

## GIVING

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Sica's life, but one lucky young man was able to see a completely different side of him. Sica presented the boy, who was paralyzed at age 10 in an automobile accident, with a racing wheelchair at halftime of last year's spring football game.

The money was raised in last year's inaugural Birdie-a-thon, where Sica, members of his family and fellow teammates were sponsored by Chambers Communications to make birdies during the golf season. By the

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Steve Nosler  
Oregon head coach

end of the season, more than \$3,200 dollars was raised.

"That is something that I am pretty proud of," Sica said. "I just went to high school and grew up in a family where charity work was pretty important."

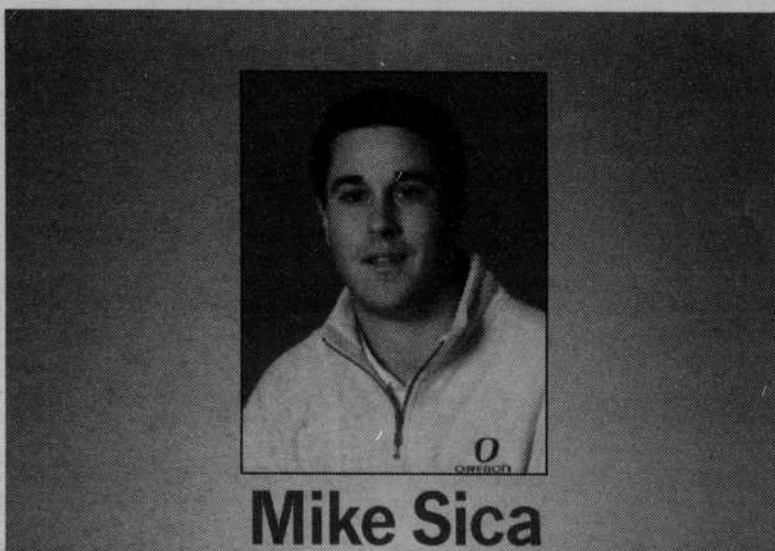
Sica also is involved with the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, which does community service work throughout the year.

"We have days where we invite, like, 10 elementary schools and we get all the athletes and play with them over at the Moshofsky Center for the day," Sica said. "It's fun to be able to give back, because we are so lucky to be athletes here at Oregon, and it's nice to show the community that we're thankful for what they do for us."

This year, with help from the Sparrow's Club and Chambers Communications, Sica again will head the Birdie-a-thon to raise money for a 3-year-old boy with leukemia.

"He needs a bone marrow transplant and his insurance won't cover it, so we're trying to raise money for him," Sica said.

Sica's mother, Joan, was one of the



Mike Sica

**Before Oregon:** Sica was a three-time West Catholic Athletic League selection for San Francisco's St. Ignatius High School. Won 16 prep tournaments and also captured the 1999 Robert O'Brien Junior and the California Golf Tour Amateur. He holds the course record (66) at the Olympic Club's Ocean Course.

**At Oregon:** Redshirted in 1999.

**2000-01:** Played in five events. Tied for 17th at the Western Intercollegiate (76-73-69-218) with a career-low 69 in the final round. Tied for 49th at the Pacific-10 Conference Championships.

**2001-02:** Came on strong in the spring as Oregon's No. 5 golfer. Tied for 29th at the PING/Arizona Intercollegiate. Top 50 finishes at the Cleveland Golf Classic, the Duck Invitational, the U.S. Intercollegiate and the Pac-10 Championships.

**2002-03:** Oregon's No. 4 golfer with a 74.7 stroke average. Eleven rounds at or below par. Solid spring included a tie for 10th at the Western Intercollegiate and a tie for 14th at the Duck Invitational. In the fall, Sica tied for 12th at the Alister Mackenzie Invitational. Shot of the year came at the NCAA West Regional when Sica made a final round hole-in-one on the 204-yard, par-3 eighth hole, which propelled the Ducks into the NCAA Championships. The only golfer to advance into the final round and finished tied for 42nd at the NCAA's.

biggest influences for him. "I grew up just helping her out," Sica said. "I can remember in middle school, going to wrap presents for underprivileged families. It's nice to be able to give back."

Nosler said Sica's willingness to volunteer helps him stand out on the team.

"He's worked quite hard on different projects that we've done as far as

community service projects, and he has always been willing to do that type of thing," Nosler said. "He will always have a soft spot in my heart for what he was."

A soft spot, indeed. One that most hope will continue wherever Sica's travels take him.

Brian Smith is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

## BRIEFS

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### Gordon expected to leave UConn for NBA

STORRS, Conn. — After UConn defeated Georgia Tech for the national championship, Ben Gordon stood on the ladder and cut his own piece off the Alamodome net.

From the UConn section, fans began to chant, "One more year."

Gordon looked at them and shook his head.

Gordon will hold a press conference at 3 p.m. EDT today at Gampel Pavilion and add words to his gesture.

Neither Gordon nor UConn coach Jim Calhoun has said Gordon is leaving but it does not take an abacus to do this math.

The junior guard is being projected as a Top 10 pick in the June 24 NBA draft — some mock drafts have him going as high as No. 6 — and he already has accomplished everything he can on a college basketball court.

Gordon led the Huskies in scoring this season (18.5) and was even better in the NCAA Tournament. In six games, he was UConn's leading scorer (21.2), was named most outstanding player of the Phoenix regional and, along with Emeka Okafor and Rashad Anderson, was one of three UConn players named to the all-tournament team at the Final Four.

This is likely only the first such press conference in Storrs this spring. Okafor, who will graduate in May but has another season of eligibility available, is also expected to make the jump to the NBA.

To be eligible for the draft, an underclassman must send a letter to the NBA by May 10.

If a player with eligibility remaining has not signed with an agent, he can return to his college team if he withdraws from the draft by June 17. Gordon said in San Antonio last week that if he were to enter the draft, he would begin looking for an agent immediately.

Okafor is being projected as the first pick in the draft.

There was a time this season when it was uncertain whether Gordon

would be able to join his old roommate. Then down the stretch he banished the image of "Gentle Ben" and became a forceful scorer in the clutch.

He hit the winning hoop against Pittsburgh in the Big East tournament final and carried that momentum into the NCAA Tournament. He helped the Huskies reach the Final Four with 36 points, one shy of his career-high, against Alabama in the Phoenix Regional final. He had 18 points against Duke and 21 against Georgia Tech.

After winning the national championship, Calhoun seemed to signal this day in his postgame press conference.

"I do think (Ben and Emeka) are ready for the NBA," Calhoun said. "If they're in position, they should leave because they're both incredible basketball players and have accomplished so much in college basketball."

Gordon accomplished much in three years. The 6-2, 195-pound guard from Mount Vernon, N.Y., evolved from a sixth man as a freshman on a team that was eliminated in the Elite Eight into one of the mainstays.

Along the way, he scored 1,795 points and was part of 85 wins, two Big East championships and a national championship.

There were so many highlights. He hit big threes against Arizona in a thrilling overtime win his freshman season. Six weeks later, he stuck one of the biggest shots of UConn's season — a three in the Big East tournament against Villanova — and this caused Caron Butler to start calling Gordon "the next one," a prophecy Gordon fulfilled this season.

Gordon's draft position isn't stable — it rarely is for guards — but he is unlikely to drop in any individual workouts because of his speed, skills and leaping ability. And NBA teams are not as willing to take risks on young guards the way they might for a big man.... Okafor was named Sports Illustrated's Player of the Year. He'll be featured in the April 19 issue.

— Matt Eagan  
The Hartford Courant (KRT)

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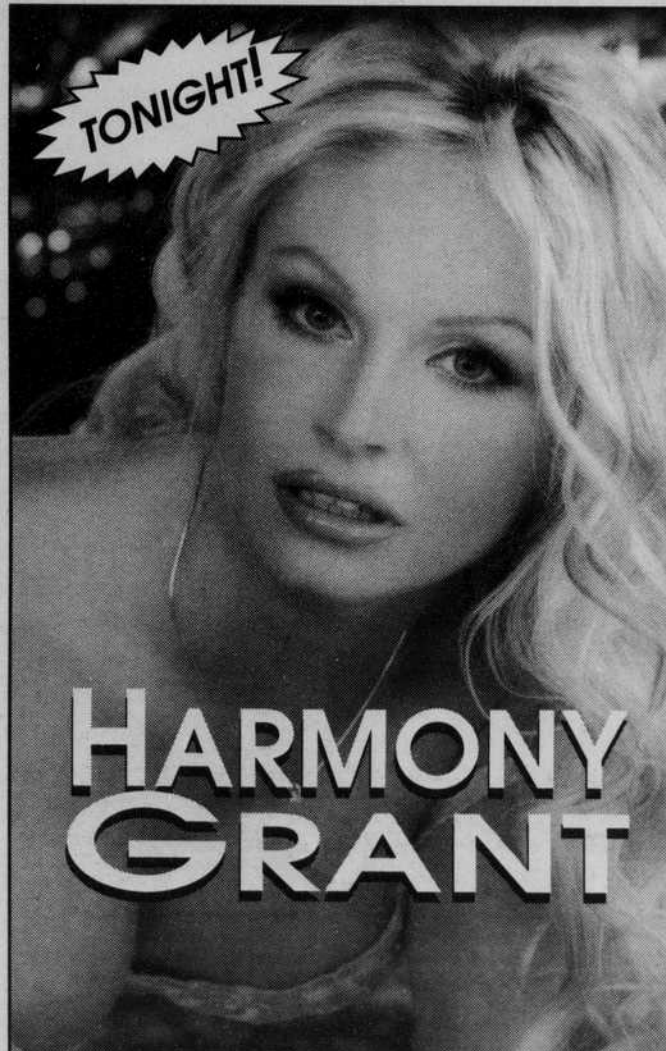
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