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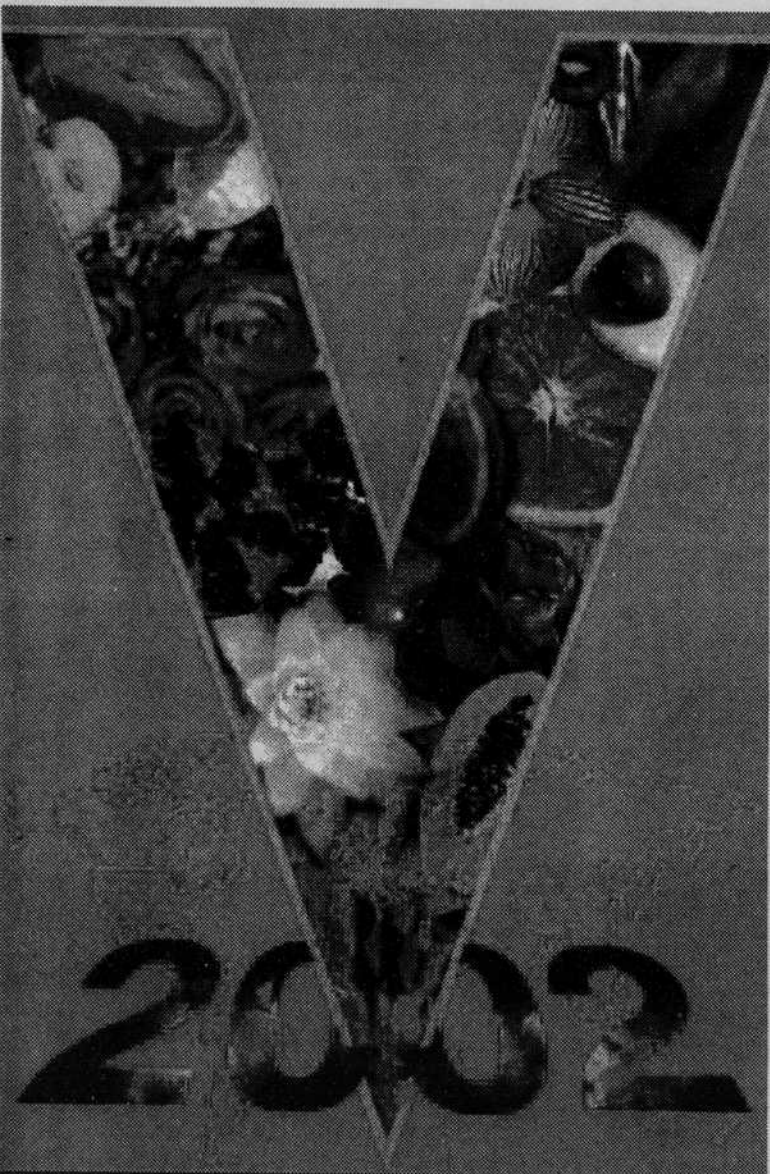
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**Sports brief**

**Oregon golfers head for Hawaii**

The Oregon men's golf team travels to Hawaii for the 12th Annual Taylor Made/Waikoloa Intercollegiate beginning today in Kona, Hawaii. The Ducks will send seniors Aaron Byers and Chris Heniff, juniors John Ellis and Chris Carnahan and sophomore Mike Sica into action on the 6,594-yard, par-72 Waikoloa Kings' Course.

Seven teams ranked among the

nation's top 25 are included in the 24-team field, highlighted by No. 1 Georgia Tech, No. 7 Texas Christian and No. 9 Southern California. Also in the field are No. 10 Fresno State, No. 14 Washington, No. 15 Oklahoma and No. 22 Pepperdine. Last week, Fresno State captured the team title at the Ping Arizona Intercollegiate.

"It's a pretty competitive field," said Oregon coach Steve Nosler, who is in his tenth season with the Ducks. "Last week Sica and Heniff pulled through for us. If the whole

team can play at that level, we can beat some of these teams we're competing against for NCAA regional seeding."

The same Duck squad finished tied for 11th last week at the Ping Arizona Intercollegiate in Tucson, Ariz. Ellis proved to be Oregon's top finisher, tying for 22nd, and Sica tied a career-low with a final round of 69. Sica finished the tournament tied for 29th with rounds of 72-75-69-216.

— from staff and wire reports

**Basketball**

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in the final month of this wild Pac-10 race.

While Oregon gets to rest on Valentine's Day and prepare for Saturday's Civil War, the rest of the eight teams will all be going head-to-head.

The series that will probably have the most impact on the standings this week are the Arizona schools visiting Los Angeles. The Wildcats are hot after doing what the Ducks couldn't — beating Stanford and Cal on the road — and then following that up by taking care of the Washington schools at home.

Thursday night, they'll need to be ready for a fired up UCLA team that is coming off a 58-57 loss at Villanova. The Bruins will be out to avenge their 96-86 defeat at Arizona on Jan. 18 in a game they once led by 20.

"There's no question that they really let this one here get away," Arizona head coach Lute Olson said. "I am sure they are excited about us coming in. They are very good when they want to be good."

**Sound familiar?**

A few days after losing at UCLA,

**Men's Pac-10 Standings**

	Pac-10	Overall
Arizona	10-3	17-6
Oregon	9-4	17-7
California	8-4	17-5
Stanford	8-4	15-6
USC	8-4	16-6
UCLA	8-4	16-7
Arizona State	6-7	13-9
Oregon State	3-10	10-13
Washington	2-11	8-15
Washington State	1-12	5-16

67-65, on Feb. 6, USC point guard Brandon Granville was still frustrated with his team's inability to win the close game.

The Trojans had been tied for first place with Oregon, but dropped down after losing at McArthur Court, 73-69, on Feb. 2. Also, they had lost at Cal on Jan. 24 in a 92-91 overtime thriller.

"I hope we don't dwell on it and we can get past it," Granville told The Los Angeles Times. "None of us have really been in this situation before, so close in three games. It's like, with those

games (as wins), we'd be 19-3 and top-10 in the nation.

"We're just concentrating on buckling down those last minutes of the game, really concentrate on putting all your energy and focus on coming out with the victory."

**Bracketology**

During their Tuesday morning teleconferences with reporters, the coaches of the top six teams in the Pac-10 standings all agreed that, at this time, all six teams deserve to be invited to the NCAA Tournament.

"If they chose the teams today, I'd feel very confident that those six teams would be in," Braun said.

ESPN.com's Joe Lunardi agreed, as all six teams showed up in his weekly "Bracketology," where he predicts the entire field of the Big Dance.

Despite losing twice over the weekend, the Ducks stayed a projected fifth seed, but moved to the bracket in Albuquerque, N.M.

Oregon is projected to play 12th-seed Mississippi State on March 14.

Selection Sunday is less than a month away.

E-mail assistant sports editor Jeff Smith at [jeffsmith@dailyemerald.com](mailto:jeffsmith@dailyemerald.com)

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**Hager**

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glowing lights, and hockey its bone-chilling ice — but baseball has it all.

To spend one day at the old field, soaking up the sun's rays and sipping a Coke while watching your favorite team play, well, is bliss.

What makes spring training even greater is that every major league team reports to Arizona and Florida with a full belief that it has the chance to win it all. Sure, the New York Yankees can rest assured that this will be the case come September, but at least everyone gets the feeling in February and March.

And yes, this means even the Cubs and the Red Sox.

But didn't it just feel like the Yankees and Arizona Diamondbacks were capping off one of the most historical World Series of all? It wasn't even 100 days ago that Curt Schilling and Randy Johnson were standing at the podium as co-MVP's.

That, however, really doesn't matter. Spring training is a magical place. Thirty-five-year-old stars mingle with newly drafted 19-year-olds for a month that is the closest thing to spiritual that professional sports can bring.

It is the time of the year where men can be boys.

Forget contracts, forget labor negotiations, even forget starting rotations. Spring training is the closest thing to purity on Earth. Baseball is paramount during spring training.

That's hard to find these days. Bring on the crackling sounds of baseball spikes on cement. Bring on the screams of the peanut vendor. Bring on the umpire calling out, "Play Ball."

I'm ready.

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