

SPORTS

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Best Bet
MLB playoffs:
Cleveland at Seattle,
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Farewell, A-Rod, until next season

Dear A-Rod,
A year ago in this space, I begged and pleaded with you to stay in Seattle. I offered my spleen if it would convince you to sign for less money and stay with the team that gave you your start. I even said that the people of Seattle "needed" you.

How foolish I was.

The Mariners need you, A-Rod, like they need a hole in the head. Whales need a beach more than the Mariners need you. Seattle fans need you like they need another coffee-house chain.

Please don't come back.

Seattle's success has been well documented this season. Manager Lou Piniella, who guided the Reds to the World Championship in 1990, can finally manage the Mariners without a superstar ego to



Peter

Hockaday

Two minutes for crosschecking

trip him up. Under Piniella, Seattle has gotten back to grassroots, hold-your-thumbs-in-your-britches baseball. Hits win ballgames, not home runs.

But you know all this, A-Rod. Your team is the yin to Seattle's yang. The Mariners won 116 games, your Texas Rangers — who shelled out \$252 million for 10 years of pure A-Rod — lost 89 games. Seattle is thinking World Series in 2001. Texas is praying for 2010.

Oh A-Rod, A-Rod, A-Rod. Why did you have to take the money and run? You could have stayed and taken the ring. This season has proven to be about the little guys, not the big-salaried, big-headed baseball behemoths. Boone, Bagwell and Berkman, not A-Rod, you buffoon.

A quick word of advice, A-Rod, in case you're still holding out, waiting for the Mariners to lose in the playoffs so you can flash that million-dollar smile with your head held high: Don't cut that cake yet. The Mariners will win in the playoffs, mostly because of your absence.

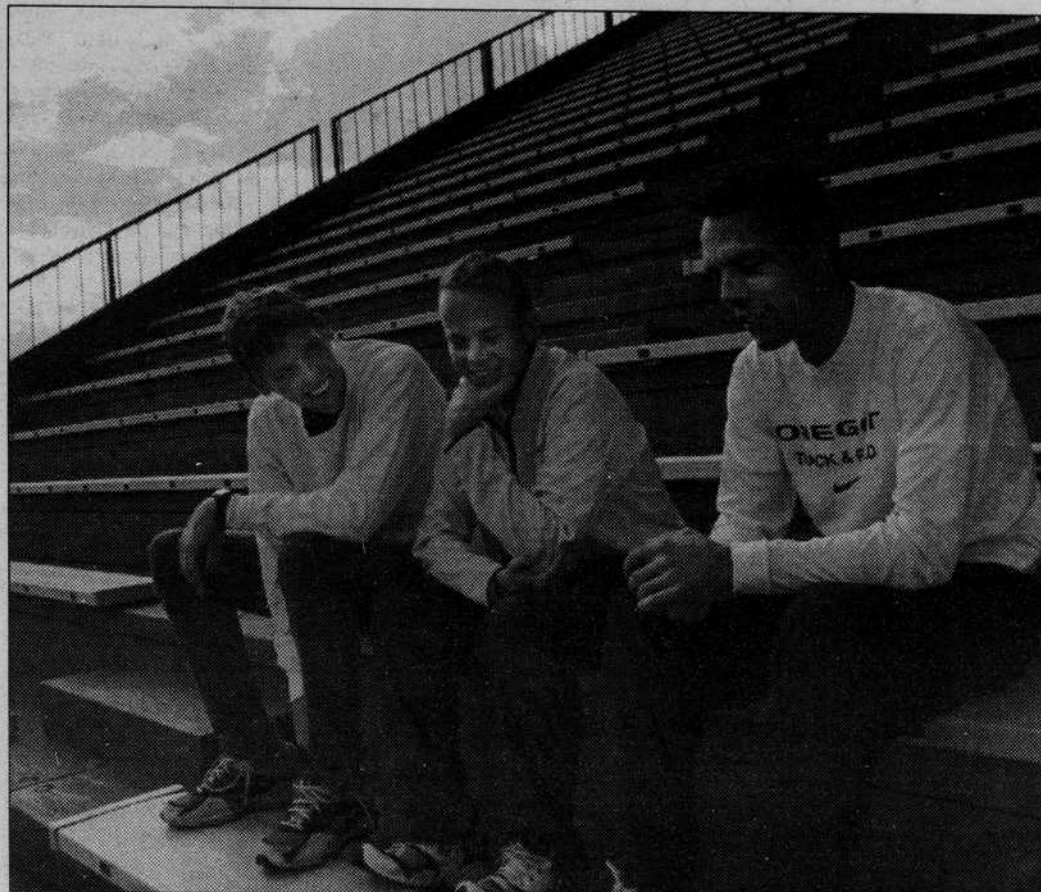
Seattle won 116 games the postseason way. Small plays. Good pitching. Clutch defense under pressure. Hits. Hits. Hits that lead to rallies. Rallies. Rallies. With you, A-Rod, it was always about the home runs. The big, SportsCenter-worthy plays at short-stop. It almost worked, too, as the M's came within a few big plays of beating the Yankees in the American League Championship Series last season.

But when the M's face the Yankees again — or Oakland, if the red-hot A's can knock off New York — Seattle won't need big plays. They will win on the Lou Piniella "116 games to a better team" plan. Seattle will use strong starting pitching and a formidable bullpen to pick up the slack if the starters don't perform. The M's will play so-called "small ball" on offense, by singling and doubling in runs, not swinging for the proverbial fences.

So please don't come back, A-Rod. The Mariners won without you, and they will win more without you.

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Well-rested Ducks ready to run again



Thomas Patterson Emerald

Junior All-American Jason Hartmann and freshmen Seth Pilkington and Ryan Andrus (left to right) relax Monday afternoon before their cross country practice. After a week off, the Ducks race again Saturday in South Carolina.

■ Junior Jason Hartmann and company are growing as a team, which should help them in Saturday's Furman Invitational

By Chris Cabot
Oregon Daily Emerald

Although the Ducks men's cross country squad has dropped to No. 18 in the nation, their ultimate goal is to crack the top 10.

After a weekend off from racing, Oregon will head to Greenville, S.C., for the Furman Invitational on Saturday, which is considered by many one of the top meets before the NCAA Championships.

The men's last race was in Minnesota at the Roy Griak Invitational where they ran to an 11th place finish. Individually, All-American Jason Hartmann placed 12th overall with a time of 24:31.7 in the 8K race. Hartmann called the Griak a "stepping stone for Pre-Nationals (Furman Invitational) and Regionals."



Fresh legs get one race under their belt

Despite running for the Wisconsin Badgers cross country team, redshirt freshman Ryan Andrus, before the meet

Turn to Cross country, page 10

A new year, a new attitude for UO tennis teams

■ With a combined-zero wins in conference play last year, the men's and women's tennis teams have much to prove as they begin a new season

By Peter Martini
for the Emerald

After finishing winless in the Pacific-10 Conference last season, the Oregon men's tennis team will use team experience and unity to compete in the conference this season.

"We need to build team unity and work on new techniques in a competitive atmosphere," junior Jason Menke said. "It's also important for us to gain valuable match experience."

The Ducks will begin their season at the San Diego All-Colleges tournament, beginning Friday.

"In order for us to win the San Diego tournament, it would take a high level of focus from every member of our team, a couple of breaks to go our way," Menke said. "Anything is possible."

Oregon is hoping to use this tournament as a jump-start into the fall season, which consists of two other tournaments — the ITA Regional in Santa Clara, Calif., and the Duck Classic in Eugene.

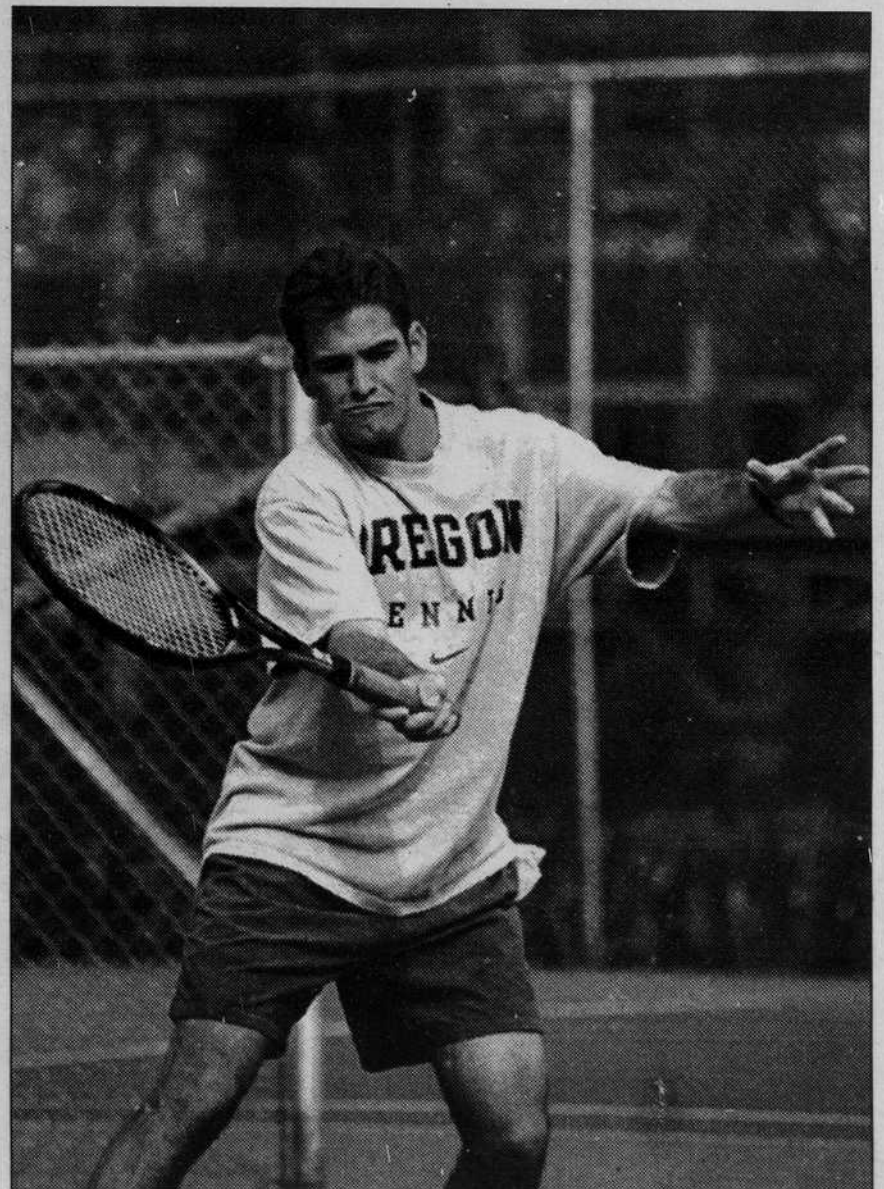
Menke said that while it's nice to win matches early, it's more important for the team to work hard and together as a team.

"We need to apply what our coaches have been beating into us during practice," Menke said. "If we do this, we may not get the results now, but they will come later on during the regular season, when it really matters. Also, I think building a strong sense of team unity is huge right now, and that will certainly come into effect during the regular season."

Finishing 19-12 last season, junior Oded Teig opens the 2001-02 season ranked No. 73 in the nation for the Ducks.

Head coach Chris Russell said he expects Stanford, UCLA, California, Washington and Southern California to finish in the top five in the Pac-10 this season.

Russell said his goal for the team is to finish in the middle of the Pac-10 and to be competitive in every match.



Emerald

Junior Oded Teig returns as the Ducks' biggest threat this season. Teig is ranked No. 73 in the nation as Oregon begins its first tournament in San Diego this weekend.

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