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# Ems fight through win against AquaSox

The Eugene Emeralds stay atop their division with a suspenseful 8-7 win over Everett Monday night

By Jesse Thomas  
Sports Editor

It was your traditional cat-and-dog baseball game Monday night as the Eugene Emeralds faced off with the Everett AquaSox in a back-and-forth battle through four innings.

After trailing 5-3 in the fourth, the Ems threw five runs on the board to take the lead and secure a victory. It was the first match-up of a three-game series between the teams and gave the Ems a 3-1 overall record against Everett this season.

The Ems entered Monday night coming from a five-game series against Boise where they dropped three games to remain barely above .500 at 17-15.

They needed a win against the AquaSox to remain atop of the Northwest League West Division.

But the Ems got off to a rough start: Everett's first batter, shortstop Oswaldo Navarro, knocked one to the left wall for a double and eventually scored on a single by left fielder Nick Orlando.

Navarro earned two runs for the AquaSox and burnt the Ems with two stolen bases in the top of the third.

"I've been working really hard and I just saw the ball well," Navarro said. "We lost tonight but there's going to be another day."

The AquaSox put two runs on the board in the first as Orlando scored on a double steal. Designated hitter Jeremy Dutton was stealing second, and as Ems second baseman Peeter Ramos realized he wouldn't make the play, he immediately turned the ball home but couldn't get Orlando in time.

Eugene turned around and had one of many answers. After center fielder Brian Wahlbrink got a single, left fielder Ryan Johnson came to the plate and ripped one over the right wall.

It was Johnson's second home run as an Emerald. Johnson ended with two



Jessica Waters Emerald

Center fielder Brian Wahlbrink (36) congratulates Ryan Johnson (27) on hitting a two-run homer in the bottom of the first to tie the game.

RBI's on the night, along with his one out-of-the-park hit to tie the score 2-2.

After stalling in the second, Everett got things going again in the third as Navarro continued to hurt Eugene. After hitting one into center for a single, Navarro eventually scored to give Everett a one-run lead.

Thanks to AquaSox pitcher Felix Hernandez, the Ems tied the game 3-3 off two wild pitches in the bottom of the third. After shortstop Alex Garcia got a single to first, he had an easy move to second off the first wild pitch.

Garcia then ran to third off a single and scored the tying run off another wild pitch from Hernandez (5-1) who got the loss on the night.

The AquaSox just kept bringing it to the Ems as right fielder Samuel Bradford and first baseman Bryan LaHair both scored in the top of the fourth. Bradford earned the fourth stolen base

of the night for Everett uncontested.

But the Ems proved that Everett had nothing they couldn't match. After Johnson was walked to first, catcher Colt Morton tied the game up with a two-run shot and the Ems' second home run of the night over the right field wall.

"The guy left me one up and out and it just had enough to get out of here," Morton said. "It felt great and we've been working on staying through balls a lot more."

The Ems went through their entire batting lineup in the fourth while managing to break out to a three run lead. As the series continued, first baseman Fernando Valenzuela was walked to first and then advanced to second off another wild pitch.

Right fielder Casey Baker hit a line drive up the left field line for a double that scored Valenzuela and advanced

third baseman Justin Smyres to third. Smyres would eventually score along with Baker.

The end of the fourth proved the end of the dog fight between the squads. The Ems maintained their 8-5 lead through six innings.

Everett gave a scare in the top of the seventh when Bradford drove one up center field to score Orlando and Dutton.

Yet the AquaSox didn't have enough in the end and couldn't put a run on the board in the final two innings.

"That's an old fashion hardball game right there," Manager Roy Howell said. "Both sides were battling and that is what makes it a great game. It shows on both sides that they're playing the game well."

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## Thomas

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good old days prior to the mid-1990s are now gone.

Depressing isn't it?

With last season's team antics, you have to wonder whether anything or anybody can bring this team out of the dark black hole

they've dug for themselves.

In 2002-03 alone, Damon Stoudamire was caught twice carrying marijuana, once just this month. Rasheed Wallace earned a seven-game suspension after an entanglement with a referee, and was also caught with marijuana once with Stoudamire. Ruben Patterson was arrested on domestic assault charges in November.

Portland's response to the horrific team image was, as history shows, restructure. Fire the president and general manager, send your future Hall of Famer to Chicago and draft an 18-

year-old high schooler that will not contribute to your squad for at least two years.

A job well-done? Not likely. The Blazers are dealing with young kids when they need someone who can contribute now. They have a 38-year-old center with bad knees, along with plenty of firecrackers with short fuses in the starting lineup.

Portland's image, its team and its performance are all in the dog house. It's a roster full of stars who were given a second chance and continued to mess up. One can only hope that Paul Allen and his billions know what they're doing because, as of

now, it doesn't show.

But this new transition could have an effect that reminds us of 1988-89, when after one season, the Blazers went to the NBA Finals. With an outcome that is as stable as Wallace's temper, let's hope the Blazers don't meet the Lakers again in the first round.

But all in all, one thing is for sure. The good old days will be sorely missed.

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## Mac Court

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proximity to campus are located on Franklin Boulevard in Glenwood and right before crossing the bridge into Springfield.

"Every single site has its advantages and disadvantages, and it's just a tradeoff when having to make a choice," Williams said. "There's a lot of speculation but there's always speculation and we are trying to go about this in a professional manner."

Several University officials were hesitant to comment on the pros and cons of the different sites in

identifying which one has an edge over another.

The three remaining sites allow for easy access by students and according to Williams the University expects student to walk from campus to the games: The new federal courthouse location, located just off the Ferry Street Bridge; the Williams' Bakery site, located on East 13th Avenue near the Hamilton complex; and the old Coca-Cola bottling plant site located on Riverfront Parkway.

Williams' Bakery did not return phone calls regarding the possibility of their site being chosen.

CSL International, which was hired by the University to file a report regarding the capabilities of each site location based upon the criteria, should soon help administrators make an educated decision.

"The bottom line is Mac Court is outdated and it's 77 years old," Moos said. "And as much as we all love it and have so many fond memories, we've got to be looking to the future and forming a vision of where we're going to be 10, 20, 30, 50 years from now."

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