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**Jesse Thomas**  
Go the distance

## Tiger's not slumping, LeBron's too hyped

Well, I'm back.

I haven't come to you in more than a month. I know, I missed you too.

Last time I wrote a column, I was preaching about how the San Antonio Spurs would win the NBA Championship.

Old news. And after my drought — 34 days later — the sports world has endured its usual gossip and flying rumors. With as much turmoil as a new episode of "Sex and the City," our society has become engulfed with rumor and speculation.

And I am not here to start any new hearsay. Instead, I will simply try and clear up the craziness that has surrounded sports fans and reporters alike in my absence.

First things first: The Buick Classic ended Sunday afternoon, and Jonathan Kaye won the event by eagling on a play-off hole against John Rollins. Chances are you have never even heard of these two before the event.

What you may have heard is that Tiger Woods finished the event 13th overall and hasn't won a PGA Tour Tournament since the end of March. Prior to that date, Tiger had won three of the four tournaments he played from Feb. 16 through March 23.

In a period of four months, Tiger has gone from a golf God to a golf dud. And the question Tiger has been asked in every press conference since March: "Are you in a slump?"

Tiger answers the question as he should, with a mere sigh and a look of, "You have to be kidding me." The man has been demoted from Superman to a status that most players would still consider great play.

For Tiger, it's a slump. But Tiger isn't in a slump. He never was. He was just playing on a mortal level rather than that of the heavens. You have to be kidding me.

You're telling me that the man who ranks number one in the world and is fourth on the money list this season — only because he has played in at least three fewer tournaments than the people ahead of him — is in a slump.

Tiger still leads the all-time money list by nearly \$13 million. In case you're wondering, that's a lot. I'm not telling you that Tiger will bounce back and win three more tournaments; I am telling you he is not in a slump.

It merely proves that Tiger is a man, not a machine, and he's a mortal like all the rest of us.

Secondly, the NBA Draft is upon us and could soon change the life of certain franchises forever. Or so they say.

The fact is that the LeBron James cover-

## Ducks close championship run at USAs

Redshirt senior Becky Holliday will meet the world's best in Paris after finishing in a tie for third at the USA Championships

By **Jesse Thomas**  
Sports Editor

Becky Holliday propelled herself further into national stardom Saturday at the USA Track and Field Championships.

After a school record and an NCAA championship, Holliday took her skills to Stanford's Cobb Track and Angell Field to face off with the nation's best in the pole vault.

The Sparks, Nev., native finished in a tie for third at 14 feet 3 1/4 inches, earning the final position on the U.S. squad for the World Championships, which is scheduled at the end of August in Paris.

Holliday opened the afternoon with first-attempt clearances at her first three opening heights of 13-1 1/2, 13-7 1/4 and 13-11 1/4.

The redshirt senior then pulled out a little luck as she brushed the bar on her final height on the way down — but the bar stayed on the pegs.

"This was hard to prepare for coming in," Holliday said. "Everything this year was geared toward NCAAs, so having to deal with all that preparation and emotion, you're due for a letdown."

"I tried coming in as relaxed as possible with no pressure and expectations, but I didn't feel my best."

Overall, the top spot went to world record holder Stacy Dragila of Nike, who won in a final height of 14-9. The event featured low heights due to strong crosswinds that changed direction, plaguing most vaulters.

In other action, All-America throwers Adam Kriz and Elisa Crumley wrapped up top-20 finishes in Friday's hammer throw and javelin competition.

Kriz finished 18th with a mark of 202-9, nearly 20 feet shy of his personal best (221-3), which he made at the Pacific-10 Conference Championships.

The Toledo native made his third NCAA appearance just a week before finishing fifth (220-2) and earning his first All-American honor.

Crumley concluded her sophomore season with a mark of 133-3, finishing 15th overall in the javelin. Crumley ended a year that was slowed by shoulder surgery last fall, forcing her

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Geoff Thurner Media services

Oregon freshman Eric Mitchum took third in Sunday's final of the 110-meter hurdles at the USAs.

## UO scores dual top-20 NCAA finishes

Oregon concluded its collegiate season at the NCAA Championships where the Ducks saw their first women's champion since 1996

By **Jesse Thomas**  
Sports Editor

The Oregon men's and women's track teams hit and overcame a few milestones in the NCAA Championships, which finished June 14 at Hornet Stadium in Sacramento, Calif.

From the first NCAA women's champion since 1996 to the first top 20 finish from both sides in

more than a decade — and the retirement of a head coach of 27 years — this year's nationals had a little bit of everything.

On the men's side, Oregon had four competitors finish in the top five, along with six earning All-American honors among 13 men.

Junior Jason Hartmann kicked it off for Oregon's men in the second day of action with a fourth-place finish in the 10,000 meters. After entering the meet seeded 11th, Hartmann finished in 28 minutes 31 seconds, a 20-second season best and a near 15-second personal best.

"I felt really good coming in and just tried to

compete as smart as I could," Hartmann said. "Among the three NCAA races, this had to be the most rewarding because it was the best field top to bottom."

Also on the track, junior Samie Parker overcame two false starts to finish fifth in the 100-meter dash with a time of 10.41.

In men's field action, former NCAA champion John Stiegeler finished fourth in the javelin after launching a 13-foot 3-inch season best (241-5).

Stiegeler ended his Oregon career after entering

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## Ems win third straight against Dust Devils

The Eugene Emeralds win three straight against the Tri-City Dust Devils, giving the Ems a 5-1 start to their season

By **Jesse Thomas**  
Sports Editor

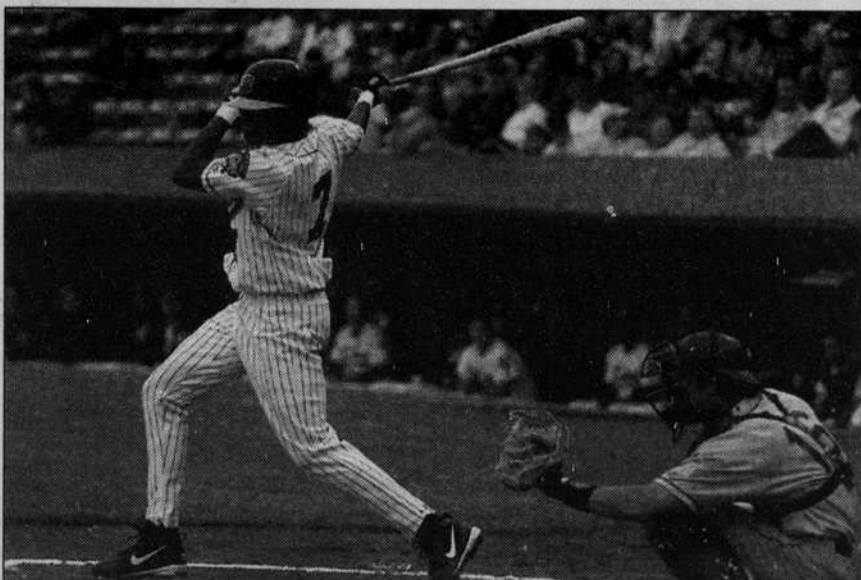
The Emeralds continued to have their way Monday evening against the Tri-City Dust Devils as Eugene improved its winning streak to three games in as many nights.

After stumping the Dust Devils 4-0 Sunday evening, the Ems took the field at Civic Stadium in front of 1,958 fans and continued the five-game series with strong pitching and solid offense in the 2-1 win.

The Ems got the game off to a quick start as they opened up against Tri-City with three speedy outs. In the bottom of the first, Ems left fielder Jeff Leise was quickly thrown out at first, but second baseman Peter Ramos was next up to bat and would not be denied as easily.

Ramos went to first base after being walked and then quickly stole second as first baseman Fernando Valenzuela was at the plate. The Ems ended the inning leading 1-0 as Ramos eventually scored off an error by the Tri-City catcher as he lost the ball behind the plate. "The bottom line is the guys are playing well," Manager Roy Howell said. "You get pitching and defense, as you

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Jessica Waters Emerald

Shortstop Alex Garcia wrapped up the Eugene Emeralds' batting lineup Monday night, helping the Ems to their third straight win in as many games against Tri-City.

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