

Sports Editor:  
Jesse Thomas  
jessethomas@dailyemerald.com

Tuesday, July 22, 2003

Jesse Thomas  
Go the distance

## Trailblazers leave fans yearning for 'Rip City'

Ah, the good old days. The days when life was easy and work wasn't so long. The days when life moved slower and cell phones weren't a necessity.

Your grandfather tells you of the good old days and you listen, wondering how life could exist in such simplicity. For this generation it's the good old days of the '80s, when parachute pants were a hit and playing dodgeball at recess was too much fun.

And when reflecting on Oregon's only professional sports team, the Portland Trail Blazers, the good old days bring the fondest memories.

For the flower children, the '70s brought the introduction of a team soon bound for greatness. From the team's entrance in 1970 to Bill Walton's 1974 arrival and the start of Jack Ramsay's reign two years later, the bell-bottom era had many beginnings for the new team. Most noteworthy, the Blazers won their first and only NBA Championship in 1976-77, a feat that would strike up Blazermania.

The early '80s provided the red carpet arrival of one of Portland's greatest players ever, Clyde Drexler. In 1983, when the Blazers racked up 156 points against Denver and turned around to throw 155 points at Chicago, it was a good time to be a Blazers fan.

The offensive powerhouse never slowed down as Portland managed 117.9 points per game in 1986-87, leading the league. In the 2002-03 season, the Blazers only broke that average only seven times.

Like the team of today, the beginning of the '90s was the turning of a page for a team in need of restructuring. With a new owner and a new coach, the Blazers made it to the NBA Finals before losing to Detroit. In the next two seasons the Blazers recorded a franchise record 63 wins and returned to the NBA Finals, where Michael Jordan successfully defended his title in 1992.

The rest of the '90s are a blur for a team that saw its greats depart with the entrance of two new coaches. It wasn't until 1999 that Portland seemed to be the team of a decade.

The 1999-2000 season can be condensed to 11 minutes. With a guaranteed chance for their second NBA Championship, Portland gave up a 15-point lead in the fourth quarter against the Los Angeles Lakers to lose the conference finals.

The next two seasons would see Portland go 0-6 against their nemesis, the Lakers, in the first round of both playoffs. And after Portland made its fans again believe it could win a Game 7 against Dallas in early May, it's clear to see the Blazers are a team in need of a transition.

What once was Blazermania and Rip City is no more. What once were the

Turn to **Thomas**, page 6

## Mac to the future

The Oregon Athletic Department is expected to soon make an announcement regarding the new basketball arena location

By Jesse Thomas  
Sports Editor

Once upon a time in 1926, a basketball arena was built. It was called McArthur Court. Now, 77 years later, it still stands, known notoriously as "The Pit," and is considered one of collegiate basketball's most feared venues.

And as soon as next summer, the construction of a new basketball arena could begin, and by 2006-07 Mac Court will no longer be home to Oregon's basketball teams. A decision from the University regarding the location for the new arena is expected soon.

"Once the president gives us the green light, which I'm hoping will be fairly soon, we want to go forward and design a facility that will accommodate our students, will accommodate our fans, will be an attraction for prospective student athletes and will continue to give us a home court edge," Athletic Director Bill Moos said. "We feel at this point that would include copying as many of the features (of the current Mac Court as possible)."

Seven sites have been identified by consulting firm CSL International: the Autzen Stadium vicinity, the new Federal Courthouse site, Howe Field, Franklin Boulevard (Glenwood), Franklin Boulevard (Springfield), North Campus (Riverfront Parkway between Franklin Boulevard and Millrace Drive), and the Williams' Bakery site.

University officials aren't saying whether any have moved to the top of the list, instead choosing to speak on features sought in the site selection.

"It's my understanding that they're interested in allowing students to easily get to it," said



Jessica Waters Emerald

Of the seven sites chosen for the new arena Howe Field (upper left), Autzen Stadium vicinity (upper right), Franklin Boulevard in Glenwood (lower left) and Williams' Bakery (lower right) are four possibilities.

Chris Ramey, Director of University Planning.

Howe Field, home to the Oregon women's softball team, would provide a location adjacent to the original arena but would force the Athletic Department to erect a new softball field.

Regardless of whether the softball field is chosen, softball head coach Kathy Arendsen isn't concerned.

"We have pretty much left it up to them (Athletic Department) because we believe we're going to be just fine," Arendsen said. "If we had a choice, we would prefer to stay where we're established."

The other site already on land owned by the University is located next to Autzen Stadium.

The east parking lot located off of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard would allow Oregon's two largest sports teams to play in the same area.

The other five sites chosen as possibilities are not owned by the University and, as Vice President of Administration Dan Williams noted, this adds the criterion of acquisition.

The other criteria used to identify and hopefully narrow the site list include proximity to campus, affordability, use of transportation, availability in terms of time scheduling and the size to accommodate 14,000-plus people.

Two of the sites that pose a problem in

Turn to **Mac Court**, page 6

## New locker room gets high-caliber makeover

The renovations to the new football locker room include structural alterations and many technological advancements

By Jesse Thomas  
Sports Editor

It's not a Club Med. It's not even a Gold's Gym. But it could be.

New renovations to the Oregon football team locker room are so advanced in architecture and technology that it rivals even the best NFL locker rooms.

"We've had several of our people observe other locker rooms, both collegiate and professionally around the country, (which is) the case with a lot of our facility enhancements," Athletic Director Bill Moos said. "We have taken what we felt is the best features of several of those and incorporated them into ours."

The ceiling was raised 7 feet 5 inches with a mezzanine level added to create more space, allowing coaches to stand in the center of the room and see all of their players.

The facility boasts a total of 120 lockers, with 39 upstairs. The lockers, which include specific locations to accommodate injured athletes, have increased in size, are fully ventilated and come with Ethernet connections, allowing for easier studying.

Even the doors have been revamped. What was once a standard door only al-

lowing single-file traffic has been remodeled to a large panel vertical lift door that opens in three seconds. The new door now allows the football team to rush onto the field faster and more energetically.

"It's more going to increase performance and be more functional," said Tim Canfield, principal designer and owner of Concept 2 Reality.

Among the many other technological renovations, a thumb scanner functions as a lock for the room.

Athletes will also never suffer a lack of information, as three 16-inch plasma screens are being built into the upper wall opposite the lockers.

The plasma screens will have satellite functionality, DVD and VCR access and video-game capabilities. The athletic department is also positioning a camera inside Autzen Stadium that will focus solely on the scoreboard and transmit the image to one of the screens.

"Those plasma panels will have multiple sources from watching game film to highlight film, and there will always be information about game time available," said Canfield, who graduated from the University in 1987 and was a pole vaulter for three years on the Oregon track and field team.

Turn to **Locker room**, page 8

Jessica Waters Emerald

The renovations include a mezzanine level and raised ceiling among others.