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Jesse Thomas  
Go the distance

## Gridiron practices bring out true fans

It wasn't the usual Monday afternoon in the football suite. Assistant coaches in a hurry and Mike Bellotti's secretary pasting message after message on the coach's door, reminding him of countless appointments. Recruits popping in and out of the office, guides giving tours and the secretary writing up scholarship letters.

That same Monday, it's 6:34 p.m. and more than half of the football team gathers, awaiting voluntary practice in the confines of the shade cast by one small tree outside the Casanova Center. Dressed in athletic shorts and sleeveless shirts, the players do what they can to stay cool in the 90-plus-degree weather that has engulfed Eugene.

And among the nearly 60 athletes who take the field, there is just one fan — Charles Oliver. Oliver has been an Oregon fan since 1994, and hasn't missed a home game in more than three years. The 62-year-old who is "going on 20" only made it to his second practice of the summer, but for the past two years he had never missed a summer workout.

Why attend every summer practice?

"The summer workouts are more important than the fall," the former walk-on cornerback at the University of Colorado-Boulder said. "Here you see who wants to play, who wants to work and who wants to be the leader."

And so the questions loom: Who does want to play for the team that wrapped up a 7-6 record last season, the worst one since 1996? Who wants to work for a team that, after starting undefeated, went 1-6 to finish the season? And who wants to be the leader of a team that has no defined leader amid its uncertain future? Kellen Clemens or Jason Fife? Who will take the wheel and drive the freight train that is Oregon football?

Although Fife had the wheel for most of 2002 as he tried to establish himself as something other than "the guy who came after Joey," he choked in the Seattle Bowl by throwing 1 of 10 for four yards. We all have off-days, but it was a bowl game nonetheless.

And on that blistering cold Monday morning, Clemens managed 19 of 31 for 161 yards passing. A look into the future? Probably. But it is likely that Clemens and Fife will share the ranks of football's most clutch position.

And Mr. Oliver is just fine with that.

"With either Jason or Kellen we can put up 35 points a day," he said.

At least the defensive line can look to some good news. Oregon's newest marketing tool in defensive tackles Igor Olshansky and Haloti Ngata weigh in at a combined 644 pounds. Opponents might want to move out of the way.

And for Oregon's offensive line? Well, they can at least look to experience, with nearly three-quarters of the line upperclassmen.

Samie Parker is back for one last go-around  
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## Sweat for success

Voluntary summer workouts have become a critical piece of Oregon's fall success

By Jesse Thomas  
Sports Editor

Football is the life four days a week for free safety Keith Lewis. With the exception of Wednesday, Lewis is in the weight room every afternoon, and on the practice field by 6:30 p.m., ready to run drills.

Lewis is one of more than 50 players who opted to take the field for "voluntary" summer workouts. And although they are "voluntary" because of NCAA regulations, the team sees it differently.

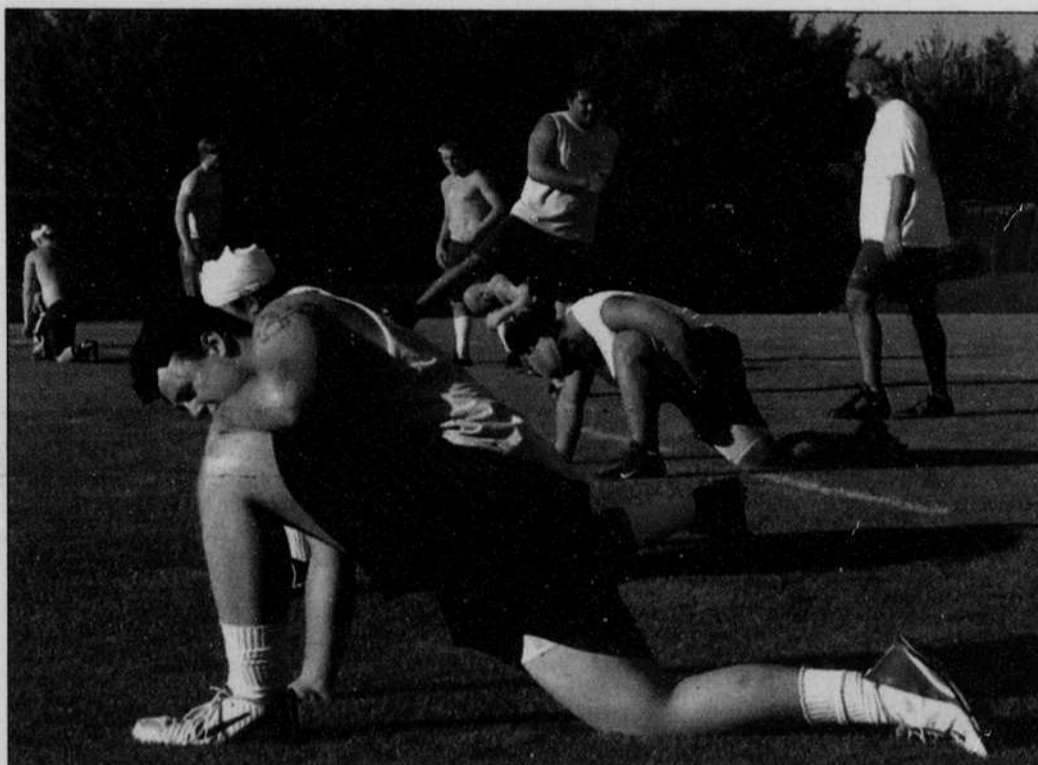
"Everybody pretty much looks for each other to make these workouts," said Lewis, a senior. "Because the chances of you working out at home are slim to none."

With the ever-increasingly competitive nature of collegiate football, teams look for any edge they can get over the competition, but mandatory summer workouts can't be a part of any advantage.

According to NCAA Division I football summer workout regulations, "Prospects and student athletes may not be required to participate in any summer workouts."

But for Lewis and the rest of the Oregon football team, "voluntary" can be interpreted as "mandatory" to prevent a repeat of last season's 7-6 finish, including a Seattle Bowl defeat.

"That's now where we need to be," Lewis said, referring to the importance of summer work-



Jessica Waters Emerald

Offensive guard Joey Forster stretches out with fellow Ducks at the beginning of Monday's voluntary practice.

outs. "It's us not wanting to repeat last year."

Senior offensive guard Joey Forster agreed.

"The players find it mandatory for each other," he said. "You kind of count on the other being there. It's something you need to do for your team and yourself."

Just five years ago, attendance at such workouts barely reached 15 at certain points. And in 1998 Oregon finished with a 8-4 record, but as head coach Mike Bellotti has noticed, increased summer attendance has accounted for increased season performance.

"Our players have come to recognize that as one of the keys to our success," Bellotti said. "Five years ago we started seeing a significant increase, to upwards of 50 players were around for the summers, and correspondingly, we had some of our best seasons. That reinforced the idea that (summer workouts are) a positive."

Yet Bellotti is not allowed to attend such voluntary workouts.

According to NCAA regulations, only a strength and conditioning coach may be present during voluntary workouts. That leaves Oregon's Jim Rad-

cliffe, the strength coach, as the only one to give orders.

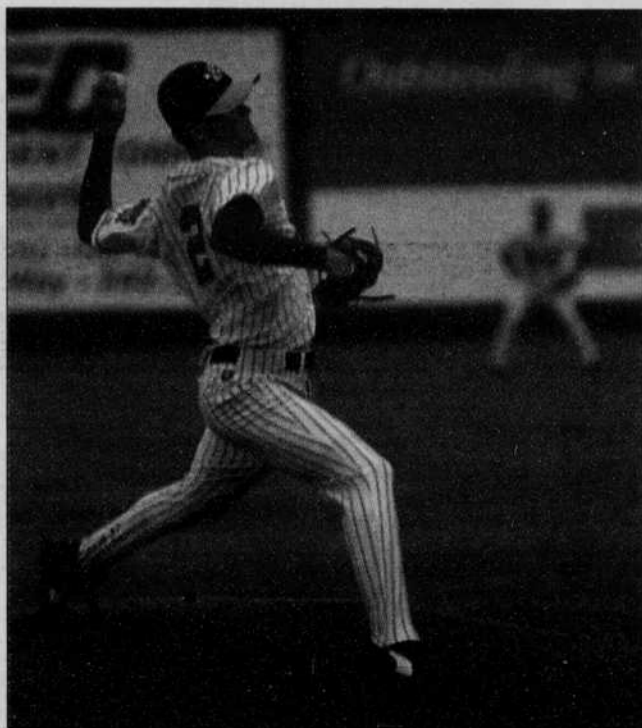
And in some players' eyes, it's beneficial not to have coaches present, which they said allows for a more relaxed atmosphere and provides team unity.

"It's good not to have them around," Forster said. "They are looking for self-motivation. Because when camp starts, they are in your face and intense."

The workouts essentially serve two purposes. They give players the opportunity to work out and stay in shape during the summer to allow for physical

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## Eugene becoming desperate for a 'W'



Jessica Waters Emerald

Left hander Sean Thompson will start Wednesday's game for the Ems against the Everett AquaSox. Thompson is 3-1 this season.

The Ems suffer through their second worst streak this season by dropping four straight games against Spokane

By Jesse Thomas  
Sports Editor

The Eugene Emeralds could be in a slump.

In a five-game series against Spokane that began Thursday, the Ems have lost four straight. The team that began the season 9-1 hasn't lost this many games since a six-game drought earlier this month.

### Round up

Spokane currently leads the entire Northwest League Division standings with a 26-13 record. Spokane (.667) has won six in a row and is 8-2 in its last ten games.

Prior to the series, the Ems were back in their winning ways. Eugene headed to Spokane on a four-game win streak with three coming in a series sweep against Everett.

Now the Ems are barely staying above the .500-mark with a record of 20-19. Monday night's results from the final game with Spokane were not available at press time; the Ems (.513) are otherwise 4-

6 in their last ten games.

But Wednesday could allow for the turnaround the Ems need: Eugene will again face the Everett AquaSox at Civic Stadium. The two teams have already met twice this season in three-game series' with the Ems dominating 5-1.

The Ems' only loss against the AquaSox came July 4 at the first meeting in Everett, where Eugene fell 6-2.

In Wednesday's matchup, the Ems will start left hander Sean Thompson. Thompson currently leads the Ems with a 3-1 record and ranks fifth with a 2.89 ERA. For the AquaSox, lefty Beau Hintz will take the mound.

But before the Ems can face the AquaSox, they will have to heal the scars from their second-worst drought of the season. The losing streak began Thursday night when Spokane handed Eugene its first loss in four games, 9-7.

Spokane's Abigail Sandoval was the man of the night as he went 3 for 4 and provided the game-winning hit with a single in the seventh that scored Jeremy Cleveland. Prior to Thursday's matchup Sandoval had knocked in 14 runs in his last seven games with an astounding .481 batting average.

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