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SPORTS

Best bet
English Premiership:
Manchester United at Newcastle
Noon, Fox Sports

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Ducks or Mariners? Nobody could tell

The crack of the bat. The smack of the ball into a waiting glove. The sun shining down on fans dispersed through the stands.

All these things are reminiscent of an afternoon game in a major league park.

For 327 fans at Howe Field, Saturday afternoon held all the familiar promise of a day well spent at Safeco Field — minus 46,000 fans, Edgar Martinez and overpriced sushi.

With the Pacific-10 Conference being the national powerhouse it is — three teams lead the conference and country — a game between any two of these eight teams can range from blowout to battle.

After being rocked 9-0 by No. 3 Washington on Friday, the No. 20 Ducks had a pregame pep talk from men's basketball head coach Ernie Kent on Saturday.

Combined with the one-day revisit of an old Oregon uniform — a uniform that had its start in 2000, the last time Oregon finished the season about .500 — the tracks were laid out for a good battle.

Amy Harris, a Freddy Garcia in her own right, was strong in the top of the first inning. The freshman struck out one batter and got the first and third batters to hit into outs.

The next inning and a half went much the same: The Ducks sent 10 batters to the plate but couldn't pick up a run, while Harris struck out another batter.

In the top of the third, Harris gave up a single and a double — with the runner scoring — but struck out two batters as Oregon escaped the inning.

Sophomore Erin Goodell, a Carlos Guillen-esque middle infielder, led off the bottom of the third with a walk. Freshman Beth Boskovich followed with a perfect Ichiro-like sacrifice bunt.

After hearing about senior Andrea Vidlund's stellar Wednesday against Portland State — Vidlund had an impressive old school Alex Rodriguez-like day with two home runs — the Bruins wanted no chance for her to school them. Vidlund was granted an intentional base on balls.

Next up was senior Alyssa Laux. Laux pulled a Bret Boone on her second pitch, sending her second home run of the season over the fence in right center field for a three-run shot.

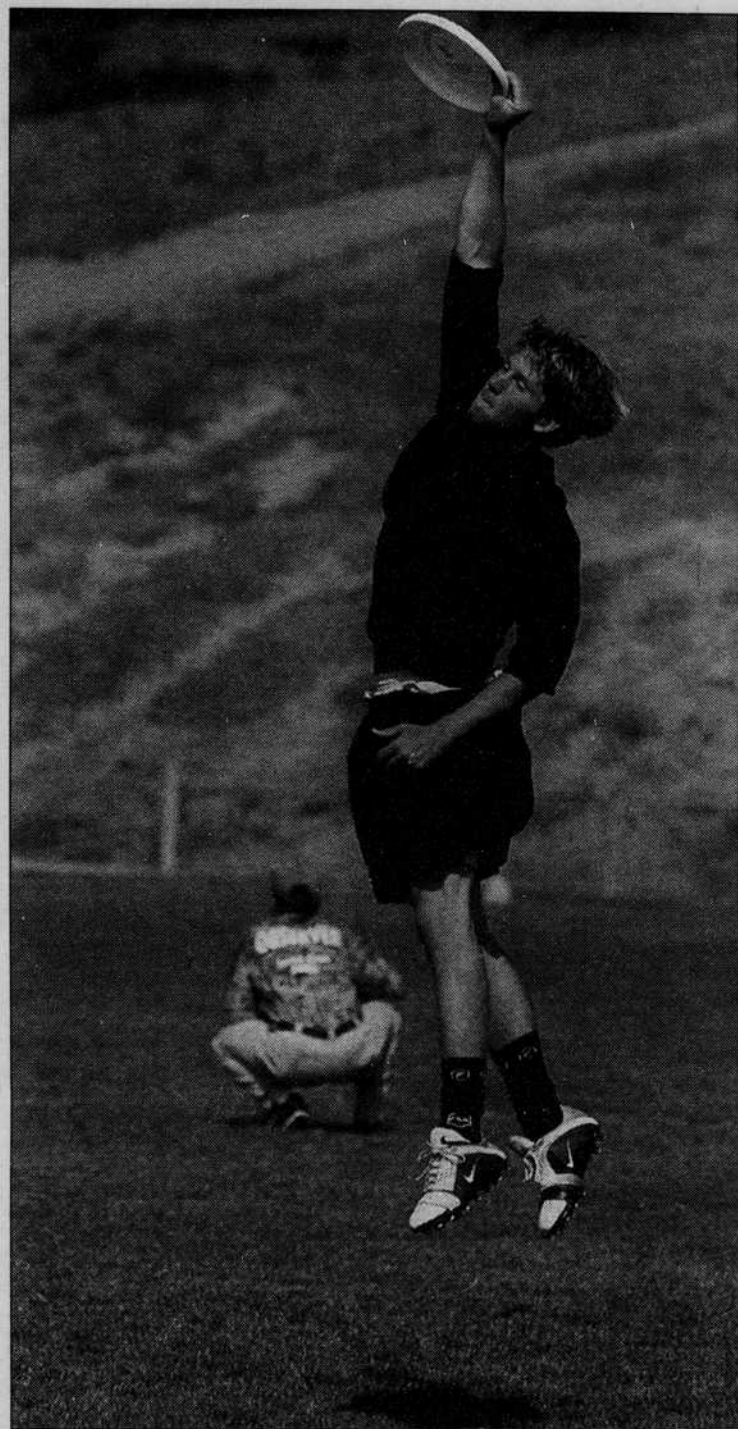
No. 2 UCLA took a turn in the fourth, but Harris threw only nine pitches as the Bruins hit into three outs.

In the bottom of the fourth, Boskovich earned a walk on four consecutive pitches. Rodriguez — oops, I mean Vidlund — took the second pitch

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Mindi Rice
The girl and the game



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Oregon's Doug McKenzie snags a disc at a tournament in Santa Cruz, Calif.

Disc jocks

The Oregon Ultimate team is ranked third in the nation and is looking for more success in a talented region

Jon Roetman

Freelance Sports Reporter

What do you get when you mix a football-style passing attack with a plastic disc?

Oregon Ultimate.

The seven-on-seven, non-contact display of disc-passing ability is a popular game among Oregon students. So popular, in fact, that it has led to considerable success at the club level. With its calculated aerial assault, different defenses and high energy level, the Oregon men's Ultimate team has worked its way into the No. 3 spot in the national rankings.

"It's definitely a pretty popular sport," club coordinator and sophomore Ben Parrell said. "People just like to toss (a disc) around."

A rough explanation of the object behind Ultimate is this: Athletes attempt to score goals by passing a disc from teammate to teammate until someone catches it in the endzone. While on the attack, the offensive team must keep the disc off the ground at all times. If the disc touches the ground, the defense immediately takes over possession with no down-time in between.

Once a player has the disc, he is allowed a pivot foot but can't take any extra steps. Shuffling of the feet leads to a traveling call and a change in possession. The game is over when a team, depending on the tournament, reaches 13 or 15 goals. If a team does not reach the winning goal total within the time limit (between 90 minutes and two hours), the new winning total becomes two goals higher than the score of the team with the lead.

Since contact is outlawed, playing defense proves to be the most difficult aspect of the game. Teams use both zone and man defenses in an attempt to obscure an opponent's passing lane as best they can.

"Stopping another team's precise, calculated offense is extremely difficult," senior and coach Ben Wiggins said. "Especially against the type of athletes we're playing."

The Ducks need all the practice they can get, as they compete in the toughest region in the country. The Northwest region holds nine of the top 20 spots in the national rankings, including the top pair of Stanford and California.

"We're coming out of the hardest region," Wiggins said. "We need big, fast and strong athletes."

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Ducks surpass '01 and '02 Pac-10 win totals

Oregon's six-member senior class has its second-best record in four years at the 2003 season's halfway point

Softball

Mindi Rice
Sports Reporter

In the midst of Pacific-10 Conference play, No. 20 Oregon has tied its combined conference win record from the past two seasons.

The Ducks split their first weekend of Pac-10 play at home, playing what head coach Kathy Arendsen called a "phenomenal" game against UCLA on Saturday. The Ducks pulled out the 5-4 win over the Bruins — the first time since May 1999 that Oregon won against UCLA and the first time since May 1998 that the Bruins did not sweep the Ducks in Eugene.

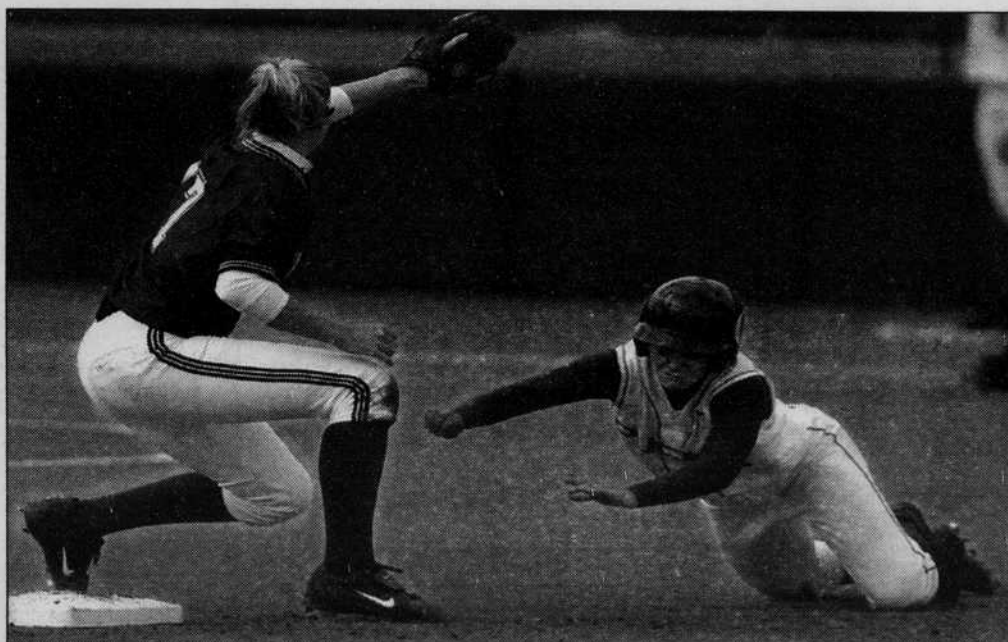
Friday's 9-0 loss to No. 3 Washington extended the Huskies' Eugene winning streak to five years.

"It was rather disappointing," Arendsen said about Friday's game.

The game included a first inning home run by Husky Kristen Rivera that fans claimed was foul — and they didn't let the umpires forget it for the rest of the weekend.

Regardless of the Friday and Sunday — a 9-3 loss to UCLA — outcomes, Oregon's senior class now has its second-most Pac-10 wins for a season with conference play only halfway over.

A Wednesday doubleheader against Portland



Mark McCambridge Emerald

Alyssa Laux and the Ducks upended UCLA on Saturday but lost to the Bruins on Sunday and UW on Friday.

State sends Oregon into a two-game home series against Oregon State. The Ducks have already chalked up one Pac-10 win in Corvallis this season.

Basketball vibes rub off

The day of the Ducks' 5-4 win over UCLA, a special guest paid Oregon a pregame visit.

Men's basketball head coach Ernie Kent spoke

to the softball team before the squad's first game against UCLA.

"It was a motivational point of view," Arendsen said. "He talked about where basketball was when he arrived at Oregon and how it's progressed."

From Oregon's inspired performance on

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