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Best bet  
NBA Playoffs:  
Indiana vs. Miami  
5 p.m., ESPN

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Hank Hager  
Behind the dish

## Numbers don't lie for softball

Numbers, especially statistics, are big in the softball world.

They tell the story. Suggest a trend. Give reasons for a demise. And tell us why the most valuable player is indeed the MVP.

So let's take a look at the Oregon softball team, past and present. Let's try to figure out their 2004 season, where it's been and where it might be going.

This is all, of course, up in the air. So far, it has been a season of misdirection.

The Ducks, ranked 12th in the nation in the USA Today poll and two spots higher in the ESPN version, round out their 2004 regular season with a game Friday at Howe Field against Stanford, then a doubleheader the following day against California.

These games take extra special importance after three tough, but relatively unexpected, losses.

Oregon (35-14 overall, 9-9 Pacific-10 Conference) was swept by Arizona and Arizona State this past weekend on the road. Arizona, ranked first in the country, is obviously no slouch and easily defeated the Ducks, 5-0.

Arizona State, which sits last in the conference, got the Ducks in two straight, 1-0 and 3-0.

What do these figures mean? Well, simply that the Ducks are in danger of dunking themselves under the .500 mark in Pac-10 play. Oregon batted a paltry .223 against the Wildcats and Sun Devils,

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## Oregon aided by consistent field play

Oregon has had only a few problems with inconsistency, although no one area of their playing is the main source

By **Mindi Rice**  
Senior Sports Reporter

While the No. 12 Ducks (37-17 overall, 9-9 Pacific-10 Conference) hover one game below their conference win total from last season, they remain among the top 15 teams in the nation.

In the Pacific-10 Conference, five teams are currently ranked among the top 10, and Oregon has beaten all of them at least once.

The Ducks have been helped by consistency, although not often is one area consistent for the majority of the time.

During March, the Ducks were on an

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## Andrus confident heading into Pac-10s

Abby Andrus expects to further her top track efforts this weekend in Tucson, Ariz.

By **Alex Tam**  
Sports Reporter

Abby Andrus is anticipating a return to the NCAA Championships.

Andrus, a redshirt senior from Peoria, Ariz., set a new personal best in the heptathlon this past Saturday at the first portion of the Pacific-10 Conference Championships.

"I was really happy with it," Andrus said. "It was just solid all the way around. Overall, I was pretty satisfied."

Her total score of 5,325 points beat her previous best by 22 points and ranks her fifth on Oregon's all-time list. Andrus sits right behind two-time All-American Jennifer Thomas at 5,452 points, who posted the mark in 1998.

Andrus said she feels really good heading down the final stretch of the season.

"I'm just trying to recover from this weekend," Andrus said. "I felt like my hurdles were good, along with my high jump and the 800. I felt really prepared for it and physically, I felt really fresh."

Andrus achieved a personal best in the high jump when she cleared the bar at 5 feet, 5-3/4 inches. She also won the 800-meters by with a time of 2 minutes, 18.48 seconds — two seconds faster than Arizona State's Jackie Johnson, the eventual winner of the two-day heptathlon event.

Andrus' personal coach Rock Light said they met right before the 800 to discuss how she was going to approach the race.

"I asked Abby what her plan was going in," Light said. "And she said she had to take it out from the start and try to get away and she did. She ran a season best and made it look smooth. Afterwards, she was extremely happy and proud."

In the long jump, Andrus finished fifth with a mark of 18-02 1/2, only a foot behind first-place finisher Grace Vela of Washington.

Andrus "had a good decent jump on a day that nobody jumped well and everybody struggled with the crosswinds," Light said.

Andrus is also going to compete in the team competition at the Pac-10 Championships in Tucson, Ariz., this weekend. She will participate in the 400-meter hurdles and the 4x400 relays.

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Erik R. Bishoff Photographer

Sarah Malone hopes to recover from a minor injury before the Pacific-10 Championships.

## Career wrap-up approaching for King

Oregon's only senior on the tennis team will be a key player when the Ducks take on Vanderbilt; he currently has 49 victories

By **Clayton Jones**  
Freelance Reporter

The wait for Oregon senior Chris King is over.

After four long years, 98 singles and 78 doubles matches at Oregon, King will see a program participate in the NCAA Tournament that previously went 8-13 in his first season and never won a Pacific-10 Conference match until this year.

"Honestly, I was shocked to hear we made it," King said. "Usually this time of year we are done, even though we feel like we should still be playing. I thought it was going to be the same this year."

As the team's lone senior, King has watched the program grow under the direction of head coach Chris Russell. It has gone from a team seen as an easy win to a team seen as one that will give any other in the country a tough match, especially after their upset victories over No. 23 Washington and No. 34 Arizona State this season.

"This is the best team we've ever had since I've been here," King said. "In the past we would have a couple guys that would keep to themselves, but this year were tightly knitted and everybody hangs out."

Russell, who has dealt with the frustrations of the past four years along with King, feels good about getting his senior a chance to be in the tournament.

"He's heard us talk about making it here for so long," Russell said. "I don't think there's a greater gift this team can give him than this and hopefully we can give him more."

Before he set foot on a court in Oregon, King's tennis journey began in Salinas, Calif., where he was ranked in the top five among all Northern California junior players.

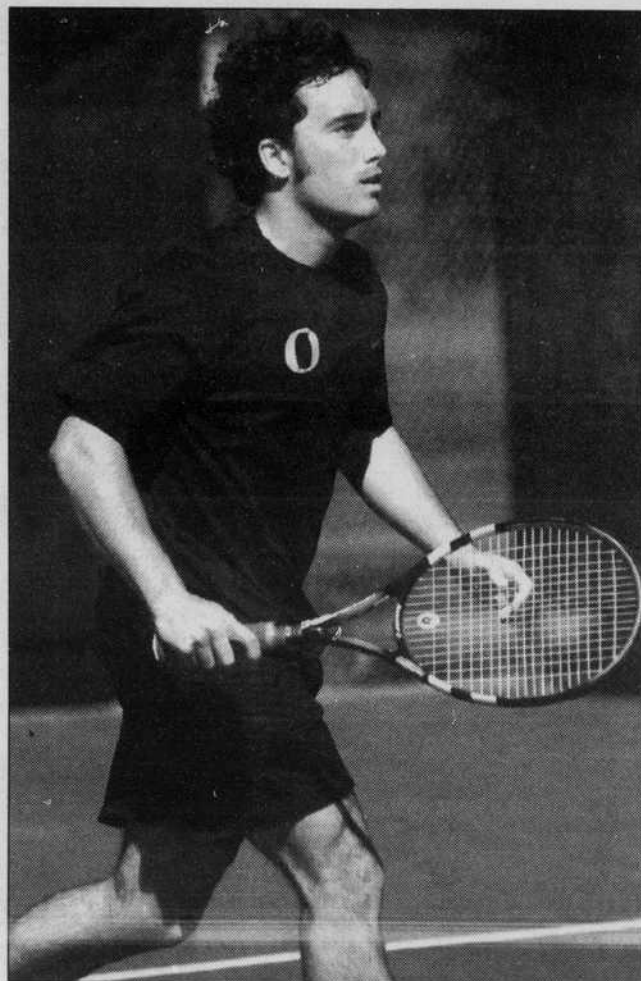
"I started playing when I was five, but I started really playing competitively when I was 14," King said.

King ended his junior tennis career by winning back-to-back singles championships at the Central Coast Section Boys Tennis Championships in 1999 and 2000.

King then came to Eugene in the fall of 2000 and compiled an 8-8 singles record as a freshman.

There wasn't any sophomore slump for King, as he compiled one of the best seasons in Oregon men's tennis history by going 23-10. His 23-win season ranks him second all-time in Oregon history for a single season.

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Danielle Hickey Photo Editor

Chris King is the lone senior on the Oregon tennis team this season. He and the Ducks will play Vanderbilt on Saturday in Mississippi.