Russell, Carter "has had a big influence on him. For Leslie to be out there on the court with Memo has really helped him out. Without a doubt, he's helped him off the court too."

The Stanford upset was just the beginning for Eisinga and Carter, Oregon's No. 1 doubles team. Despite playing nine doubles teams ranked in the top-50, the team has compiled an 18-9 record, good enough for second in the Oregon single-season record book.

On April 28, Eisinga and Carter went on an incredible run at the Pac-10 championships, winning their first three matches. Then-ranked No. 34, the doubles team upset UCLA's No. 46 Jean-Julien Rojer and Jean Noel Grinda and Arizona State's No. 41 Ed Carter and Alex Osterrieth to leap into the semifinals. The next day, Eisinga and Carter eliminated another Cinderella doubles team, Southern California's Parker Collins and Andrew Park to become the first-ever finalist from



Catharine Kendall Emerald

After a solid freshman year, Eisinga will be an integral part of Oregon's future success.