

# Blazers can't beat Dallas, but still Rip his heart out

When it comes to the NBA, I'm a fair-weather fan.

Wait! you say. Don't admit that! That's stupid!

Well, momma always said stoopid is as stoopid does.

Yep, I'm so fair-weather I need SPF-30 sun-block to watch a pro basketball game. That's why, for most of Sunday afternoon, I rooted for the Blazers. And even if the Blazers lost, tattoo "Rip City" on my bicep, because I'm a Blazer convert.

I grew up in Golden State Warriors country, which means I grew up a football fan. Warrior players hated or simply choked their coaches, while



**Peter Hockaday**  
Two minutes for crosschecking

on the other side of the Bay, Joe Montana lobbed passes through the crisp Candlestick air to Jerry Rice and won Super Bowl rings the size of Mack trucks. The choice was easy.

Nowadays, I consider myself a free-agent fan. I ignore the NBA for most of the year, and come playoff time, teams can bid for my loyalty through a complicated system of likeability, potential to win the big one and underdog status. Last year the Sacramento Kings were lucky enough to win that honor, and I cried with the rest of the Laker-hater club when the referees handed the Big Yellow Machine the series in game 7.

This year, I turned up my nose and stuck my pinkie out with the rest of the country with each new Jail Blazer offense. I laughed at the pure comedic image of Ruben Patterson chasing Zach Randolph around a practice court after Randolph sucker-punched Patterson like Britney Spears in a bar fight.

When the Blazers went down 2-0 to Dallas, I had my agent call up other teams and test the free-agent fan market.

But then Maurice Cheeks put his arm around a scared eighth-grader and belted out the national anthem like he was a finalist on "American Idol." The Blazers lost and seemed destined for a sweep, but at least the Rose Garden wasn't completely filled with inmates.

Then the Blazers won their first playoff game since the 14-point collapse to Los Angeles in 2000. Then Arvydas Sabonis, who's older than Father Time, tipped in a shot at the buzzer and sent the series back to Portland. Then, in game 6, the Blazers owned the Mavs like Mark Cuban never could.

By Sunday, like the self-respecting sports fan I am, I was hooked on the idea of a comeback. But this wouldn't be just a comeback, it would be *the* comeback. The scope was enormous. In all the playoff se-

ries in all the sports in America, only a couple hockey teams from the 40s had pulled off this feat — from zero to hero. From 3-0 to 3-4. From swept to sweep.

So I donned my red-and-black on Sunday. I had some people over to my house and yeah, I rooted for the Blazers. I complained about the officiating (the phantom sixth foul on Sabas? Are you kidding me?). I made fun of Cuban's T-shirt that he stole from a trailerpark laundromat.

And I found out there's more to love about this Portland team. There's Sabas, throwing a completed pass over his head. There's Damon Stoudamire, pulling a Superman on a ball that was clearly headed for the lap of some random cameraman. There's Scottie Pippen, playing in pain, still clutch in the end with a three from the corner.

That three was Custer's last stand for the Blazers. Dallas' duo of Dirk "Über-baller" Nowitzki and Steve "Have a Labatt's, eh?" Nash drained

the kind of shots that belong only in video games on "easy" mode. The Blazers couldn't hang.

But after the game, I noticed something. Even in the midst of the Blazers' we've-come-this-far-back-only-to-lose disappointment, Rasheed Wallace and the rest of team initiated the high-five line with the Mavs. In that moment, Dallas players understood the magnitude of the comeback, Portland players understood the talent of the Mavs and everybody shook on it.

It wasn't quite as touching as Mo Cheeks singing "O'er the ramparts we've watched," but it helped me make an important decision. I think I'm going to sign a long-term fan contract with the Blazers.

That is, at least until game 7 of the Kings-Lakers conference final.

Go Sacto.

Contact the sports editor at peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

## Heinonen

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Seniors Heather Murtaugh and Janette Davis took first and second, respectively, in the 100 meters and the 200 meters, while senior Amanda Brown won the triple jump and long jump.

"I liked the way our people competed today," Heinonen said. "The 1,500 was a great way to finish the meet. The fashion show (4x400 relay) was fun, the kids really wanted to do that."

The Ducks' "B" squad in the 4x400 relay honored Heinonen by each wearing a different Duck jersey from Heinonen's 27 years.

"Tom's totally creative," former Duck heptathlete Jenny Kenyon

said. "It's a track environment that, not only can you improve as an athlete, but you can enjoy track. The reputation of Oregon track and it having crowds and really engaging the community, I think he's really maintained that reputation."

Heinonen won't be fully retired after this season ends. He plans to

coach the Oregon club distance running team starting next fall as well as spending time volunteering.

"I think it will be fun: no administration, no recruiting, no parents," Heinonen said.

Beginning next fall, men's head coach Martin Smith will take on the women's squads as well as director of men's and women's track and field and cross country.

"You don't replace Tom," Smith said. "This program has been a labor of love for him; the women's team, he's been their only coach. They're

going to be difficult and impossible shoes not to fill but just to try to make sure you're able to build on."

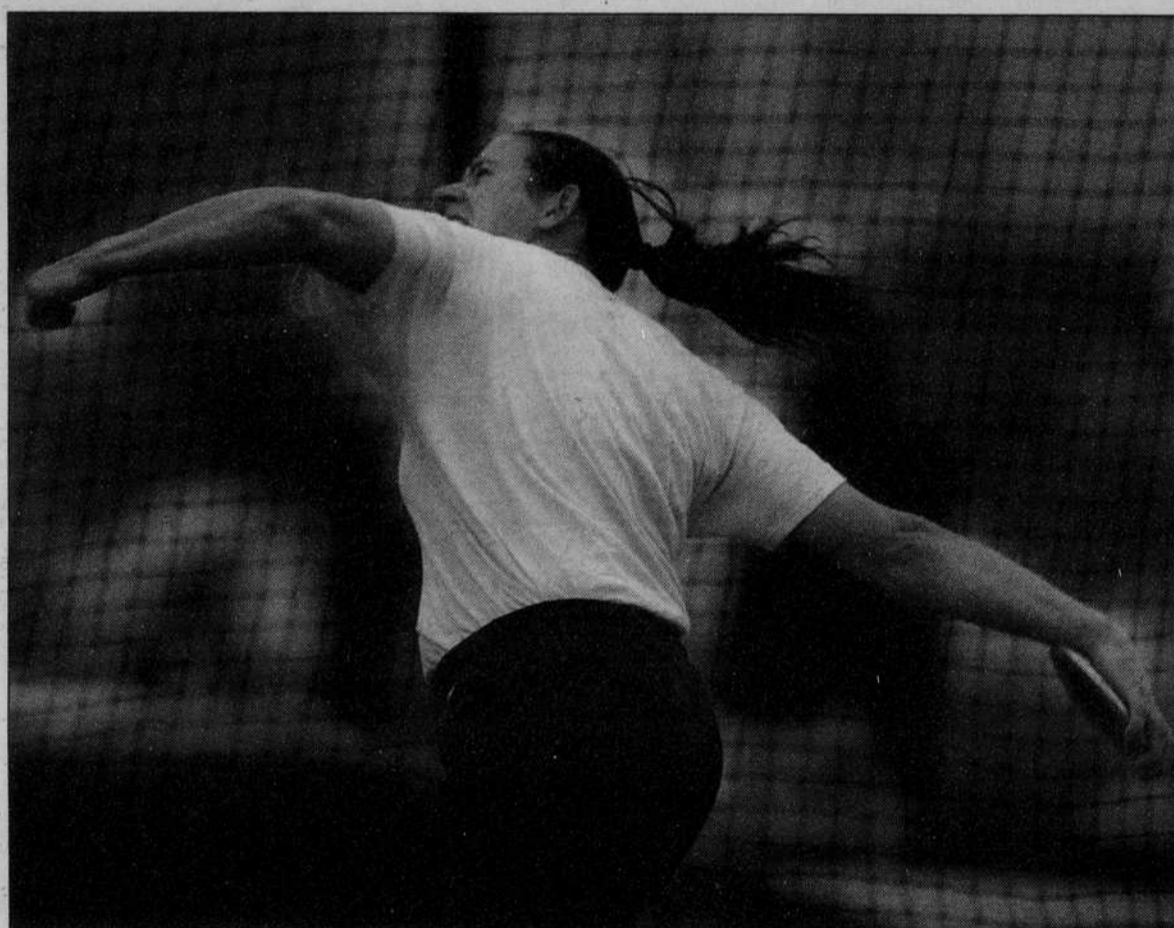
While he was honored on Saturday, Heinonen isn't done quite yet. Heptathletes compete on Saturday

and Sunday in Los Angeles, while athletes still seeking Pacific-10 Conference or NCAA Regional qualifying marks have one last opportunity to achieve those marks. Heinonen's last time to coach begins May 18 at the Pac-10 Championships.

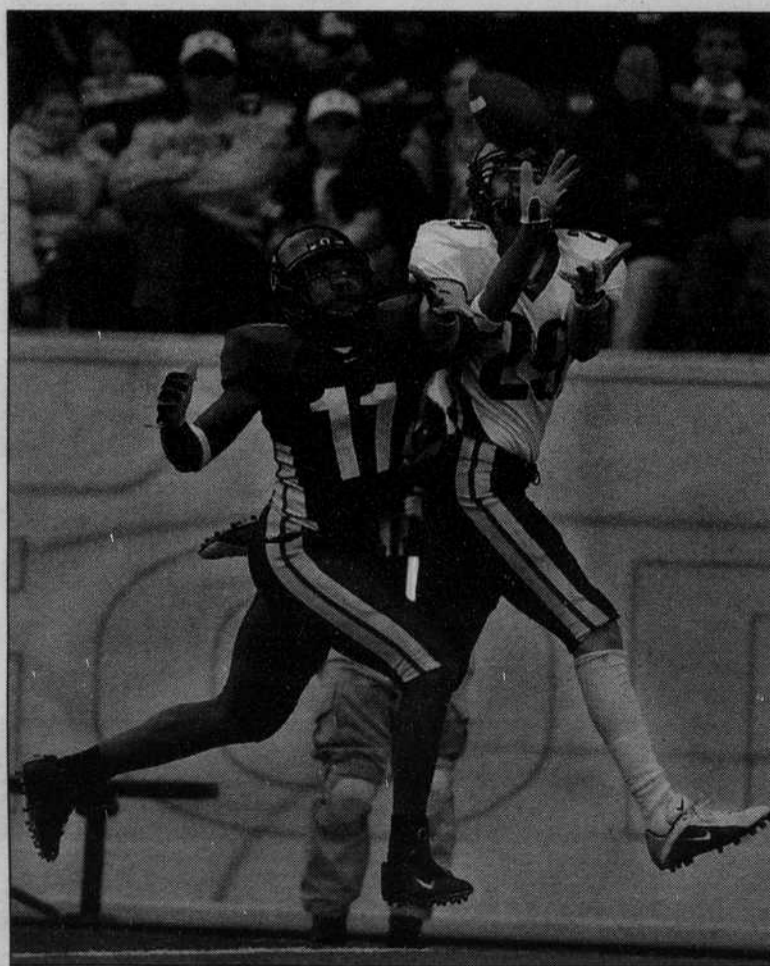
Contact the sports reporter at mindirice@dailyemerald.com.

**"You don't replace Tom. This program has been a labor of love for him..."**

**Martin Smith**  
Men's track head coach



Mary Etter throws the discus amid Saturday's rain. Etter said the discus was 'horrible' and that nobody did well in the event.



Charles Favroth (11) makes an interception over Tony Salazer (29) at the spring game.  
Mark McCambridge  
Emerald

## Spring game

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of the game without significant injury is a plus. That and the starting quarterback spot may have gotten a little bit clearer.

Clemens finished the afternoon 12-of-16, and threw touchdown strikes to Samie Parker, Ryan Loftin and Demetrius Williams. The most impressive of the three came in the second quarter when Clemens threw a home run pass to Parker for 68 yards. Safety Keith Lewis called the play a broken assignment on behalf of the defense, but whatever you want to call it, it was an efficient strike on just the third play of the drive.

"Samie Parker gave (Clemens) some great support in catching some balls," Bellotti said. "I thought Demetrius Williams came up with some big plays."

Parker finished the first half, and the game, with 135 yards on seven catches. Williams finished with just two catches for 25 yards, but those were two intricate catches.

Starting at the defensive 23, Clemens rolled to his left and lofted the ball over cornerback Aaron Gipson along the sideline with Williams catching it at the 6-yard line. A play later, Clemens fired one over the middle, a pass first tipped by Parker and then caught by Williams along the back of the end zone, barely inbounds.

Fife, meanwhile, didn't show the same quality of play he had put forth in Oregon's earlier spring scrimmages. The fifth-year senior failed to complete a pass in four attempts and was sacked twice.

"Then again, I didn't really have much of an opportunity to do much either," Fife said. "I didn't get as many series as I thought I was going to get. I got frustrated all spring about not getting the opportunities to do what I wanted to do."

Defensively, the Ducks didn't get burned, nor did they show marked improvement. The group allowed 202 yards through the air and 144 yards on 36 carries on the ground.

Lewis had the first interception of the day, stepping in front of a Johnny DuRocher pass early in the third quarter. DuRocher was picked off again, this time by Charles Favroth, in the waning minutes of the fourth quarter.

Chris Dearmon and Kevin Mitchell both got full sacks while Haloti Ngata and Darius Sanders teamed up for one as well.

"There are a lot of things we need to get better at in the secondary," Lewis said. "A couple of blown coverages, but all in all, you can be happy. The secondary has made tremendous progress (this spring)."

The game ended Oregon's spring workouts. It was the 15th of the spring — the most allowable by the NCAA — and Oregon will be back on the field in early August in