

Of men with sticks, pig bladders, abusive sports bars

My sports bar hates me. This all started because of that nagging human characteristic, that need to be included in something, that desire to go to a place where everybody knows your name. Sure, I wanted Cheers. Who doesn't? The bar I fell in love with even has a Cheers-like name: The Cheerful Tortoise.



Peter Hockaday
Two minutes for crosschecking

And even if they didn't exactly yell "Pete!" when I walked in the door ... well, we'll get to that later. I'll start this story from

the beginning. The Tortoise was the perfect bar for me. The place has more televisions than a Circuit City. And they play sports. And I'm a sports guy. It's not a complicated relationship. I started going in on Sundays, soaking up the Sunday Ticket package, engulfing myself in football games. The love affair began.

I started going Saturdays for college football and Oregon away games. Then Mondays for Al Michaels and Dennis Miller. Then Thursdays for the dollar-beer specials. I took a friend there for his 21er, dropping a ton of money as a small thank you for the months of good, Cheerful times.

I was like Al Pacino in Scarface. I was riding high, living the life. But it wouldn't be long until I was fighting

off the feds with a machine gun, sniffing coke as the people I once trusted tried to take me out like a prom date.

Wait, where was I going with this? Back up.

It was a hard, cold March night when Darren died, and those who knew him will always hold the Tortoise responsible. It was a Thursday, and word about the drink special had started to get out. So the bar had set up a bouncer at the door and a new cover charge. I brought my friend Darren Rhode. The bouncer killed him.

Darren was possibly, maybe, not real. He might have been possibly, maybe, my alter ego. My fake identification alter ego. But that doesn't give anyone the right to just take poor Darren and put him in their back pocket, does it? I was faced with a harsh reality.

Three months until my 21st birthday, three months without bars. Three months without hope, without friends, without sunshine. It was a dark period.

But then, hope. A birthday. A triumphant return to the Cheerful Tortoise, preseason football games and baseball pennant races.

And here's where the bar starts to mistreat me. Some of my favorite waiters and waitresses leave. Not a big deal, like taking my fake — not something that they can necessarily control.

Then they shrink the size of the dollar-beer cups. Advertise a dollar-pitcher special and run out by 7:30 p.m. Run out of pizza cheese on the same night. Have a movie — "Deuce Bigalow, Male Gigolo." I'm not even kidding — on the big screen during an important Giants-Padres game. The Beaver game on all three big

screens during the 49ers-Giants game, the monumental opening game of the NFL season. I could go on. Little things. A small punch in the arm here and there. A knee to the gut, metaphorically of course.

And yet, and yet... It is, after all, a sports bar. The only true sports bar within walking distance of campus. And that's why I'll probably keep going there. And I'll probably follow the same destructive pattern in a new town after college, a new setting for the same old story.

For the sportsaholics, this is our curse. We will go to many lengths — even to the point of personal peril — to cheer, jeer, and generally enjoy our men with sticks and pig bladders. Such is the life of a sports nut.

Contact the sports editor at peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com.

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Pac-10

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Baylor, they went directly from pigeonholed to holy ... whatever.

The point is, nobody knows how Cal will perform against Washington on Saturday. The Bears haven't beaten the Huskies since 1976, a streak that includes 19 straight losses. But the Bears weren't supposed to win a game this season, never mind topple Michigan State last month.

Washington hasn't lost at Husky Stadium in 17 tries. But when a team, Cal, needs one more victory to equal its win total from the last two seasons combined, you never know what could happen.

Farming for some health

It looks like Clarence Farmer

shouldn't have played those last couple minutes.

Farmer, the Arizona running back who finished second in the Pac-10 last season with 111.7 yards per game last season, tweaked his knee in the closing minutes of the Wildcats' 14-9 victory over North Texas and will likely sit out Saturday's game against Oregon.

"At the beginning of the year, everyone was talking about a big showdown between Onterrio Smith and Clarence, which won't take place," Arizona head coach John Mackovic said in a press conference Monday.

The injury is not the first to hit the Wildcats this season. Star cornerback Michael Jolivet is out indefinitely with a knee injury. Linebacker Lance Briggs and defensive tackle Brad Brittain both went down against North Texas. In all, Arizona starters have missed 15 games due

to injury. Somehow, the Wildcats are entering the Pac-10 season at 4-1, despite their injuries.

Rumble this Saturday Saturday Saturday

Northwest meets southwest in two key Pac-10 games this week: UCLA takes on Oregon State and USC squares off against Washington State.

The Trojan defense held the Beaver offense scoreless last week, in Derek Anderson's first hiccup as a Beaver starter. But this week, the USC "D" will face off with the much more formidable Jason Gesser-led Cougars. Youth one week, experience the next for the Trojans, and the difference could show up in the win/loss column.

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2:00-2:50					
4:00-4:50					
5:00-5:50	Intermed. Step Jessica	Kickbox Aerobics Michie	Body Sculpt Megan	Kickbox Aerobics Michie	
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