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# Sportswriters reflect on momentous moments

The Emerald sports staff picks some moments from the year that was in Oregon athletics

**Peter Hockaday, sports editor:** I basically grew up in Maples Pavilion, home of Stanford basketball. I started out as a kid, running around and around the promenade outside, getting yelled at by security officers. I turned into a basketball fan, hanging on every Brevin Knight shot and yelling at Cal's Jason Kidd.

I still remember the feel of Stanford games; the smell of the hot dogs, the crazy students, the sea of red. I'm sure kids from Eugene will always remember similar things about McArthur Court.

In three years covering the Oregon men's team, I've made the trip to Maples twice. This year's game was a Cardinal blowout and a low point in Oregon's season. But it was a high point for me. After interviews, while everyone else was writing stories, I ducked out of the hallway and walked into the empty arena. Luke Ridnour was there, seeking consolation from his parents. And it was just this surreal moment, this connection between my childhood and my reporterhood, and it's a moment I'll remember forever.

**Hank Hager, sports reporter:** OK, so my favorite moment wasn't really a game in the truest sense, or a play that boggled my mind. No, those were few and far between this year.

Getting to go home, now that is my moment of the year. Of course, it was courtesy of the Oregon women's basketball team and the Pacific-10 Conference Tournament. The HP Pavilion at San Jose (Calif.),

a sparkling facility (OK, a little bias there), hosted the tournament, a place where I used to work for three years. I knew while I was driving down there in early March that it was going to be fun.

The Ducks didn't get past their first game; they lost to UCLA. I stayed down there to cover the entire tournament despite the team's early exit, soaked up some sun, and went to the old high school hangouts to get some memories back into the brain.

Oh yeah, I also got to miss a week of classes for my trip. I suggest this. There's no better way to go.

Anyway, I saw Stanford take the Pac-10 Tournament, but I also got a chance to visit with old friends and show former co-workers that, yes, I was doing more than just taking classes at Oregon.

**Mindi Rice, sports reporter:** There are so many highlights from wrestling and softball that it's like a bag of Lay's potato chips — I can't choose just one.

Softball proved everyone wrong, but as much as I enjoyed covering them, Oregon wrestling will always hold a place in my heart.

Two moments from the wrestling season are my highlights. The first was my first match covering the team, an 18-15 comeback victory against Oregon State at McArthur Court in December.

Down 15-3 with four matches left, Martin Mitchell pinned his opponent for six points.

Jason Harless and Casey Hunt followed with wins to tie the match at 15 and leave it in the hands of senior Tony Overstake.

Overstake rose to the occasion and won 9-3, giving Oregon the victory.

In Portland State's Stott Center, the Ducks ended the season with a shutout. Their first since 1982.

They combined one pin, three major decisions, four decisions and two forfeits for a 42-0 victory.

The pin was the best match. Freshman Bob Pool, in his first dual, pinned his opponent in 25 seconds.

Wrestling and softball both provided amazing moments for the 2002-03 highlight reel.

**Jesse Thomas, sports reporter:** Track and field has been a significant part of my life since I was in the seventh grade.

Damn, sometimes I forget how old I'm getting!

The sport got me through my senior year of high school. I never raced in the 4A state meet at Hayward Field but always attended. And I always looked forward to the Prefontaine Classic, which ended the weekend.

In those days, I use to run around searching for Bob Kennedy to ask him for an autograph. While covering the meet this year, I went up to him, shook his hand and told him he had a good race.

I was star struck through the entire afternoon, whether I was standing next to Gail Devers or talking face to face with my bombshell, Suzy Favor Hamilton, about her 1,500-meter race.

Using my ability as a press agent, I sat in a chair next to Stacy Dragila behind the autograph table with a 15-foot line of people waiting for a mere moment to get her signature. It was pure beauty.

From the past and present of the Prefontaine Classic, being able to be in the mix of the meet this year was by far my most memorable moment.

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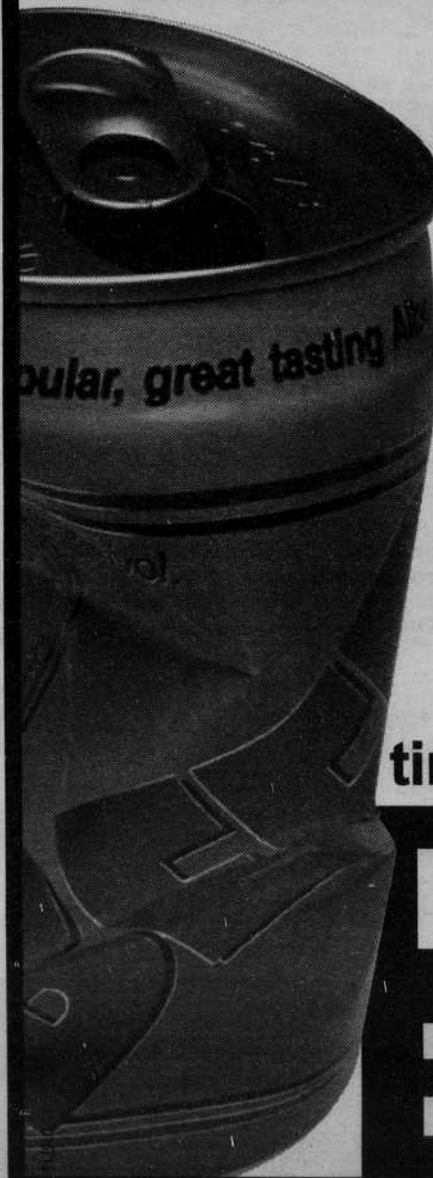
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