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Mindi Rice

The girl and the game

Cougars, Beavers dominate Northwest

There must be pigs flying over the Northwest section of the Pacific-10 Conference.

Oregon State and Washington State, the wayward step-siblings of the highly publicized and funded Ducks and Huskies, are leading the Pac-10.

I'm talking football here folks, not calf-roping or lawnmower relays.

The Cougars, in their defense of the 2002 Pac-10 Championship, are well on the road through the conference with a 5-1 record.

Washington State is in the top 25 nationally of eight categories, including the allowance of an average 81.3 rushing yards per game.

The thing that bodes best for the Cougars is a conference trend — in the past decade, nine of the 10 conference champions had seniors at quarterback. With the graduation of All-American Jason Gesser, senior Matt Kegel has stepped out of a shadow and into the limelight of success.

The Cougars hit a bump in the road Sept. 6 in a 29-26 overtime loss to then-feared, now-mocked Notre Dame.

Since that game, Washington State has gotten back on track. Blowing past teams one at a time, the Cougars are currently No. 6 in both national polls.

Hopefully some of those Eastern Washington Cougar faithful have made the drive to Seattle if for no other reason than to gloat.

Not that they needed an excuse to leave Pullman, anyway.

As for Oregon's neighbors to the north, the Beavers match the Cougars with a 5-1 record.

One thing Oregon State has unmatched in the conference is pass efficiency defense — its 88.22 rating is fourth in the nation.

Behind the arm of Derek Anderson and the legs of Steven Jackson, the Beavers are in the midst of their best conference start since 1968.

But don't tell them, or their returning and new head coach Mike Riley.

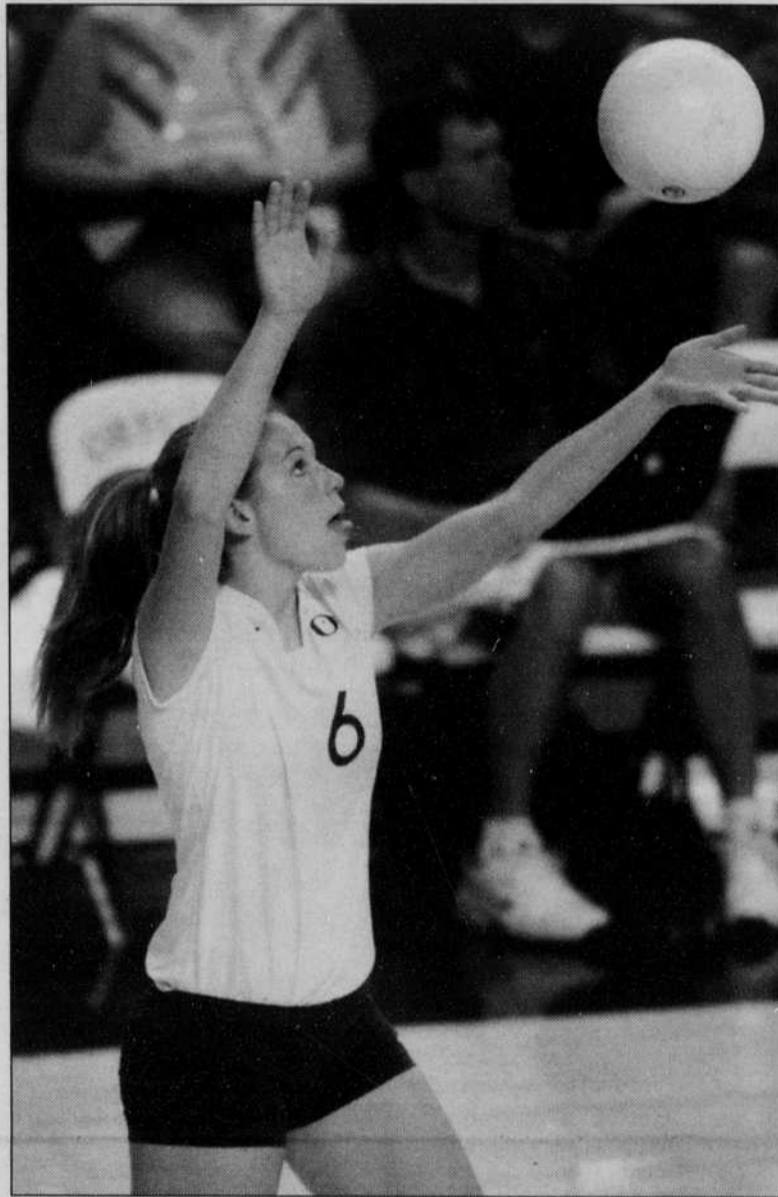
It seems that mum's the word on everything to do with publicity in Corvallis, especially Jackson's potential Heisman Trophy campaign.

Before previous seasons, Duck alumni have paid for posters in New York City and Los Angeles. Recently, Beaver believers mocked their rivals by essentially saying there would be no Heisman publicity in Who-ville.

Minus the State, the sibling schools are in the midst of tough and tougher seasons.

After falling victim to the Sports Illustrated jinx — or was it the Cougars running some Ducks into the mountains? — Oregon is 4-3, including a 1-2 conference record.

Between head coach Mike Bellotti

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Mark McCambridge Photographer

Freshman Allyson Leavitt made the transition from an attacker in high school to a defensive specialist in college with the guidance of Oregon coaches.

Oregon looking for Pac-10 win against Wildcats

The Ducks will have to deal with sophomore Kim Glass in tonight's Arizona match

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

After returning home last week for only the second time all season, the Oregon volleyball team is back on the road tonight against Arizona.

The Ducks are searching for their first Pacific-10 Conference win of the season and first win against any opponent since defeating Villanova, 3-0, on Sept. 13.

Oregon (3-13 overall, 0-7 Pac-10) has lacked the ability to score points in bunches and has often succumbed to more experienced opponents that are able to jump out to an early lead. The Wildcats (7-10, 1-6) should present the Ducks with ample scoring opportunities.

They lead the conference in errors per game (9.89).

Arizona and Arizona State "make the most errors of any teams in the conference, so they give you (opportunities)," head coach Carl Ferreira

said. "But they have very explosive and dynamic athletes."

One of those athletes is sophomore Kim Glass. The 6-foot-2-inch outside hitter was the American Volleyball Coaches Association National Freshman of the Year in 2002. Glass set Wildcat single season records in kills (556), kills per game (4.96) and 20-plus kill matches (14) during her freshman campaign.

"She is an international, world class volleyball player and athlete," Ferreira said. "We need to attack her. We're going to try and triple block her and not just let her have her way."

This season, Glass is averaging 6.23 points per game. Middle blocker Bre Ladd (3.91) and outside hitter Jennifer Abernathy (3.12) are both averaging more than three points per game and are always offensive threats. Jolene Killough, a 6-foot-5-inch middle blocker, is a force at the net.

After being ranked third in the preseason Pac-10 poll, Arizona is tied for eighth in the conference. Despite struggling, the Wildcats have been competitive in all but two of their conference matches. They have shown flashes of being an elite team, with wins over No. 5 Pepperdine and No. 8 UCLA.

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The jinx lives on in Florida's game 7 win; Cubs denied entrance into World Series

The Marlins prevail, 9-6, to defeat the Cubs and earn a World Series trip for the second time in their history

By Mike Phillips
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

CHICAGO — Long live the goat.

If you don't believe in the Cubs' jinx, the Cubs' hex or the ridiculous Curse of the Billy Goat, you haven't been paying attention.

It seems Jack McKeon could start Beyonce Knowles at shortstop and use David Letterman as his closer and still beat the Cubs.

The Marlins were patient enough to wait for the inevitable, the eventual collapse of a franchise that has been inventing ways to lose since Teddy Roosevelt was president. The Cubs lost their way to the World Series as only the Cubs could — in a gut-wrenching, painful series that will be remembered more for a bizarre play in the stands than for anything the Marlins did.

Crazy? Sure it is, but it makes as much sense as the Cubs' sad history. The Marlins, barely 11 years old, are off to their second World Series after beating the Cubs, 9-6, in Game 7 of the NLCS after the Cubs blew a 5-3 lead.

The Cubs, who started playing at Wrigley Field in 1916, haven't been to the Series since 1945 and haven't won it since 1908. Everyone knows those painful and unfathomable numbers by now. Follow a Cubs fan to a roulette wheel. If he bets red, you bet black — and you can't lose.

It has been this way for decades: The '69 Cubs had three Hall of Famers and baseball's best team — and lost. The '84 Cubs were nine outs away from the Series — with the best pitcher in

baseball leading 3-0 — and lost.

Cubs fans have suffered long and hard, but this might be their greatest heartache. You can add Steve Bartman's name to the long lineage of Cubdom, a river of misery that runs from one generation of Cubs fans to another and another and another...

Bartman, a self-proclaimed Cubs fan, tried to catch a foul ball down the left-field line in the eighth inning of Game 6, and when the inning stayed alive the Marlins rallied for eight runs and an unbelievable 8-3 win to force Game 7.

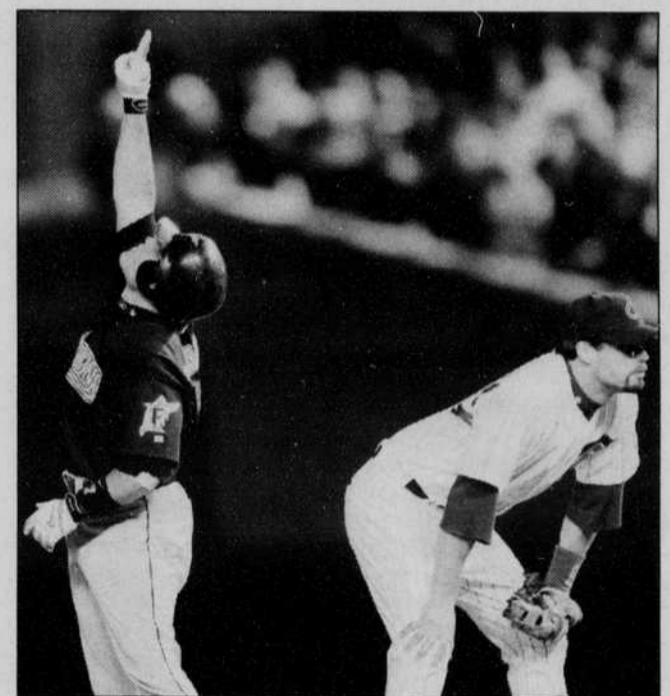
The Game 7 loss left Cubs fans stunned, and the feeling in Chicago this winter might be that this team needs a psychiatrist more than another bat or arm in the bullpen.

"Sometimes you just have to look back and at the end say, they might have been better than us," said Cubs manager Dusty Baker, who came to Chicago this year after leading the San Francisco Giants to the World Series last year. "It's disappointing, but we have established a foundation for next year."

Cubs fans will blame Bartman — the scapegoat who takes his place next to William "Gus" Sianis' Billy Goat as a part of the tragic Cubs lore.

"It's going to take a while to sink in," Baker said.

It was almost apropos that Hall of Famer Fergie Jenkins, the Cubs' ace in '69, threw out the first



Joe Rimkus Jr. Miami Herald

Ivan Rodriguez points to the sky during Florida's win Wednesday.

pitch, because this series and this Cubs collapse was all about pitching.

How could the Cubs lose? They had Mark Prior. They had Kerry Wood.

The Marlins would have to beat one of them at least once, and then, after the Cubs took a 3-1 lead, the Marlins faced an impossible task: they would have to beat Prior and Wood.

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