

Sports

Golf

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — From record TV ratings to praise by his awe-struck competitors, Tiger Woods has clearly moved into territory claimed by few stars in any sport.

"We've had two athletes in my time — Muhammad Ali and Jordan — that draw fans from outside their sport," said Dick Ebersol, president of NBC Sports. "Every indicator we have says Tiger is the next one."

Certainly that was the case at the U.S. Open, where Woods won by a record 15 strokes in a performance that sent television ratings soaring.

NBC's coverage of the final two rounds of the tournament drew an average overnight rating of 7.5 with an 18 share, according to numbers released Monday by Nielsen Media Research, the highest two-day average for the Open since overnights were instituted in 1975.

The overnight numbers showed an increase of 14 percent over last year's 6.6. Sunday's fourth round recorded an overnight mark of 8.8, a gain of 11 percent from 1999's 7.9.

Next month, Woods heads for Scotland — the home of golf — and will try to complete a career Grand Slam at the British Open at St. Andrews.

Woods will be an abiding favorite and invariably will raise questions about whether courses can be "Tiger-proofed" to keep tournaments competitive.

"You can't stop him by tricking up the course," said Michael Bonallack, who retired last year as secretary of the Royal & Ancient Golf Club. "What purpose would that serve? He's already proven he's the only one who could handle this place."

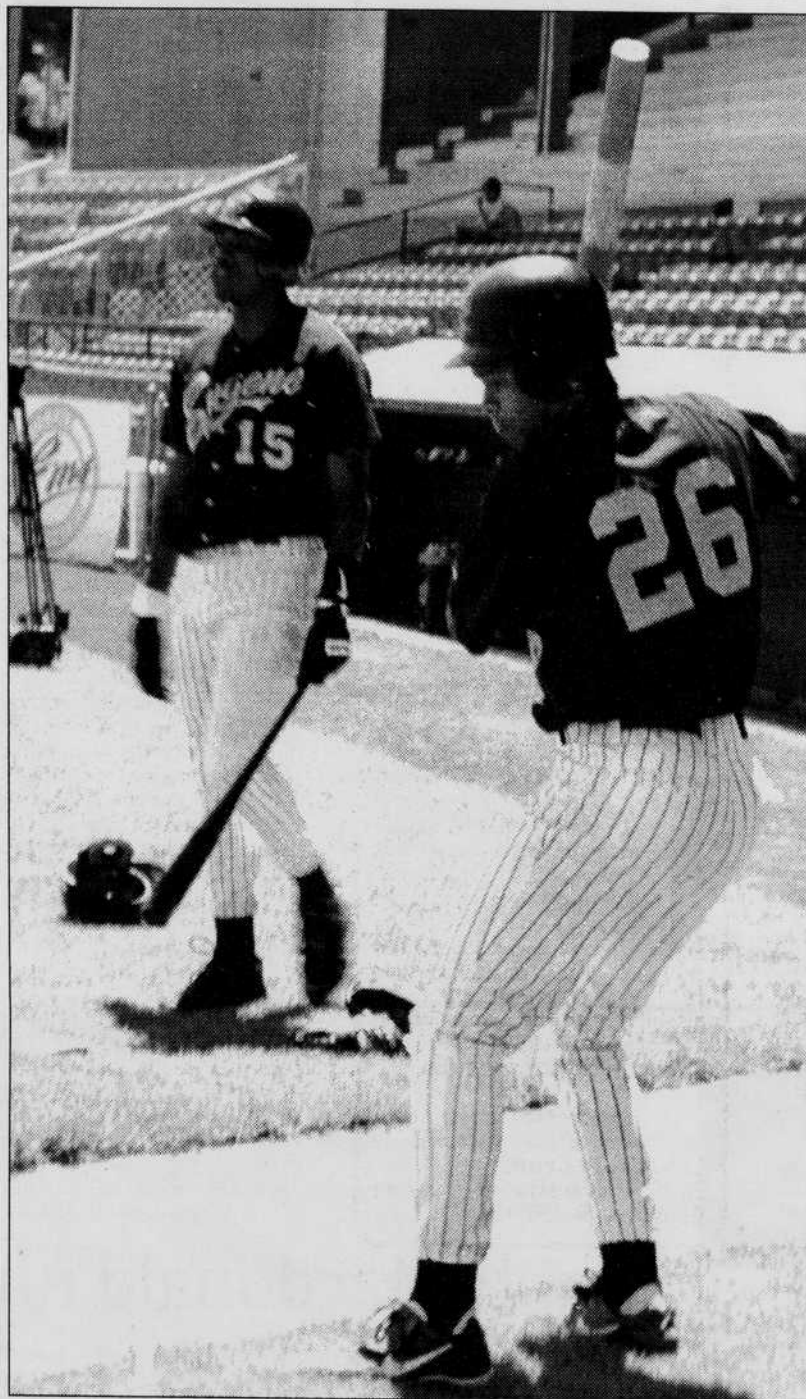
Woods' victory Sunday at Pebble Beach gave him his third major in only his fourth year of professional golf. That's one fewer than it took Jack Nicklaus.

It was the most lopsided victory in major tournament history, with Ernie Els and Miguel Angel Jimenez tied for second.

He tied the U.S. Open scoring record of 272, set at par-70 Baltusrol by Nicklaus in 1980 and Lee Janzen in 1993, and broke the record in relation to par, 12 under.

"It's kind of like Texas in the old Southwest Conference," former Longhorn Tom Kite said, referring to the football team. "You knew who was going to win before the game. It's certainly fun when you're pulling for Texas, but it's not real exciting for everybody else."

Searching other sports for comparisons were commonplace over the weekend, with Michael Jordan's name coming up more than once.



Michael Mallory (15) and Emmanuel Pina (26) are both excited to be on the Emeralds this summer. Celine Bally for the Emerald

Ballers on call

■ The Emeralds are an eager bunch ready to reward their fans with a winning season, after finishing last the previous two years

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

It was Saturday afternoon and the Eugene Emeralds were holding their first workout in Civic Stadium in preparation for today's season opener at Spokane.

Michael Mallory, the Chicago Cubs second round draft pick in 1999, glanced around at the 20 or so fans spread out in the 5,000-plus seat stadium and looked amazed.

It appeared as though he was a bit disappointed that only a few people came to watch the team take batting practice and do defensive drills in its first appearance in Eugene.

But his thoughts were quite the opposite.

"Those fans right there are the most fans I've seen all year," said Mallory, who is a 6-foot-4 centerfielder with a strong arm and a powerful bat. "We usually drew only two or three people a game down in Mesa. The weather was just too hot for the fans."

The Emeralds, the Cubs short season Single-A team, arrived into town late Friday night after spending the previous two months down in the 112-degree heat in Mesa, Ariz. In order for the players to avoid any weather related problems, the team held their spring games at 7 a.m., hence the lack of fans.

"I've heard that the fans here are great and they like to fill this

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Emerald at-home schedule (partial)

- June 25—Yakima
- June 26—Yakima
- June 27—Yakima
- June 28—Yakima
- June 29—Yakima
- July 3—Vancouver
- July 4—Vancouver
- July 5—Vancouver
- July 12—Spokane
- July 13—Spokane
- July 14—Spokane
- July 15—Spokane
- July 16—Spokane
- July 20—Everett
- July 21—Everett
- July 22—Everett
- July 23—Everett
- July 24—Everett
- July 31—Portland
- Aug 1—Portland
- Aug 2—Portland
- Aug 3—Vancouver
- Aug 4—Vancouver
- Aug 5—Vancouver
- Aug 9—Salem-Keizer
- Aug 10—Salem-Keizer

Television stations vie for rights to Ducks

KEZI-TV was awarded back the television rights of University sports, but KVAL-TV is not going down without a fight

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

In 1991, Eugene-based television station KEZI-TV lost its telecast rights of Oregon athletic events to local rival KVAL-TV.

KEZI, the ABC affiliate, protested the decision, but lost.

Then on June 7, the University awarded the rights back to KEZI after nine years at KVAL, the CBS affiliate.

And now, it is KVAL who is protesting the arrangement.

The reason for the protest, says KVAL general manager David Weinkauf, is that he feels that the bidding process "unfairly placed our company at a competitive disadvantage." Weinkauf asserts that his station was "misled" by the athletic department during the bidding process.

KEZI, on the other hand, feels that the process was fair and is thrilled to get back the rights to televise Duck sports.

"I feel for Weinkauf because

I know this puts his job in jeopardy," said Bill Nagy, who was hired onto KEZI in December of 1998 to oversee the company's broadcast, production and cable divisions. "Yet I'm also thrilled. It's a good feeling and we're locally owned and we feel the local news team should be the ones covering the Ducks."

The deal between the University and Chambers Communications, who owns KEZI, is believed to be worth \$1.4 million dollars over three years.

A key for the controversy between the two stations and the University is the role that ESPN Regional played in the decision. Unlike nine years ago, when the University did not have a partnership with ESPN, the deal was negotiated on behalf of the University through ESPN.

According to Dave Williford, director of the athletic department's Media Services, ESPN had the final say.

"ESPN talked to both of them and they got separate bids," Williford said. "KVAL's protest is being looked at closely by Melinda Grier [general counsel to the University]."

Weinkauf strongly believes that the agreement is not one that should be made by people outside of the University.

"I think that ESPN has been brought into this to turn things around," Weinkauf said. "But it's not an ESPN decision. It's a U of O decision."

What also has Weinkauf upset is the role that the television stations in Medford played. He says that when University representatives visited his station on May 12, he "specifically asked if exposure in the Medford market would be a consideration in the award process."

In his protest letter to University President Dave Frohn-mayer, Weinkauf wrote, "We

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“We want to enhance the product. We kind of feel that the coaches shows have been a little dull and have looked into making some changes.”

Bill Nagy
KEZI-TV
supervisor



Best Bet

MLB: Tampa Bay vs. Seattle
7 p.m., FoxSports Northwest