

## SPORTS

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**Best bet**  
NBA playoff:  
Dallas at San Antonio, Game 2  
6:30 p.m., TNT

Wednesday, May 21, 2003

## Lovin' it live: NBA takes over from reality TV

Now that the Bachelor finale has ended (I knew he'd choose Jen), and American Idol will wrap up tonight (Go Ruuu-ben!), I can finally focus my energy on the NBA Playoffs.

It has been an exciting and suspenseful journey thus far. Although, I have to choose another team to give my life to since my Blazers made me think for the second time in four years that they could actually win a game 7 just to lose in the last 12 minutes.

But the good news is the Lakers will not four-peat.

Now c'mon, raise your hand if you were one of the know-it-alls who was sure of a Sacramento vs. Lakers Western Conference matchup.

I know more people thought that than the amount of people who know one plus one is two. My sports editor was one of them.

But now the conference race leaves an interesting scenario. We have the Texas two-step and the Eastside brawlers in a fight to see who can lose in the NBA Finals this year.

And with the Princeton women's lacrosse championship secured, New Jersey fans can again cheer for a squad that has seen a ray of hope since the Spurs did them a favor in Game 6 of the conference semifinals.

What team would want to go to the NBA Finals two years and a row and walk away with nothing but a record of 0-8? Not the Nets.

Nets forward Kenyon Martin said it the best when he told ESPN, "If it didn't work out for them, I said teams would be licking their chops," in reference to a non-L.A. final, as hard as it is to imagine.

New Jersey went on to dish up a big old porterhouse Sunday night when Jason Kidd left Detroit fans in "awww" with a buzzer-beater that didn't even look like it had a chance.

So just how good are the Nets this season?

Not to beat the topic of Game 1 like a dead horse, considering it means nothing as the Pistons gave away three of the first four to Philly, but the Nets are good.

Jersey shot under 40 percent from the field and scored a playoff low of 76 points and still won. The Mavericks know how to score that many before halftime.

But that final score gets flushed down the drain when you consider the Nets scored 18 straight fast break points in the first quarter (that's just ridiculous), more than Allen's squad could score in any game, against the league's No. 1 defensive team.

It's as clear as a Sunday morning to see the Nets will enter the Finals after three more games. But let's get back to the Texas cock-fight that reminded me of my father's words in my young basketball days.

"You've got to make your free throws," he'd always tell me. And although I didn't listen, the Dallas Mavericks sure did.

Now, the Spurs should have won Game 1 because that is what should happen when you lead a game for 47 minutes and 46 seconds.

But when your opponent makes 49 free-throws straight, and you manage to pull a Portland stunt by giving up in the fourth quarter, you can and will lose.

Yet, I do not fear the fate of the Spurs as they will emerge in the NBA finals in a matchup with New Jersey. The conference finals will go to seven games because that's how Dallas likes it, and they'll stick to what works.

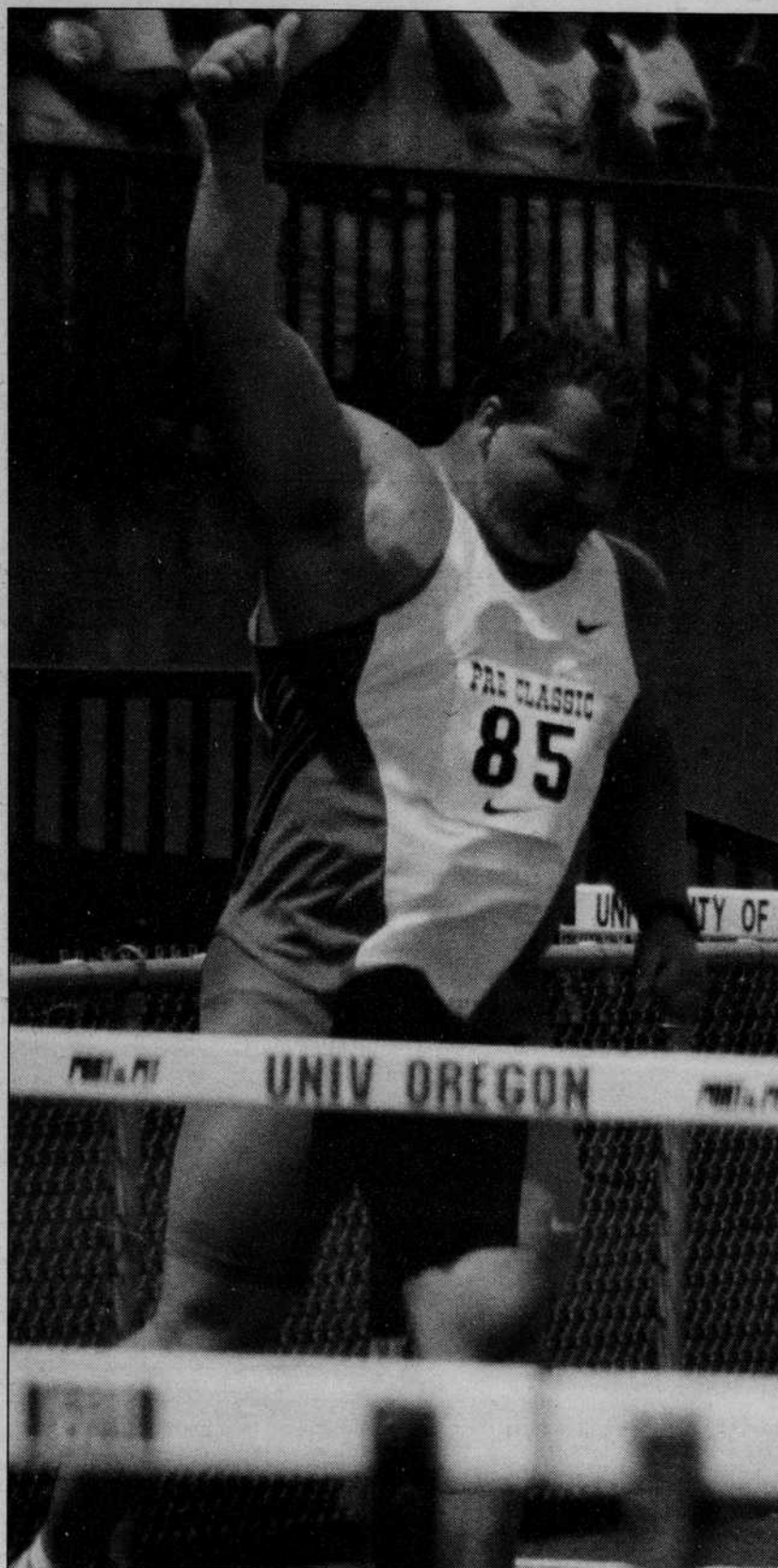
And just this time, they won't be so successful in Game 7. And when the final rolls around, I want to see the Nets at least win a few games to attempt a championship feat. But San Antonio will win in six.

So the madness is long and underway.

And thank god it's interesting, because if I was forced to watch the yellow and purple sweep their way to another NBA title, I would have enjoyed the Mr. Personality finale more.



Jesse Thomas  
Go the distance



Kevin Toth celebrates his victory last year with the Hayward Field fans. Toth threw 72-93/4.

## Shot through the heart

Kevin Toth and John Godina return to the Prefontaine Classic one year after their record-breaking show

### Prefontaine Classic

Hank Hager  
Sports Reporter

For one day last year, Hayward Field lost all its prestige as Track Town, U.S.A.

The three men who stood in the shot put ring made fans forget. They did it with style and grace and something no one had ever seen on U.S. soil.

Three of the nation's best threw the shot put farther than 71 feet. The 16-pound shot turned into electricity on that sunny Saturday afternoon last May.

"This is shot put town right now," Kevin Toth said at the time. "It's not Track Town anymore."

OK, so the name didn't stand and most likely won't be changing anytime soon. But what Toth, John Godina and Adam Nelson did that day will go down in American track and field history.

Better yet, two of the three will have the opportunity to remake history this coming Saturday at the 29th annual Prefontaine Classic.

Nelson had to pull out of the competition because of a back injury, but the returning duo should give the Hayward fans something to cheer about.

"Any time you've got a trio like that, you want to get them all back," meet director Tom Jordan said.

The shot put competition, the second event of the Pre Classic, will begin Saturday at 1:05 p.m. With all eyes on Hayward, it is conceivable the group could begin the day with a bang.

Oh, and maybe they'll start off another record-setting performance.

"We hope so," Jordan said. "The Turn to **Shot put**, page 10

## Ducks march on at NCAA tourney

Daria Panova wins her second singles match and teams with Courtney Nagle to advance in the doubles bracket at the NCAA Championships

### Tennis

Ryan Heath  
Freelance Sports Reporter

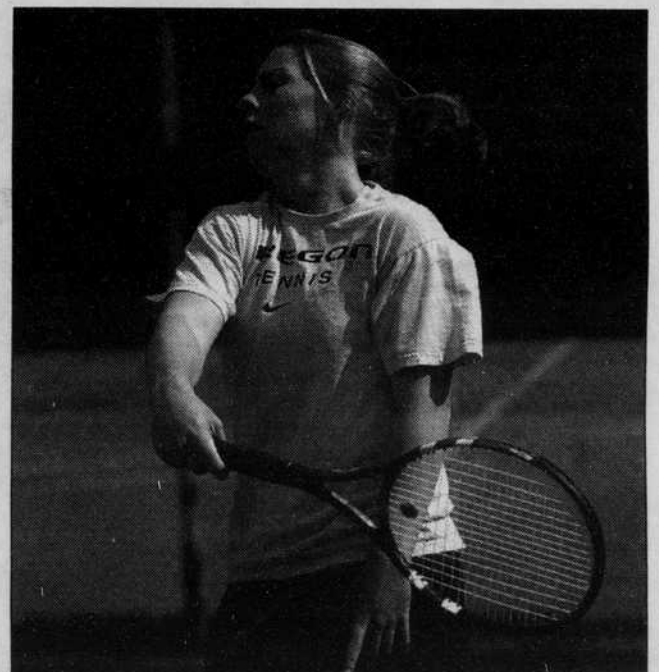
For three elite Oregon tennis players, suffering through a cold winter and a disappointing early spring earned them a trip to the hellish heat and humidity of a late spring in the south.

A day after battling in the sweltering Florida sun to get past the first round of the NCAA Championships, Duck sophomore Daria Panova advanced to the Sweet 16 and teamed up with junior Courtney Nagle to move on to the second round in doubles in Gainesville, Fla.

Meanwhile, Oregon's Manuel Kost is in Athens, Ga., awaiting his first round match of the men's NCAA Championships.

"It was a little bit easier to compete twice today because of

Turn to **Tennis**, page 9



Adam Amato Emerald

Courtney Nagle teamed with Daria Panova to win a first-round doubles match Tuesday, while Panova also won a singles match.