

SPORTS

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Best bet
NBA opening night:
San Antonio at Los Angeles
7:30 p.m., TNT

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Taking advice from the coach, getting off couch

Comfort is overrated.

Settling is for the lighthearted.

It's the single worst thing to do in any sport and in life.
"Don't settle."

My high school cross country coach would tell me those two words before every single race I ever ran.

The man taught me almost all I know when it comes to sports. He taught me for six years of my adolescence and although I haven't been under his supervision for almost three years, he is always still 'coach.'

Those two simple words can be related to anything. In a race, if you settle, you get caught. Plain and simple.

Settling means becoming comfortable with a certain position and only being satisfied with the present. It is giving up on the chance to be great and only allowing for simply average performance.

Settling is too easy. It's easy to get caught. To be satisfied with the present is not hard, because you don't have to worry about pushing a little bit more.

We have all been prisoners of it at one time or another. Sometimes there is just no avoiding it. And for those who seem to never get comfortable, they are the victims of greatness.

Could the Anaheim Angels settle for a loss in Game 6, after being down 5-0 in the seventh inning with the Giants on the verge of a World Championship? Sure. But that would have been too easy.

The Rally Monkey emerged and the Angels found their magic. They were not about to watch their first World Series Championship opportunity in 42 years stare them down without a fight.

And look at them now. They are World Champions. They found greatness in small places and didn't settle for anything less. Who would have thought a 24-year-old who moved up from the minors at the beginning of the season — John Lackey — would win Game 7 of the World Series? I didn't.

Comfort and greatness do not belong together. They just don't go along in the same sentence. And to settle is to take second place, or worse.

Will Emmitt Smith settle now that he has the NFL career rushing record? No, he'll probably just utter a sigh of relief. My guess is he will rush one more season, if not two, and will hit 18,000 yards.

Could the Oregon football team settle for another Pacific-10 Conference loss after two in a row and thinking that the perfect season is over? Yes. Will they? Of course not.

These are examples of greatness. Examples of never settling for anything less than the best.

Settling doesn't relate only to sports, but is a matter of everyday life. Relaxing is great and comfort every now and then does no harm. But if you settle for too long, you will miss out.

Accepting a current situation in life is simply a cop out. I don't get it. It doesn't make sense to me. It is simply an act of the weak at heart.

We can always become better than we are. Chances for greatness arrive at our doorstep everyday. Do you open the door to accept the challenge? Or do you settle down in the couch and get comfortable?

Settling relates to the sport you play, to the grades you get, to the relationship you are in and to the life you live. It is too easy to settle for average when anyone has the chance to be great.

People like Emmitt Smith, John Lackey, Troy Glaus, Walter Payton and the Oregon Ducks all tested greatness. They got off the couch and opened that door and took the challenge to become what they are.

It relates to us all. For me, I have taken my warm-ups off and am making sure the laces on my spikes are tight as coach comes over to remind of those two little words. I am reminded that I have to push the entire way to the finish line.

If you remember just one thing, remember this.

Don't settle.



Jesse Thomas
Go the distance

Pac-10 race gets top heavy

Five Pac-10 teams are within two games of first place, but history shows it's hard to win a championship with two losses

Pac-10 Notes

Adam Jude
Senior Sports Reporter

Nothing is ever guaranteed in the Pacific-10 Conference, except when it comes to the meaning of two losses.

The last time a team with two losses won the conference crown was 1993, when UCLA, Arizona and USC each went 6-2 in the Pac-10. In fact, only four times since 1958 has a team with a pair of losses shared the conference title.

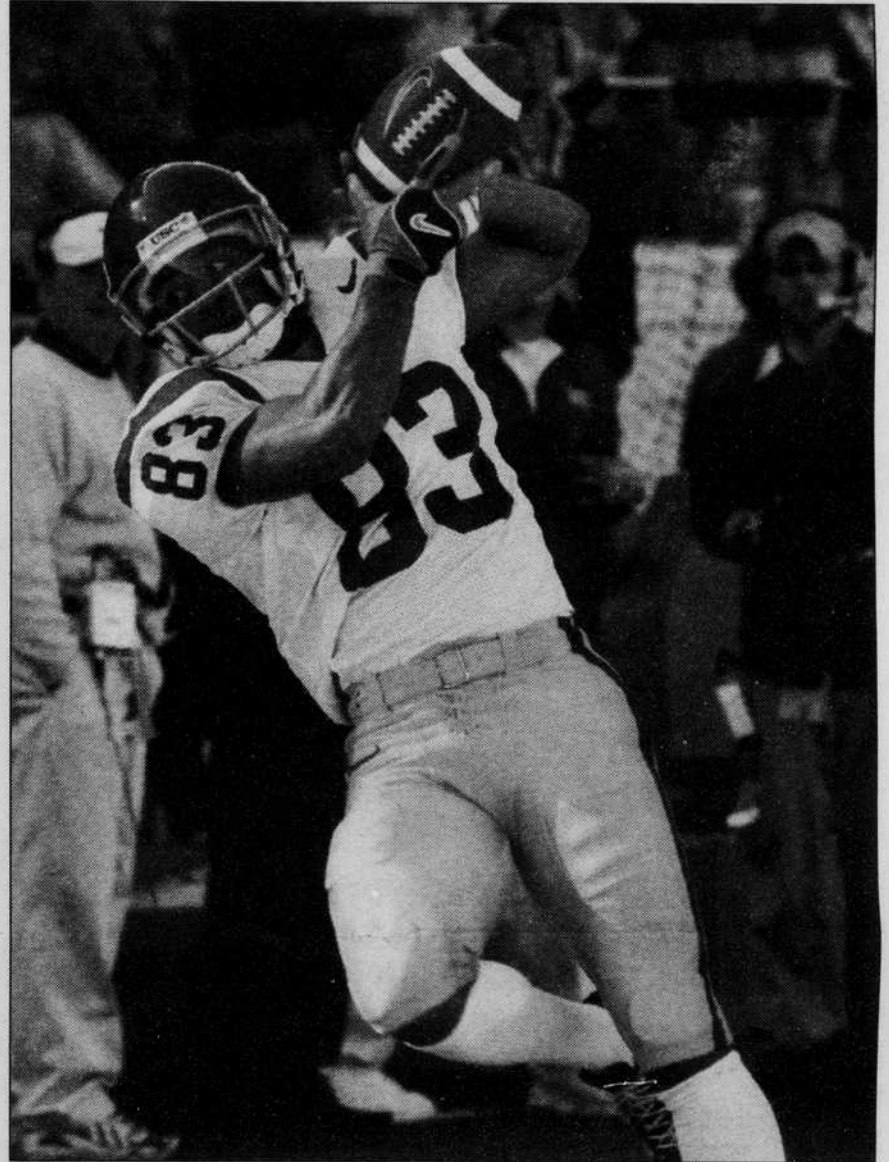
The odds, then, are stacked heavily against the Ducks (6-2 overall, 2-2 Pac-10), who lost their second straight game Saturday for the first time since 1999.

With conference play half completed, Washington State (7-1, 4-0) and Arizona State (7-2, 4-0) are in the driver's seat for the Rose Bowl. USC (6-2, 4-1) is behind.

"It's a special year already," WSU head coach Mike Price told The Seattle Times. "It's a special team, a special year, and I'm proud and honored to be on the sidelines with this football team."

The No. 8 Cougars would like to make it even more special with a trip to the Rose Bowl. And an advantageous schedule could help make that happen.

When the teams meet in Pullman, Wash., this week, either Washington State or Arizona State will be knocked off the undefeated pedestal. The Cougars then host Oregon the following weekend, Washington on Nov. 23 and round out the regular season at the Rose Bowl against UCLA.



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

USC's Kareem Kelly and the Trojans are third in the close Pac-10 conference race.

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Everybody's gone surfin' ...surfin' U of O



Courtesy Oregon Club Surfing

An unidentified surfer hits the waves on the Oregon coast.

Despite cold water and less-than-perfect conditions, surfing in Oregon is alive

Scott Archer

Freelance Sports Reporter

Forty-seven degree water is cold. The Oregon coasts ocean waves are cold. Oregon itself can be cold.

Get over it and get out in the water — that's the idea that coach Paul Griffes is trying to convey about the Oregon club sports surfing team.

"The quality of surf in Oregon is excellent," Griffes said.

Griffes is crazy enough about surfing that he's trying to revive the once-defunct surfing team and is pitching the idea to people that the sport is alive and well in Oregon. Griffes is another California transplant attending Oregon, and like other Californians, surfing is one passion that

just won't die in him.

"I started surfing 11 years ago," Griffes said. "I just love it. I did it very regularly when I was in northern California." Staying true to form, Griffes is again back at the beach once or twice every week perfecting a craft in not-so-picture-perfect conditions.

"It's very cold," Griffes said. "The temperature ranges from freezing cold to very cold. I go online, look at the forecast to figure out the conditions, the swells and the wind factor."

Taking Griffes seriously can be hard at first. Surfing in Oregon?

"There are lots of good places to surf in Oregon," Griffes said. "Locally, it's often possible to find good waves right out in Florence."

"We go all over the place," Griffes said. "With surfing, there are many variables to consider when choosing

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Club Sports Tuesday