

SPORTS

Best bet

NBA: Portland at Houston
5:30 p.m., KEVUSports Editor:
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Economic principles illuminate Brand plan

"The discipline of colleges and universities is in general contrived, not for the benefit of the students, but for the interest, or more properly speaking, for the ease of the masters."

— Adam Smith,
"The Wealth of Nations"

The great economist Adam Smith surely wasn't speaking of the college athlete when he wrote that sentence in 1776.

But as Syracuse and Kansas battled down to the wire for the NCAA title Monday night, as Cingular Wireless and Coca-Cola rang little cash-register bells for the NCAA during breaks in the action, the much larger issue of academic integrity loomed over March Madness.

And the issue is all economics, baby.

I know, I know. You slept through econ and filled out all "C"s on the midterm scantron. And now you're wondering what the Nash Equilibrium and Adam Smith have to do with basketball.

Here it is: Adam Smith would hate the NCAA for its convoluted view of economics. College athletes are the bearded ladies at the carnival, used for their entertainment value and nothing else.

They're not paid with the green stuff so, supposedly, athletes receive an education as comeuppance for their role in The Show.

Yeah, right.

According to NCAA numbers, 60 percent of all students who entered universities in 1995-96 graduated within six years. But only 34 percent of men's basketball players graduated during that span, and 50 percent of football players graduated.

Those numbers are skewered like a shish kebab. When athletes transfer or go pro early, they're counted against a school's graduation rate. So when schools like Oklahoma have a zero percent graduation rate for their men's basketball programs, it could mean that of a three-member recruiting class, one player went pro and two transferred.

But in economics you learn numbers don't lie, and the numbers are, across the nation, lower than Christina Aguilera's neckline.

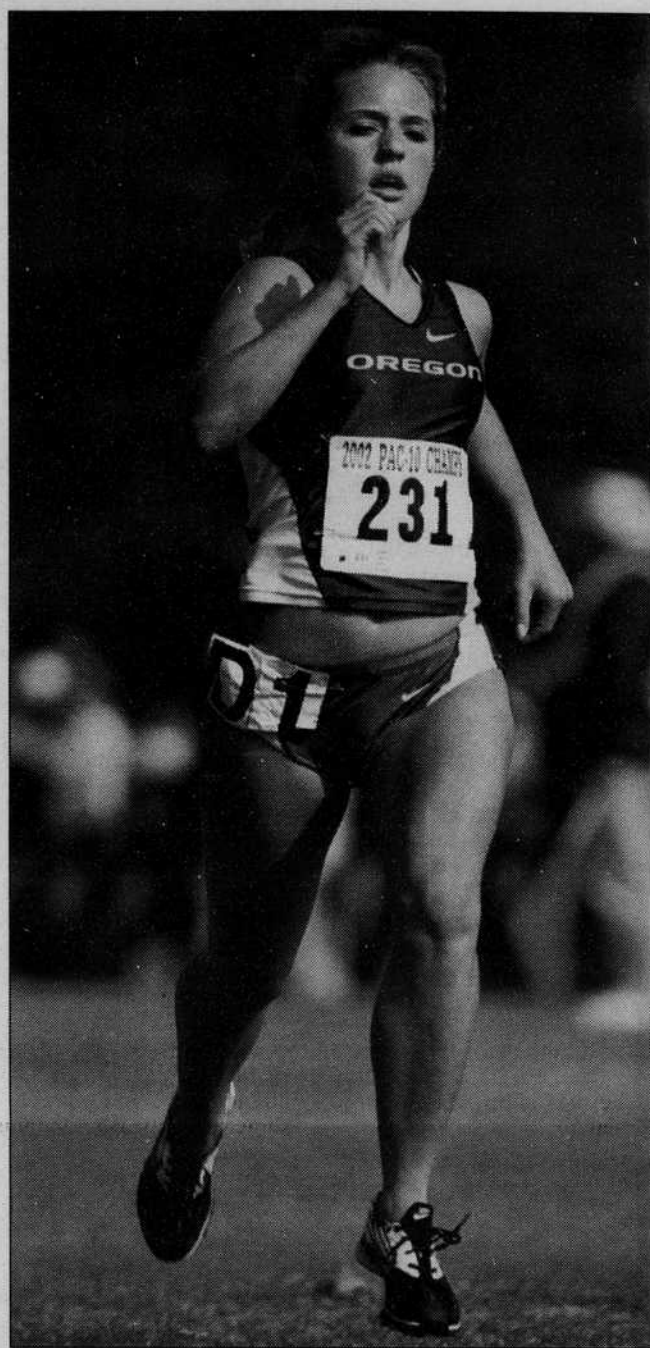
So here comes former Oregon and current NCAA President Myles Brand to the rescue. Brand wants to put the student back in student-athlete. For this, some call him looney tunes. I call him Spartacus.

The first-year president has proposed widespread academic reforms that will sweep across the plains of this nation, through the cities and right to the top of every ivy-covered clock tower at every university. His proposals call for hammering schools that don't meet rigid academic standards, forcing them to skip revenue-raking postseason events or losing scholarships, the blood pumping through a team's veins.

Turn to **Hockaday**, page 14



Peter Hockaday
Two minutes for crosschecking



Geoff Thurner Oregon Media Services

Nicole Feest had success in cross country and is now starring in track.

Freshmen make early track impact

Oregon has a class of 10 freshmen and three, especially, setting the precedent for the future of Duck track and field

Women's track

Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

Amidst the veteran leadership and dominance, the Oregon women's track and field team has some new freshman in the ranks including Nicole Feest, Whitney Gum and Sara Schaaf.

Among the 10 baby Ducks entering the squad, Feest is considered the team's top distance-running recruit for 2003. Feest was the top newcomer in cross country, scoring in three meets and running in six of seven races.

The Lombard, Ill., native found instant success on the trails as she won the Beaver Classic and finished 26th in the Willamette Invite.

"It's prepared my physically and allowed my eyes to see what Division I is like," Feest said of her cross country experiences.

Feest owns a personal best of 10 minutes, 59 seconds in the 3,200-meters, ran in her senior year. She is expected to focus primarily on the 5,000 while also running the 1,500.

"She's really enthusiastic, aggressive and not afraid to run a lot of miles," Oregon head coach Tom Heinonen said. "It's been fun and she's running well."

Gum is Oregon's top addition in the shot put and discus and is expected to add even more depth to the already-deep throwing squad.

The Billings, Mont., native was state champion her senior year

in 2002 in the shot put and discus and owns personal bests of 44 feet, 5 inches and 126-7 in the respective events.

Gum was a team captain in track and field, a National Honor Society member and earned valedictorian honors at graduation. Her experiences at Oregon have been exciting, yet also frustrating as she hasn't thrown her high school marks thus far.

"I have got close with the throwers and it's been great," Gum said. "They are my mentors and also my friends. I wanted to come out and be stronger but it is a learning experience."

Schaaf is expected to make an impact this year in the sprints as she redshirted the 2001-02 season recovering from a femur stress fracture at the end of the cross country season.

In her first year, Schaaf focused primarily in the distances and it has been a challenge for her to transfer to the shorter distances.

"Last year was completely on the other end of the spectrum," Schaaf said. "It's been difficult because I am now with the sprints but I am really enjoying myself."

The Klamath Falls native is a former Oregon 4A state champion in the 800 and 400. Schaaf won the 800 in 2001 and the 400 in 2000 and owns personal bests of 2:12 and 55.73 in both events.

She did see some action late last season in the Oregon Invitational and Oregon Twilight placing 13th and sixth, respectively, in the 800.

Schaaf is expected to focus on the 400, 800 and 4x400 relay but could potentially move up and down the distance spectrum as needed.

Turn to **Track**, page 14

Golfers fourth after two California rounds

Senior Chris Carnahan sits tied for eighth overall at the 57th annual Western Intercollegiate in Santa Cruz, Calif.

Men's golf

Scott Archer
Freelance Sports Reporter

With a possible bid to the NCAA West Regionals on the line in the next four Duck tournaments, the Oregon men's golf season seems to be coming together at the right moment.

For the first time in the spring portion of its 2002-03 season, the Ducks are in position to have a top-five finish. Currently, Oregon is tied with Pacific for fourth overall, after a 578 combined first and second round score.

The 57th annual Western Intercollegiate tournament is being hosted by the San Jose State Spartans at the 6,445-yard, par-70 Pasatiempo Golf Course in Santa Cruz, Calif.

The Ducks were led on Monday by senior Chris Carnahan, who currently is in a five-way tie for eighth place after shooting a 72 in the first round, followed by a two-over-par second round. Junior Mike Sica is currently tied for 16th overall at four-over-par, but shot a second round even par. Oregon is usually led by senior John Ellis, who shot an opening-round one-under-par 69, followed up with a seven-over-par 77 in the second round.

Redshirt freshman Kyle Johnson, who is making his first tournament appearance with varsity since the Oct. 7-8 Club Grove Intercollegiate, concluded the first and second rounds tied for 50th overall after shooting an 11-over 151. Johnson was added to the roster after finishing eighth overall two weeks ago in the Oregon Duck Invitational. Johnson competed as an independent, earning a spot on Oregon's five-man varsity squad. Five Duck varsity members compete at a time.

Freshman Gregg LaVoie rounds out the scoring for the Ducks, currently tied at 57th overall after scoring a 12-over 152.

Leading the tournament is No. 10 UCLA, which currently holds a 13-stroke lead over current second place leader UC-Irvine, after shooting a team score three-over-par 563. Texas El Paso sits in third place, one stroke behind UC-Irvine.

The Ducks are currently two strokes behind UC-Irvine for second place, as UCLA has distanced themselves from the rest of the field.



Emerald

John Ellis dropped with a second-round 77 at Oregon's tournament.

Steve Conway of UCLA carded a 72 and 67 to pace the tournament-leading Bruins. However, Conway is currently tied with Texas El Paso's Dan Swanson at one-under-par 139. All 13 competitors that are in the top-10 individually are only three strokes behind leaders Conway and Swanson.

Oregon finished last year's tournament sixth overall and looks to keep its streak of three consecutive top-six finishes at this venue alive today. The final begins at 8 a.m.

Scott Archer is a freelance writer for the Emerald.