

Sports Editor:  
Hank Hager  
hank.hager@dailymerald.com

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Behind the dish

## Rodriguez deal draws even more shock value

So the New York Yankees just acquired Alex Rodriguez from the Texas Rangers.

Should we all be impressed by this recent move? Is an approximate \$190 million payroll really something the Yankees should be proud of?

Better yet, will this really make a difference in the scheme of things?

My answer is no, no and no. And not because it's the Yankees, or Rodriguez, whose contract is more of an albatross than a benefit. Unless, of course, your name is Alex Rodriguez.

What most people forget is that New York lacks a seemingly forgotten post-season ingredient.

### Pitching.

Mike Mussina and Javier Vazquez anchor the rotation. From then on, though, it lacks any kind of bite. Kevin Brown is an excellent starter, but he's been to the doctor's office so often it would make Eric Lindros' head spin.

Mariano Rivera is a quality closer, but the rest of the bullpen is questionable. And in the American League East, bullpens can mean 10 extra wins or losses.

So, unless George Steinbrenner finds a crown jewel from his farm system, the Yankees will have to bash their way to the pennant. Which is possible, but not a safe way to play ball.

There's an underling principle in all of this. The move will create a long line of assumptions that the Yankees are the team to beat.

Think twice before doing so.

Every so often these days we all make judgments in the world of sport based on shock value. So the Yankees received Rodriguez; therefore, they will be the best.

The Los Angeles Lakers acquired Gary Payton and Karl Malone this offseason. Reactions across the country suggested they would roll.

Look at them now.

It's a fallacy to assume that a team will automatically be the team to beat because of one big move. The Florida Marlins were a ragtag team of relative nobodys before the season, yet they beat the Bronx Bombers in the Fall Classic.

The year before, the Anaheim Angels came out of nowhere to stun the San Francisco Giants for the World Series crown.

This even stretches to collegiate athletics. Sure, Southern California had a whole host of big names that carried the Trojans to a partial national championship. But USC was an all-around dominant team. The Trojans didn't win the Rose Bowl solely on the shoulders of quarterback Matt Leinart.

No, the Trojans won because they outworked, out hustled and outsmarted their opponents. Their pieces fit beautifully and it showed in the end.

Even college baseball saw the best of

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## Steen shows Oregon's depth at point

Kayla Steen received more minutes than normal Saturday due to an injury to guard Corrie Mizusawa; Steen played 22

By **Mindi Rice**  
Senior Sports Reporter

Saturday's loss to Washington provided a window to the soul for Oregon's bench.

When point guard Corrie Mizusawa, who has started all 24 games for the Ducks, played limited minutes because of a knee injury, senior Kayla Steen found her opportunity to step in at the point.

### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Steen, Oregon's returning assists leader, played 22 minutes Saturday — 12 more than her season average — and contributed three points, five rebounds and three assists.

"Kayla Steen came in and played very well and was very gritty for us," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "She got some boards for us and really took over when we needed her in replacement of Corrie."

Mizusawa matched Steen's three assists in her 15 minutes on the court, playing four minutes in the second half. By the 10-minute mark of the second period, Mizusawa had her warm-up jersey back on and had taken a seat toward the far end of the bench.

Despite limited minutes against Washington, the transfer junior moved up another spot on Oregon's single-season assists list. With four regular-season games and the Pacific-10 Conference tournament remaining, Mizusawa is No. 4 all-time with 157. She passed associate head coach Allison McNeill's 151 assists to move up on the list.

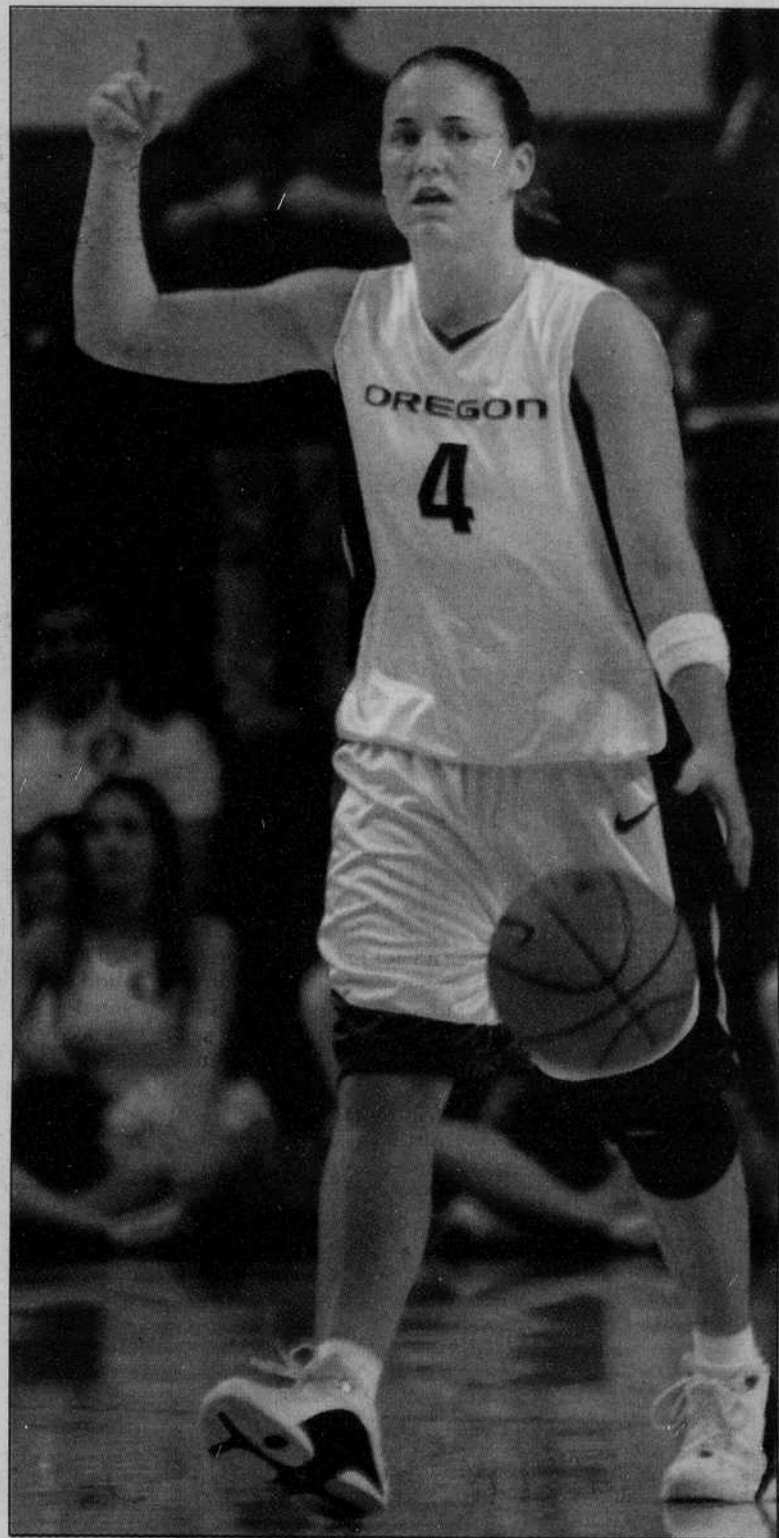
Mizusawa played 27 minutes against Washington State on Thursday in addition to her 15 on Saturday, both below her season average of 32.5 per game.

"Corrie has been diagnosed with a small meniscule tear and a bone bruise (on her left knee)," Smith said Monday. "We want the bone bruise to have time to heal, but she'll have to play through the meniscule tear."

The meniscus tear is the same injury that guard Chelsea Wagner plays on right now. Wagner's left knee is drained regularly and the sophomore wears a brace on her knee in games and practices. Smith said that once Mizusawa's bone bruise heals that the meniscus tear will be evaluated for a course of rehabilitation and work, possibly similar to what Wagner goes through with her knee.

Mizusawa played against both Washington schools with a brace on her knee after initially suffering the

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Senior Kayla Steen (4) earned kudos from head coach Bev Smith. She filled in for guard Corrie Mizusawa Saturday at the point against Washington. Mizusawa has an injured knee.

Erik Bishoff  
Photographer

## Cardinal move to top after 21st win

After North Carolina upset then-No. 1 Duke Sunday, Stanford moved into the nation's top spot on Monday

By **Jesse Thomas**  
Sports Reporter

One had to wonder, at least at some point, when 21-0 still wasn't good enough.

### MEN'S BASKETBALL

When is a school that has had its best start ever, an undefeated record, and hasn't lost a game since March 22, 2003, still not considered the best in the nation?

Well, for the past four weeks it was that way as Stanford (21-0 overall, 12-0 Pac-10) held the No. 2 spot in the Associated Press Top 25 poll, trailing Duke.

Now that Duke has lost to then-No. 21 North Carolina State on Sunday, 21-straight wins are finally enough to vault the Cardinal into the nation's top spot.

And as Stanford continues its winning ways, head coach Mike Montgomery is gradually becoming more accustomed to the fact that his team will likely keep winning.

"It's the best we've ever done at the school," Montgomery said. "I had to change my tune with the guys. We're not afraid of winning every game. I think some of that was starting to creep in, that it would be bad if we won every game."

"We're not trying to win every game, but it's ludicrous for us to act and think like we're going to win every game and we're the greatest."

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No crowd or amount of rowdy fans have been able to stop Josh Childress and Stanford from earning 21-straight wins. Childress had 15 points and nine rebounds in Stanford's win over Cal.

Erik Bishoff  
Photographer

