

SPORTS

Thursday

Best Bet

NHL Playoffs, Game 1: Vancouver at Colorado
7 p.m., ESPN2

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Smooth landing

■ Sophomore Amanda Brown has found a home on the Duck track and field team after riding the basketball bench

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

A little over a year ago, Amanda Brown had the Oregon women's basketball blues.

As she sat on the sidelines and watched Oregon fall to Alabama-Birmingham in the first round of the 2000 NCAA Tournament, the freshman wondered what was ahead for her. She hadn't played in a game since coming in for a minute against Portland State on Dec. 18, 1999 — a total of 21 straight games spent riding the pine.

Even though she was a part of a Pacific-10 Conference Championship team, Brown felt like an outcast.

"At first, I loved basketball," Brown said. "I still do, but after that experience last year it was pretty hard for me to say I wanted to play basketball again."

But the Eugene native would soon find her niche, and it would be just a hop, skip and a long jump away from McArthur Court.

For Brown, retribution would lie in the more peaceful confines of Hayward Field.

Since abandoning the basketball team for the track and field team, Brown has come into her own as Oregon's top long jumper. She participated in the Pacific-10 Conference Championships last year after improving her length by almost a foot-and-a-half over the season.

This year, after a full off-season of preparation, Brown exploded with a personal best 19-foot jump at the Oregon Preview, then leaped two inches beyond that at the Stanford Invitation-

al a week later. Though she has already qualified for the Pac-10 meet this year, Brown could be thinking of the NCAA Championships in May.

"There's a lot more development to go [in Amanda]," Oregon head coach Tom Heinonen said. "The sky's the limit."

"She's just going to keep on getting better and better," sprints coach Mark Stream said.

Brown has learned more on the track and field team than just how to jump far. She says she has learned life lessons on the track that were absent from the Ducks' basketball locker room.

"In basketball, it was more about breaking you down instead of building you up," Brown said. "When I came to track, all of that I lost was restored back to me through the coaches and the team. They were all really supportive, and they helped put me up where I needed to be."

Already, Brown has made lifelong friends and found support at Hayward Field. She names sprinter Lucretia Larkin and her coach, Stream, as key factors in helping ease her transition to the track team. Those two, along with a full team of throwers, hurdlers and runners behind her, made sure that Brown felt comfortable with the Oregon track team.

Larkin said the feeling was mutual.

"We've been sort of attached at the hip," Larkin said. "We do everything together. We both understand where we're coming from, we're both dedicated to it, and we have self-discipline."

Self-discipline and dedication are two of Brown's key attributes. Combined, they have led her to take up sprinting. Brown has a particular distaste for sprinting — in fact, she says she hates it — but she does it anyway because it helps her on the long jump runway.

"I'm not a sprinter" is all she ever Turn to Brown, page 13



Sophomore Amanda Brown has emerged as the team's top long jumper and has scored personal bests twice this season. Adam Amato Emerald

Softball loses third baseman for remainder of year

■ Oregon's 'adversity' continues as junior Holly Ray's season comes to an end

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

Already drained from a six-game losing streak during the first two weeks of Pacific-10 Conference play, the Oregon softball team was dealt another major setback this week.

Starting third baseman Holly Ray is scheduled to have season-ending surgery this morning for a torn rotator cuff in her right throwing arm. The junior from Tualatin started 37 games this season, hitting .198 with five home runs and 14 RBI.

"We've been hampered by injuries all year," head coach Rick Gamez said. "[Ray] is a great player. We're going to miss her."

Ray has seen little action since the beginning of March and has not played in any of the Pac-10 games.

The Ducks (23-24 overall, 1-5 Pac-10) also played without starting second baseman Alyssa Laux for several games in the preseason, while senior Kelly Planche (shoulder) and junior Missy Coe (knee) are still battling the injury bug.

Sophomore transfer Lynsey Haij has been starting at third in Ray's absence.

"Despite all of our adversity, I think

this team has stayed positive and has the right frame of mind," Gamez said.

No laughing matter

In addition to senior Triawn Custer's record-breaking home run at California Saturday, several other Oregon players are making their marks in the record books this season.

Coe's eight doubles this season bring her career total to 40, the most in school history.

Junior pitcher Connie McMurren is just four strikeouts shy of third place on the all-time strikeout list. McMurren's 332 K's trail Rachelle Taylor's school-record 474 strikeouts, established in the early '90s.

And, last but not least, Laux has reached a pinnacle that one could only dream about. The team's second leading hitter with a .373 average has been hit by a pitch a whopping 14 times in her Oregon career — another highly sought-after record. Congratulations, Alyssa.

With so many stats, one has to wonder which Oregon player has the career record for the largest consumption of sunflower seeds. Just kidding. There's no such category.

7th-inning woes

After dropping consecutive games in the final inning to Portland State earlier

Turn to Softball, page 13



“Despite all of our adversity, I think this team has stayed positive.”

Rick Gamez
head coach



Oregon junior third baseman Holly Ray (left), shown here with junior teammate Connie McMurren, will miss the rest of the season with a torn rotator cuff in her right shoulder. Emerald