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Williamses' Wimbledon W's warrant a washout

Two of anything is one too many. Imagine two Shaquille O'Neals, a pair of Tiger Woodses or a duo of Greg Madduxes.

It's not pretty.

Sure, there's always the lofty goal of "raising the bar" while providing "good competition." But in reality, it's just a tad bit stale when a dominating force is duplicated.

Two of the same is bad for sport.

Point in question: The Williamses, who over the weekend won the Wimbledon doubles title and competed against each other in the singles championship.

Ask the most fluent fan about Serena and Venus

and they'll say something like, "Well, er, it's hard to compare the two because they're just so similar. Serena is more emotional and a bit stronger, but Venus has a quiet, well-strategized game."

And what does the nonchalant viewer know about the Williams sisters? How about, "They're twins, right?"

Wrong. But hey, they might as well be.

The success — moreover — the domination by the Williamses is the at the root of this evil. No one wants to see an identical replica of anything, especially in tennis.

In sports, we root for many things, one of which is the underdog. When the Williamses are playing, the underdog is the Pop-Tart you had for breakfast — it never had a chance. Furthermore, when the Williamses play each other or play as a team, it becomes routine, predictable and old. That's not how it's supposed to be.

The reason rivalries work is because of differences, not similarities.

Would the great '80s rivalries of Magic vs. Bird have taken place with two Johnsons instead of one? Magic would probably have full-blown AIDS instead of just HIV by now ... but that's a different story.

The Williamses are too much alike. They're 18 months apart in age. Serena is blonde. And, uh, yeah. That's about it.

For this whole Williamses thing to work, the two ex-Comptonians need a makeover.

During the next doubles match they play, Venus needs to "accidentally" bean her sister in the back while serving. In retaliation, Serena can then knock over a half-hearted serve to their opponents, which can then be fired fiercely back at Venus for a direct head shot. And so on.

After the match, Serena could say something along the lines of "Venus is just jealous of me because I'm better looking than she is. Oh, and I'm a better tennis player, too."

In response, Venus would look

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Ems defeat Indians in rubber game

Fluid hitting and strong pitching propel the Emeralds to a 13-7 victory over Spokane

By Brad Schmidt
Oregon Daily Emerald

Midway through the first inning Monday, the thermometer just above the right field fence read 80 degrees.

On the field, the Eugene Emeralds were even hotter.

The Ems (8-12) scored three runs on four hits in the first inning to set the tone of what went on to become a hitting exhibition, then rallied behind the strong right arm of pitcher David Pauley to dominate the rubber game of a five-game series with the Spokane Indians 13-7.

With the early offensive production, Pauley kept Spokane (7-14) at bay. Pauley (2-0) struck out the side in the first inning, struck out one in the second, two in the third and one more in the following inning to amass seven strikeouts after four. Pauley pitched six scoreless innings and gave up only two hits before being replaced in the seventh.

"He was good. He's been really good," Ems manager Jeff Gardner said of Pauley. "He was aggressive with his fastball."

The Ems opened the game with a double to left-center field by third baseman Rolando Agosto. Agosto then scored after the Indians' left fielder misplayed a pop fly while looking into the sun, letting the ball drop just in front of his glove. Two batters later, shortstop Khalil Greene sent a pitch past the Spokane third baseman, allowing second baseman Brian Burgamy to score. Right fielder Steve Baker knocked in the final run of the inning after sending a high bloop to shallow right field.

The Ems continued their hot hitting and got a little help from the Indians' pitching in the bottom of the fourth inning, when Baker and first baseman Jeff Brooks connected on back-to-back solo home runs. A total of three Indians pitchers then proceeded to hit two players with pitches and walk two more to allow another two runs to score



Adam Jones Emerald

John DiBetta (50) covers first base and awaits an oncoming throw to put out a Spokane runner during Friday's 8-3 loss.

uncontested.

In the fifth, Baker continued his sizzling performance, jacking another ball out of Civic Stadium for his second solo shot of the game and giving Eugene an 8-0 lead.

"Baseball is a crazy game," Baker said. "I was in a bit of a slump, but I got some good pitches that got left over the plate."

After falling behind in the count 0-2 in the sixth, Baker fouled-off three straight pitches. Refusing to go down and wait-

ing for a pitch to his liking, Baker finally connected and sent a sharp grounder past the Spokane third baseman for his fourth RBI of the game.

"It was nice for him," said Gardner, who watched Baker finish the game 4 for 5. "Hopefully this will get him going again. He could be a dominant offensive player."

The Emeralds finished the game with a total of 16 hits. Even more shocking, however, was the Ems' fielding, which yielded

only one error. Part of the superb defense can be attributed to the sure-handed Greene, who joined the team last week after agreeing to terms with the Emeralds.

Greene, the 13th overall draft pick by San Diego Padres, hit .348 in his first six games with the Ems amid being honored on the national level for his 2002 collegiate performance.

Greene will be named the winner of the prestigious Golden Spikes Award today. The

Turn to **Baseball**, page 6

Off-field problems take focus from game

By Mike Phillips
Knight Ridder Newspapers

MILWAUKEE — Baseball's All-Star Game landed in commissioner Bud Selig's hometown Monday, complete with fireworks and a home-run derby. But instead of celebrating the mid-summer classic, players spent the day defending it.

"I've been here an hour, and I think I've answered one baseball question," said Braves pitcher Tom Glavine, who, like all the All-Stars, had to spend an hour interview session with the media. "It would be nice to talk about the half season I had or my team had, but this is reality. This is part of the game."

"Any time you are in a labor year, you are going to have a dark cloud."

The cloud keeps getting darker. Baseball faces more problems today than at any time in recent years. Less than 48 hours after Arizona outfielder Luis Gonzalez hit his dramatic ninth-inning, World Series-winning single,

Selig and the owners voted to eliminate two franchises. The game has been unraveling since, and the All-Stars came to Milwaukee amid questions about a possible strike, steroid use and contraction.

"You just want the fans to enjoy the game. ... It's a shame this takes away from the game."

Luis Gonzalez
Arizona Diamondbacks

"Obviously, we know what's going on. There is a cloud hanging over this game," Gonzalez said. "The last two work stoppages have just magnified everything that's going on. No one wants another one."

"You just want the fans to enjoy the game. When we go on the field, we will enjoy this

game. It's a great time, and everyone in Milwaukee is excited. It's a shame this takes away from the game."

Cubs slugger Sammy Sosa and Giants home run king Barry Bonds received standing ovations when they were announced for the derby, but with all the unanswered questions about steroid use in the big leagues, fans wonder every time a long home run is hit. Sosa hit four homers over 500 feet, including a 524-foot shot. Sosa and Bonds deny using steroids, but without testing, the questions hang over every long ball they hit.

"It's gotten to the point that every time someone gets injured, someone says — 'He's on it.' And every time someone hits a home run, someone says — 'He's on it,'" said Yankees first baseman Jason Giambi.

The All-Star Game has never been played with so many questions about the

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