



Tim Kupsick Photographer

Aaron Brooks (with ball) and Kedzie Gunderson were two of a number of Oregon basketball players who played in a charity wheelchair game to raise money for leukemia patient Davie Untz, who needs a bone marrow transplant.

HAGER

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"So and so arrested for marijuana possession" or "so and so stands trial for assault," we often read.

Most times, we click on these stories and give a cursory glance. "So what?" we think, it's not as if we haven't seen this before. Tomorrow, there could be more, so why care about this "isolated" incident?

Only once in a while, like in the case of Kobe Bryant or Leonard Little — who recently was caught driving under the influence six years after committing involuntary manslaughter in a vehicle — do our ears perk up.

"That's horrible," we think to ourselves. "Hopefully, he or she doesn't get away with it if they did it" we mutter under our breath.

Then comes along a group like Westendorf, who is an Oregon volleyball

player, and the rest of the athletes that played. We commend them in the back of our minds for helping raise money for a child with leukemia. We praise them for what they did, and say "Keep it up, we want you to come back next year and watch you guys all over again."

We do this with a shrug of the shoulders, a casual walk to the exits and a bit of forgetfulness. We know there's still 350 more days before the event even comes into our frame of mind, so until then, we'll remember it, but still, forget about it in a way.

That's the shame.

According to the Doernbecher Children's Hospital (Portland) Web site, approximately 2,700 children are stricken with leukemia each year. It's a cancer of the blood and one that usually requires a bone marrow transplant.

That's what Untz has.

He is lucky, in that sense, as Westendorf and others have helped provide a better chance for him.

We should all remember those like Untz. We need to remember people with debilitating diseases that make their lives hard, if not impossible. If remembering an athlete who has a disease makes it any easier to do so, go right ahead. But we all need to remember how good we have it sometimes.

And there are people like Westendorf who know that, who want to make a difference and don't just sit there. They know they have the tools to change and better the life of an unfortunate soul.

There should be more opportunities to better the community through the athletic world. Athletes do a lot, most of which none of us ever see, but there's always more that can be done.

That's the key.

Remember, nothing is ever enough.

Contact the sports editor at hankhager@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

SPORTS BRIEF

Team USA may lack true center

NEW YORK — The latest edition of the Dream Team has been rolled out, subject to change, for the Summer Olympic Games in Athens.

Once again, the U.S. basketball team will find the rest of the basketball world is gunning for them and that the international game, collectively, has improved.

Stu Jackson, the National Basketball Association's senior vice president for basketball operations, said the experience in the 2002 world championships, when former Milwaukee Bucks coach George Karl coached the U.S. entry to a sixth-

place finish, and the qualifying games last year in Puerto Rico showed how the game had advanced globally.

In those Puerto Rico games, the American team beat Argentina by only eight points in a second-round game.

"No longer can we take a team without our very best players," Jackson said last week. "Our team has to adjust to the international game and not the other way around. The game is a lot more perimeter-oriented and has a lot of passing and cutting."

Even the margin of victory in the Olympics is narrowing. In 1992, the original Dream Team won by a whopping average of 43.8 points per game. In 1996, it was 32.3 points per game. In 2000, it was 21.6

points, and that included a narrow victory over Lithuania.

This year, the Olympic team, as always, is loaded with stars. But Jackson admits it's missing one key element: a true center.

The team consists of Mike Bibby (Sacramento Kings), Tim Duncan (San Antonio Spurs), Allen Iverson (Philadelphia 76ers), LeBron James (Cleveland Cavaliers), Richard Jefferson (New Jersey Nets), Jason Kidd (Nets), Karl Malone (Los Angeles Lakers), Stephon Marbury (New York Knicks), Shawn Marion (Phoenix Suns), Tracy McGrady (Orlando Magic), Jermaine O'Neal (Indiana Pacers) and Amare Stoudemire (Suns).

— Don Walker

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (KRT)

SPORTS BRIEF

Ex-Negro League players get compensation

WASHINGTON — Major League Baseball agreed Monday to pay \$1 million to 29 former players from the Negro Leagues who were excluded from the big leagues in the late 1940s and 1950s.

The money is compensation for being left out of the major leagues even after Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in 1947. In reality, many major-league teams remained segregated until the late 1950s.

Under the compensation plan, the 29 surviving players can choose to receive either \$833 a month for four years, or \$375 a month for life. To qualify, ballplayers must have played in the Negro Leagues for at least four years between 1947 and 1957.

"It's good that we're getting to the climax of this thing," said Bob Mitchell, 71, who pitched for the Kansas City Monarchs during 1954-1957 and who fought for the compensation package. "I'm very happy for the guys to be able to realize this because it was a long struggle on my part, and it was a lot of patience on their part, waiting with hope for this to happen."

— David Goldstein

Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)



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