

SPORTS

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Online Exclusive:
See how the Oregon men's and women's
tennis teams did during spring break
only at www.dailymerald.com

Monday, March 29, 2004



Hank Hager
Behind the dish

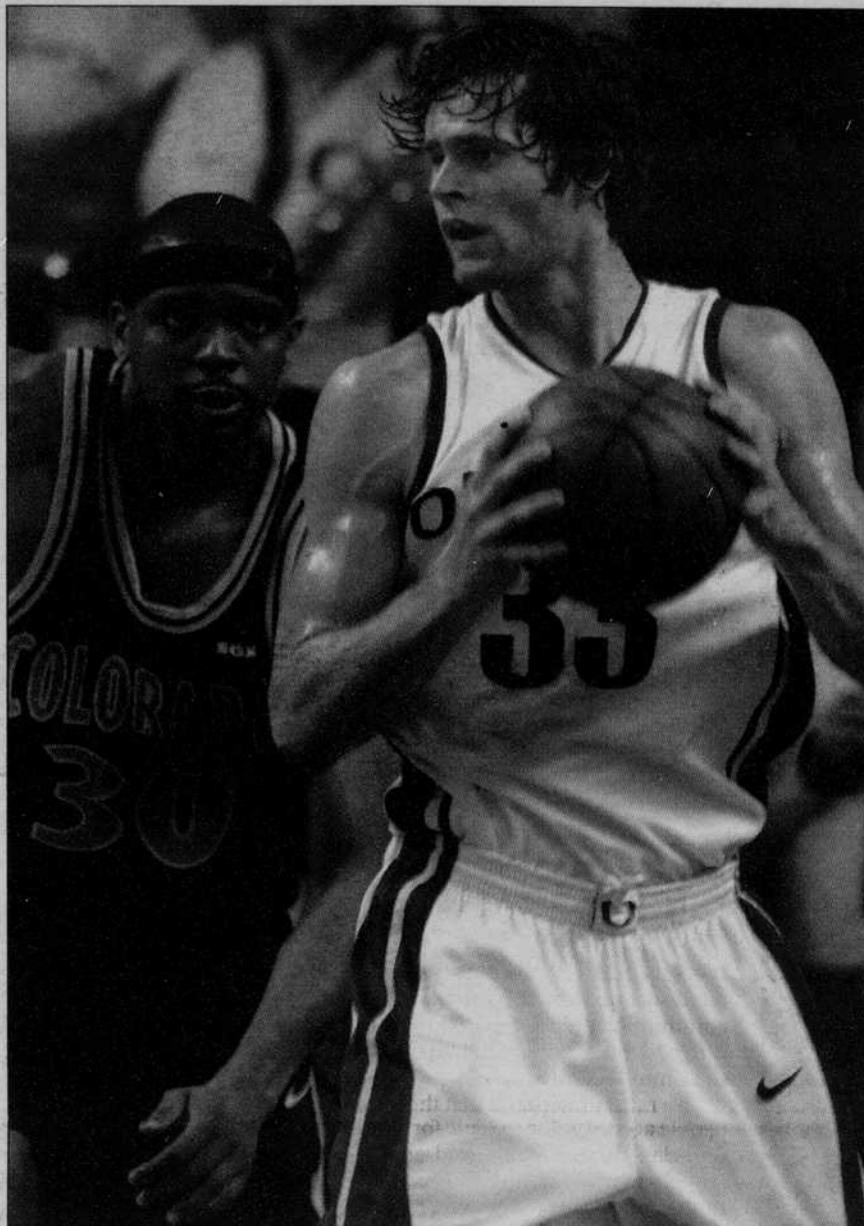
Pit Crew rightfully shows its softer side

Two games in a six day span. Games against two non-traditional rivals — Colorado and George Mason — that play in the Big 12 Conference and Colonial Athletic Association, respectively. Two crowds that shook every beam and every fabric of McArthur Court. And that was with finals week and spring break in full force.

In fact, the 7,000-plus in attendance was as impressive as Luke Jackson's 29 straight points during Oregon's comeback win over Colorado. The scoreboard was shaking, press row was rocking (a first, according to many members of the media) and the 78-year-old building was living up to its image.

Six days later, Oregon's 68-54 win over George Mason was sold out, and the fans who attended made it clear how much they loved what the Ducks were doing.

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Adam Amato Senior Photographer

Luke Jackson played his final game at McArthur Court in a win over George Mason.

Three wins down, on to New York

Oregon rolls to three victories in an eight-day span to advance to the semifinals of the NIT

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

Luke Jackson scored 29 straight points and 31 of Oregon's last 33 in a win over Colorado.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Andre Joseph scored a career-high 22 points against George Mason as the Ducks rolled past the Patriots.

As a team, the Ducks held Notre Dame to 61 points in a win over the

Fighting Irish.

What does that all add up to? A trip to New York for Oregon (18-12 overall) for a chance at the 2004 National Invitation Tournament championship.

The Ducks' came from behind to defeat the Buffaloes, 77-72, dominated the Patriots, 68-54, and outlasted Notre Dame, 65-61, to get on a roll.

"Especially with Aaron (Brooks) coming back and getting into a better rhythm with the team, we're playing better defense," Jackson said. "It kind of seems, especially after the Stanford game, we're a little bit battle-tested and guys believed what we're able to do if we just defend guys."

"I feel good about the way we're playing right now."

The Ducks can feel good about themselves because of an 18-point comeback against the Buffaloes. Oregon found itself down by 15 at halftime and in an almost assured one-and-done position.

Not so, Jackson said. He catapulted the Ducks back from the brink, scoring 14 of the team's 16 overtime points. Before that, he had scored Oregon's last 17 points of regulation, including a leaning three-pointer with 20 seconds to play to send the game into overtime.

The Creswell native ended the game with 40 points, two shy of a career best.

"Forty points is an amazing number to hit," Colorado center David Harrison said after the game. "When he came down and

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'Tenacious competitors' lead Ducks

Oregon finds success in Tucson as a trio of Duck decathletes post personal bests during break

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

The performance of three Duck decathletes highlighted a successful spring break for the Oregon men's track and field team.

MEN'S TRACK

Andy Young, Gabriel LeMay and Ryan Voge each finished in the top six and eclipsed the NCAA provisional standard of 7,000 points March 23 and 24 at the Mike May-

nard Wildcat Combined Events in Tucson, Ariz.

The event marked the season opener for the trio, with each finishing among the top four collegians.

Young, a redshirt sophomore, led all collegiate athletes and finished third overall with 7,179 points. He finished with second-day marks of 15.23 seconds in the 110 hurdles, 121 feet-5 inches in the discus, 15-7 in the pole vault, 170-2 in the javelin and 4:22.73 in the 1,500 meters.

Young's second-day total of 3,669 points was a personal best for the Newberg native. His first-day total of 3,510 was also a personal best, including marks of 11.70 in the 100, 22-0.25 in the long jump, 34-8.25 in the shot put, 6-3.5 in the high

jump and 50.27 in the 400.

Voge, a redshirt sophomore, finished sixth overall with 7,054 points, topping his former personal best by 606 points. The Hillsdale native's previous best of 6,448 came during the 2003 Mountain West Championships when he competed for New Mexico.

Voge's second-day performance included marks of 16.00 in the 110 hurdles, 95-4 in the discus, 14-11 in the pole vault, 160-7 in the javelin and 4:42.56 in the 1,500.

His second-day total of 3,191 was nearly 300 points better than his previous second-round best of 2,894 points during last year's California Invite.

LeMay, a redshirt senior, finished fourth overall with 7,175 points and

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Oregon hurler throws no-no

Ani Nyhus threw a no-hitter Saturday against Utah State, striking out a school-record 16 batters for Oregon's 25th win of the season

By Mindi Rice
Senior Sports Reporter

Oregon pitcher Ani Nyhus had the keys to stop the bleeding at Howe Field this weekend.

Nyhus scripted the team's storyline — she pitched in all three of Oregon's games and picked up two dramatic wins, including a come-from-behind victory to open Pacific-10 Conference play, and setting a strikeout record while throwing a no-hitter against Utah State.

The weekend closed with Nyhus' no-hitter, a 2-0 victory against the Aggies in the second game of a doubleheader on Saturday.

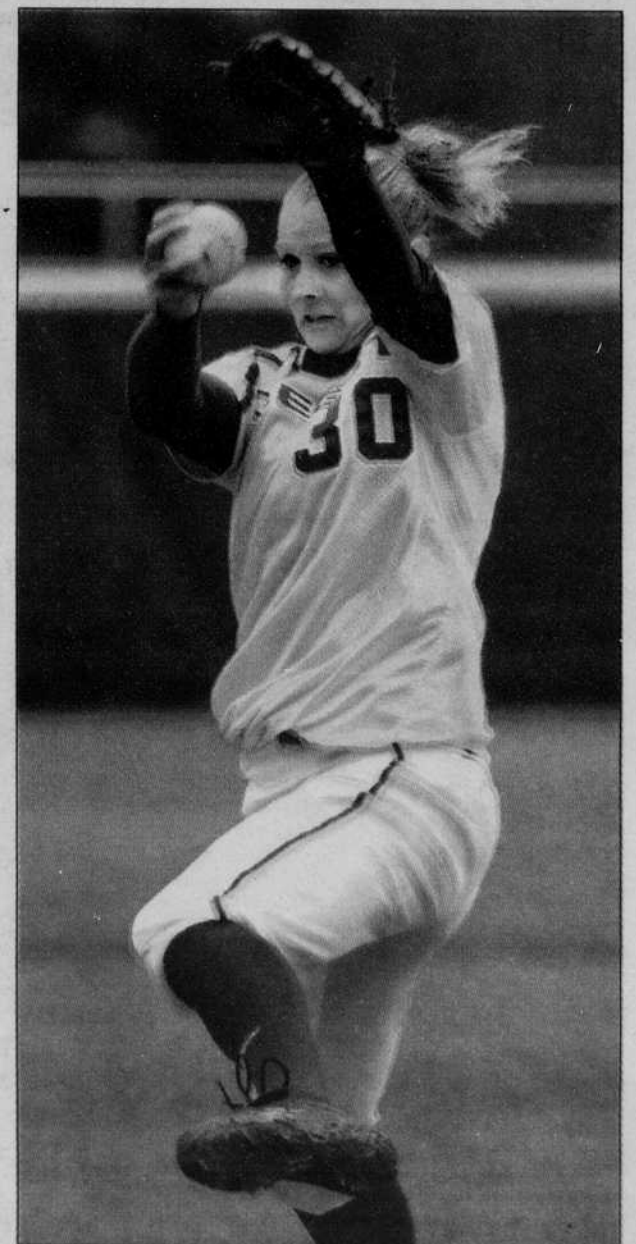
It was a close call in the seventh, however, when Aggie batter Casey Smith hit a shot to Oregon second baseman Erin Goodell. Goodell bobbled the ball slightly in her attempt to throw it to first baseman Kristi Leiter, but Smith was safe at first when the ball got to Leiter. The decision was made to call the play an error on Goodell, preserving Nyhus' no-hit performance.

"The no-hitter was more on my mind than the strikeouts," Nyhus said. "It was early on in the game that I started looking at the scoreboard, but in the seventh I didn't think about it as much."

Nyhus also struck out a career-high and Oregon single-game record 16 batters, including striking out the side in the first and second. The old record, 15 strikeouts by Rachelle Taylor, was set in 1994.

In the bottom of the first, third baseman Dani Baird scored on a single by Kayleen Hudson to give the Ducks a 1-0 lead. Oregon padded its lead in the fourth with another run. It was all the Ducks needed to hold on for the 2-0 victory behind Nyhus' stellar game.

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Erik R. Bishoff Photographer

Ani Nyhus threw a no-hitter in Oregon's 2-0 win against Utah State.