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## SPORTS

Best bet  
MLB:  
Houston vs. St. Louis  
5 p.m., ESPN

Friday, June 4, 2004



Jon Roetman

Roughing the passer

## Intramural T-shirt is a must-have

I have a problem.

After three years at this University, something is still missing from my college experience.

It's not the feeling of academic enlightenment. My brain has received its fair share of knowledge.

It's not the partying. I've spent plenty of time sleeping on bathroom floors.

It's something more petty than that. Something so small in the grand scheme of things that it's almost laughable.

But I can't help it. I have to get my hands on one. It's not like I haven't had my opportunities. Four times I've felt confident that I would be taking one home, only to fall flat on my face.

The object I speak of is a "University of Oregon Intramural Champions" T-shirt. That's right. Go ahead and laugh. I can take it.

From the first time I saw one of those shirts on the back of an intramural athlete at Oregon, I had an obsession. I had to have one. It was the top prize for second-tier athletes at Oregon. By second-tier, I don't mean bad. Just not good enough to line up under center for Oregon football head coach Mike Bellotti or shoot jumpers for Oregon men's basketball head coach Ernie Kent.

My first opportunity to claim the prize came when I moved to Eugene and into the dorms as a sophomore. I was the quarterback of the Robbins Hall flag football team and we were poised to rough some people up. We quickly fell back to earth, however, dropping our opening game to some bush league fraternity team when a bad call late in the contest nullified what would have been a go-ahead touchdown pass.

Things only got worse for me and my Hamilton buddies as our team captain forgot to inform us about the date of our first playoff game, which led to a forfeit.

With that disappointment hanging over my head during Christmas break, my buddies and I signed up for the 5-on-5 basketball league as soon as winter quarter started up.

Once again, I was on a team that was very confident entering its first game. Once again, things didn't go as planned. As we went to present our student identification cards and sign the play sheet, we noticed some of the opponents names included Onterio Smith, Samie Parker, George Whighster and Keith Lewis.

Ouch.

We held our own for most of the game, living off three-pointers and beating Whighster off the dribble. The game was put out of reach, however, when Lewis — without dribbling — took five steps (I'm not exaggerating) before smiling at me and drilling a huge three-pointer.

Things went the same way my junior year and this year, each winter entering the basketball season with hope only to be shot down.

I eventually realized that the hope my buddies and I hold entering each intramural season is far-fetched. I'm one of the

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## Future looks bright for Oregon track

The Oregon men's track team had a strong season behind the performances of its young, but somewhat experienced, talent

By Jon Roetman  
Sports Reporter

The 2004 season served as notice that the Oregon men's track and field program remains one of the best in the country.

The Ducks finished in the top two of the Pacific-10 Conference for the third consecutive season under head coach Martin Smith and will send 14 athletes to the NCAA National Championships next week in Austin, Texas.

The Ducks were loaded with plenty of talent this season — mostly underclassmen — which led to several strong individual performances.

### MEN'S TRACK

Tommy Skipper and Eric Mitchum were arguably Oregon's best athletes this season and figure to build a solid foundation for the next couple of years. Skipper, the Ducks' prize freshman recruit from Sandy, put on a show every time he stepped on the field. The freshman broke the school pole vault record in February (18 feet, 8 3/4 inches) and then broke his own record last week at the NCAA West Regional Qualifier, setting the conference outdoor record with a vault of 18-10 1/4.

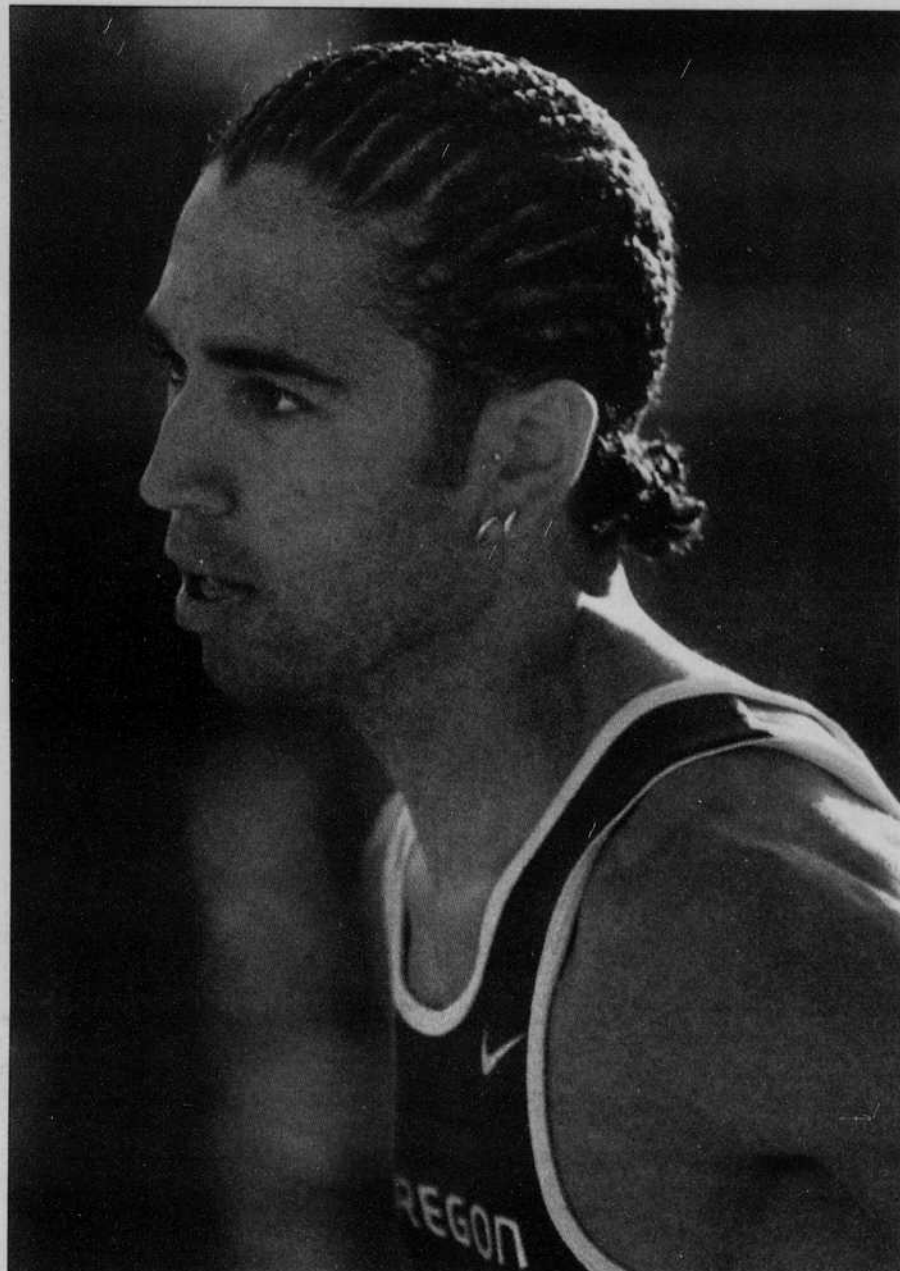
"Athletically, looking back on this year, I was pleased to be consistently over 18 feet," Skipper said. "Overall happiness this year, athletically, has been an 8 (out of 10). With school and the track team and everything, that's an 11."

Mitchum, a sophomore, was also a big part of Oregon's youth movement. He smoked opponents all season long in the 110-meter hurdles, including a pair of blazing times at the Texas Relays (13.50 seconds) and the Mt. SAC Relays (13.53). The Calumet City, Ill. native's time at Mt. SAC was wind-legal and broke Micah Harris' school record by 0.14 seconds.

Oregon's veterans were led by Brandon Holliday, who was one of the conference's top hurdlers. The senior put his mark on the season when he rebounded from a bout with food poisoning to run the conference's top time (51.08) in the 400 hurdles at the Oregon Twilight.

Oregon also featured a solid group of first-year transfers. Juniors Leonidas Watson, Paul Etter and Kedar Inico

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Danielle Hickey Photo Editor

Senior hurdler Brandon Holliday is one of the few athletes Oregon will see return next season.

## UO women finish year of surprise success

The Oregon women surpass expectations in the first year of the merged men's and women's programs

By Alex Tam  
Sports Reporter

A season that began with low expectations is ending with unforeseen success.

With a roster consisting of 31 athletes — shortened compared to the average of over 50 athletes per team — the Oregon women's track and field team was predicted to be a bottom dweller in the Pacific-10 Conference.

However, under first-year head coach Martin Smith, the Ducks have seen personal records from each athlete fall at astounding rates this season. A new era dawned upon the women that started with the hiring of first-year assistant coaches Lance Deal, Rock Light and Marnie Mason.

"Those three individuals have done a superb job coaching not only technically, but psychologically," said Smith, who is also in his sixth season as men's head coach. "Building a new confidence, not setting the bar low, having expectations and being very fine teachers, and I think the women have responded to that. I'm really happy for them."

Sarah Malone, a junior javelin thrower, is one athlete who has been openly enthusiastic about the coaching changes. After battling through injuries last season, which caused her to redshirt, Malone said she finally feels healthy and credits it to Deal, the throws coach and four-time Olympian.

Malone has also been instrumental in becoming a leader by organizing team meetings before every meet to discuss personal and team goals.

"It's a complete 180 (from last year)," Malone said. "I finally feel I'm a part of the Oregon track and field program that I imagined

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Junior Sarah Malone holds Oregon's all-time javelin record at 179 feet, 7 inches and is one of seven Duck women to compete at this year's NCAA Championships. The Newberg native also ranks third nationally in the javelin among collegiate athletes. Malone became one of Oregon's team leaders this past season by doing things such as organizing team meetings before every meet.

Lauren Wimer  
Senior Photographer

