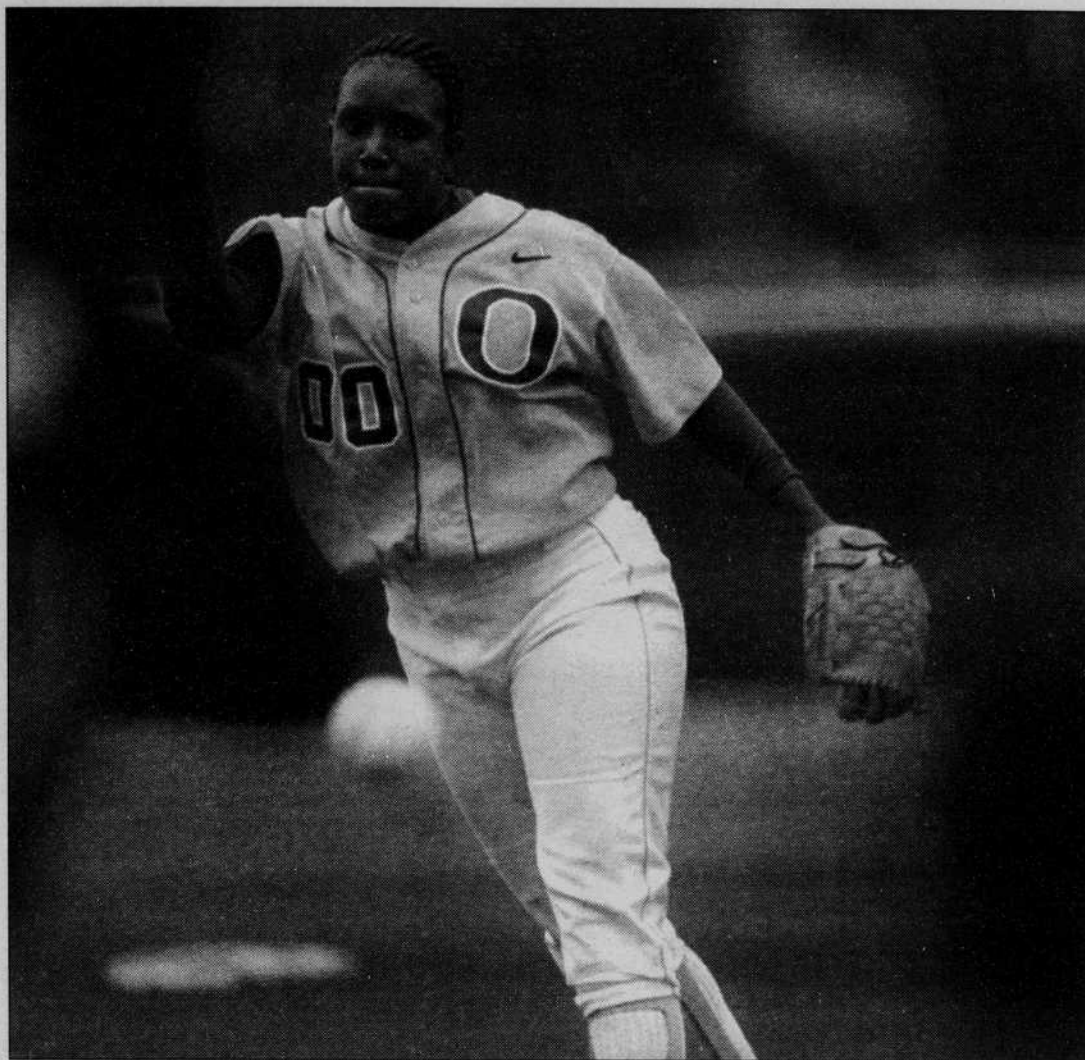


## SPORTS

Best bet  
MLB: Seattle at Oakland  
7 p.m., Fox Sports

Tuesday, April 1, 2003



Adam Amato Emerald

Junior pitcher Anissa Meashintubby and the Ducks will square off with Portland State in two games this afternoon.

## Club cyclists dodge rain in spring's races

The Oregon Club Cycling team opened its season in the Corvallis mud and Eugene cold during break

**Jon Roetman**  
Freelance Sports Reporter

The Oregon Club Cycling team got its collegiate racing season underway during the break, when the Ducks were hoping for sunny weather.

Instead, they were greeted with a wet and muddy season opener March 22 in Corvallis as the Pacific Northwest weather was in classic form.

The Oregon State University Spring Classic Road Race featured a three-mile stretch of dirt road, which was transformed from a harmless dust creator into a slippery mud bath, placing more strain on cyclists.

"It was a tough road race," senior student coordinator Brad Ritter said. "Everyone was covered in mud after the race."

Despite the rough conditions, the Ducks had four cyclists place in the top 15 in their respective divisions. Alex Rock finished fifth in the men's "A" division. Derek Darves came in sixth for the Ducks in the men's "B" division, while Ritter finished seventh and Ben Hurley 12th.

While most people would think of stormy weather as a reason to keep the bike in the garage, the Ducks know a little mud goes along with all the work required to stay competitive in the world of collegiate cycling.

The Ducks' cycling season begins long before races start. In the offseason, cyclists set goals, including times they want to achieve or certain races they want or need to win. Of course, every time a cyclist enters a race, he or she would like to win, but there are times during the year when a certain division is lacking in points and a race really needs to be won.

Being in good enough shape to achieve those goals is addressed with specialized weight training and plenty of riding. Cyclists start with 18 to 20 hours per week of long-distance endurance training to build stamina. During the season, a cyclist will shift to high-intensity training, consisting of higher speeds

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**Club Sports  
Tuesday**

## Duck doesn't duck as Swoop swings

The Oregon and Utah mascots tussle at halftime of the Ducks' loss to the Utes in the NCAA Tournament

### Nashville notes

**Peter Hockaday**  
Sports Editor

Phil Knight offered a kind word after the game. Joey Harrington passed a note expressing his support. Athletic Director Bill Moos patted him on the back.

An Oregon player? Nope. All this was heaped on Mal Williams, also known as The Duck.

In one of the most bizarre events on a bizarre afternoon in Nashville, Williams — who has been the main man in the Duck suit for four years — got in a mini-fight with Swoop, the Utah mascot, at halftime of Oregon's first-round loss March 21. CBS replayed the incident over and over, and of course it made Sportscenter the night of the game.

Williams said he was just trying to protect the Duck cheerleaders.

"My main concern was that (the cheerleaders) had worked so hard on this dance, and it turned out to be, because we lost, the last game for a lot of those girls," Williams said. "I thought that was totally disrespectful. Everything is scripted, and so there was a scripted halftime, and he did not stay off the floor, so I had to react to that."

Oregon was scheduled to take the floor first for their halftime routine. But when the dancers started, Swoop, on stilts for his halftime performance, came out of a tunnel on the other end of the floor. Williams

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## Softball takes on 'dangerous' PSU

No. 19 Oregon takes a break from conference play to match up with Portland State this afternoon in a two-night doubleheader

### Softball

**Mindi Rice**  
Sports Reporter

After a disappointing weekend trip to Arizona, the No. 19 softball team heads north for a doubleheader against Portland State that begins at 4 p.m. today.

The Ducks (17-9 overall, 1-3 Pacific-10 Conference) take a break from Pac-10 play after losing 2-0 to No. 13 Arizona State on Friday and then losing 4-1 and 8-0 to No. 2 Arizona on Saturday and Sunday.

Portland State (8-14 overall) is coming off a sweep of Seattle University in a home doubleheader. The Vikings took eight innings to beat the Red Hawks 3-2 in the first game and won the second game 7-3.

The Vikings won only one game of five in each of their first two preseason tournaments, then split their four games in the Tulsa Invitational. Since then, Portland State has played four straight doubleheaders, sweeping two and being swept in the other two.

"They're a dangerous team, well coached, talented," head coach Kathy Arendsen said

of PSU. "We're hitting them between Pac-10 series, so there's a very legitimate chance that we're going to let down somehow and this is a team we can't do that with."

"We have a win against Oregon State. If we can beat Portland State in this series then at least we're ahead in the state championship. They're a quality non-conference team."

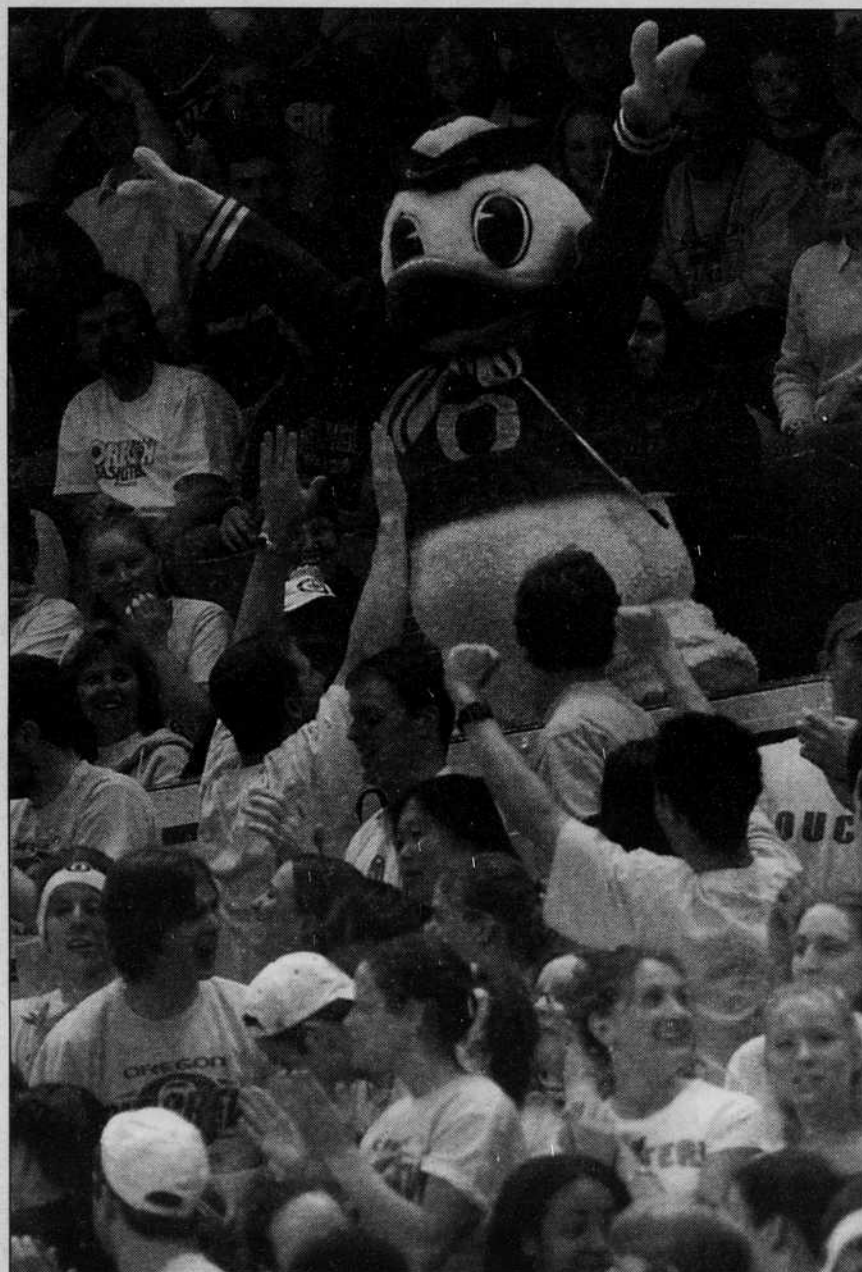
The Ducks had a tough weekend with the Arizona trip. Arizona State is the sixth-ranked team in the conference while Arizona is one of three Pac-10 teams — along with UCLA and Washington — in a close battle for first place nationally.

"Playing on the road in the Pac-10 is so difficult," Arendsen said. "We'll have to play better defense and we've got to hit the ball. If we're only going to get eight hits in three games we're not going to be very successful. If we can only score one run in three games, I can guarantee we won't be successful."

"We just have to build on the experiences we had this weekend."

Friday's game was a pitcher's duel through four innings before an Oregon error let Arizona State score its two runs. Freshman pitcher Amy Harris struck out seven batters in six innings pitched.

"I thought we could have won Friday night," Arendsen said. "We put ourselves into a possibility to win Saturday and we just didn't play well (Sunday)."

Turn to **Softball**, page 12

Adam Amato Emerald

The Duck, seen here at Oregon's last home game, wasn't celebrating against Utah in Nashville.