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Oregon Daily Emerald

SPORTS

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Big Mac's exit marks ending of special era

And Mark McGwire makes three.

Three of baseball's finest ambassadors to ever step between the lines announced their retirements during, or after, one of the sport's most successful seasons. Cal Ripken Jr. and Tony Gwynn stepped away from the game recently, following two decades as baseball immortals.

But now comes the news of McGwire's departure from the sport he loves, and although it was done without much fanfare, baseball will lose one of its

greatest symbols in the history of the game.

The year was 1998. Only four short years earlier, baseball was mired in the worst work stoppage in the history of professional athletics. Major League Baseball was losing money. But then along came McGwire and a fellow named Sammy Sosa.

Their historic home run chase proved to be the most exciting race in recent memory, and what would ultimately lead to baseball's continuing reign as "America's pastime," a name it was beginning to lose because of all the labor unrest.

McGwire's 70 and Sosa's 66 home runs should be remembered along with the New York Yankees' 27 World Series wins, Nolan Ryan's seven no-hitters and even Hank Aaron's 755 career home runs.

What those home runs did that season has never been done in the history of sport.

Another gentleman, if that's what you can call him, decided to abolish McGwire's single-season record this past year. Barry Bonds, even though he plays for my beloved San Francisco Giants, had no right breaking that record. When McGwire did it, he did it with pizzazz and a genuine love. When Bonds did it, he wouldn't even comment on it.

When McGwire did it, he didn't immediately run and ask to be traded or ask for a new contract because he wanted more money. When Bonds did it, the first thing that came to everyone's minds was whether it was going to take \$20 or \$21 million to sign the 37-year-old.

No, instead, McGwire returned home, happy in his accomplishment and knowing that his record probably helped save the game of baseball. What he did for the sport is immeasurable. Had he and Sosa not pushed each other, who knows where the game would be today. The owners and players still don't have a collective bargaining agreement, so is there going to be a 2002 season, at least on time?

Dan Patrick, best known for his creative catch phrases and enthusiasm on SportsCenter, recently wrote a column for the station's Web site. He discussed McGwire's retirement, raising a point that McGwire, unlike the greats, will

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Soccer ends season of improvement

■ The Ducks tally a school-record eight wins, but six seniors miss the postseason for the fourth time

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

One all-time Oregon soccer great. Two senior defenders anchoring a new defensive system. Three shutouts, four goals to beat Washington State, five season goals for the young freshman star. Six graduating seniors. And seven non-starters to see significant playing time. It all added up to eight wins.

The Oregon soccer team notched a school-record 8-8-2 ledger in 2001, and the season marked a turn-around in the program with the Ducks breaking school records for goals, shots, points and assists.

"It was nice for us to finish chances and get better results this season," Oregon head coach Bill Steffen said.

The Ducks started the season shakily. They beat Gonzaga in the opener but then tied Idaho and lost to Montana. After successive wins over San Jose State and Nevada, Oregon entered its matchup with then-No. 20 San Diego at 3-1-1 overall.

In their biggest win of the season, the Ducks toppled the Toreros, 3-0. Oregon entered a matchup with then-No. 5 Portland with high hopes, but lost 4-2. The Ducks suffered a similar fate when they played the top teams from the Pac-10, and limped into last weekend's matches with Washington and Washington State with a 1-6 conference record.

But the Ducks ended the season on a high note in Washington. They almost beat the Huskies, who scored a goal in the 88th minute to tie the game, and ripped into the Cougars for a 4-0 win.

"Those games in Washington redeemed (the players) for some times when they played that well but didn't win," Steffen said.

Oregon was led all season by a sextet of seniors who paced the team in points and attitude.

"We'll miss those seniors," Steffen said. "Not only for their roles on the field, but for their



Adam Amato Emerald

Chalise Baysa (2) was the most productive player in Oregon history. She broke all the Ducks' major offensive records.

roles off it as well. We're confident in them becoming successful people when they leave here."

The six Oregon seniors included forwards Chalise Baysa and Crystal David, midfielders Beth Bowler and Annie Murphy and defenders Starr Johnson and Angela Romero.

Baysa was the most point-productive member of the graduating seniors. She will be remembered as perhaps the best player ever to grace Papé Field, after she broke individual records for career goals, game-winning goals, points and shots.

And on Tuesday, the Pacific-10 Conference coaches selected Baysa to the All-Pac-10 Second Team for the third time in her career.

"She's been a lightning-rod for our team for

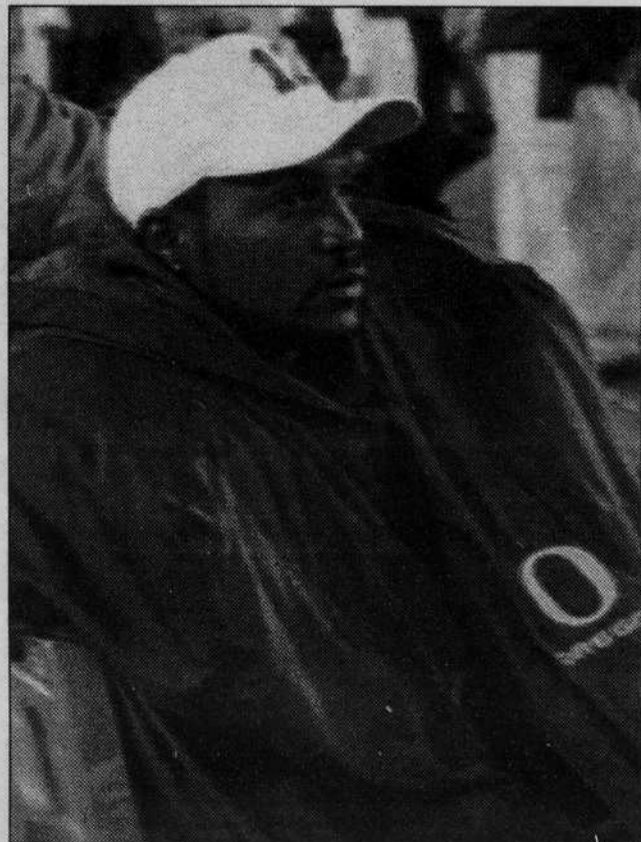
four years," Steffen said. "She's handled that role with class."

Romero and Johnson are the most unheralded members of the graduating class. This year, they took over and ran a new defensive scheme, allowing the Ducks to outscore their opponents, 32-28.

Murphy was the hero for one game, scoring twice to beat Arizona State. Bowler improved dramatically this season under the new scheme, and took 36 shots overall. That would have been a school record had Baysa not taken 69 this season.

Those totals illustrate the Ducks' different mentality this season. Shoot, and shoot often. That offensive mentality will be passed on,

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Thomas Patterson Emerald

Maurice Morris, seen here resting his hamstring during the Arizona State game, has three weeks to heal up before the Dec. 1 Civil War.

No. 7 Oregon to enjoy 'well-deserved break'

■ With plenty of time to rest, the Ducks expect to be ready for Oregon State on Dec. 1

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

Seventeen days, four hours, 12 minutes and 34 seconds — let the countdown begin.

Saturday's dizzying 21-20 victory over UCLA at the Rose Bowl was Oregon's last game until its Dec. 1 bout with Oregon State. And after eight consecutive games, dating back to Sept. 22, the Ducks are going to savor the time off.

"We needed a break," senior quarterback Joey Harrington said. "This is our bye week. We've been playing for eight straight weeks now and this is a well-deserved break. We're just going to relax and try to get healthy."

The Ducks — 9-1 overall and ranked seventh in both the coaches and media polls and, more importantly, fourth in the Bowl Championship Series — will use the extra time to heal some wounds and prepare for the nationally televised Civil War game at Autzen Stadium. Head coach Mike Bellotti gave the team two days off from practice this week and said the team will probably take four days off for the Thanksgiving break next week.

"It will be exactly like a bowl game," Bellotti said of the break. "We'll alternate between days off, weight training, practicing, recruiting. We've never had something like this for a regular season game."

Getting healthy will be their No. 1 goal before facing Oregon State, the team that ended the Ducks' hopes of a Rose Bowl with a 23-13 win in Corvallis last year.

"I've got a list of eight or nine

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