

EMMIES

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crushed him. He was so pissed that he had even taken the time to buy them. He swore up and down that he could throw 250 feet, and that he did it in high school, but he's yet to prove it. It's gotten to the point that he won't even throw them anymore. He won't even compete against me because he doesn't like to lose."

Good luck with that one, Adam.

Best Athlete You've Never Heard Of: *Sven Swinnen.*

Swinnen took his team to the NCAA Regionals in Oxford, Miss. He led the Ducks with a top-20 ranking for most of the season.

He's a first-team All-Pacific-10 Conference member. Time to get to know him.

Most Improved Female: *Andrea Bills.*

In our fifth year handing out these prestigious awards, we figured it was a time to start a new category.

For two years now, the Duck basketball women have been without Cathrine Kraayeveld for most or all of the year. So Bills did what she did, held the Oregon post game in check and helped Oregon limp through a 6-12 Pac-10 season.

Not only did Bills increase her points per game by almost two (9.8 in 2002-03 to 11.1 this season), but she started all 29 games — the second year in a row she started all of Oregon's games.

She also increased her rebounds per game by almost one and fouled out just once, compared to three times in 2002-03.

Most Improved Male: *Kellen Clemens.*

All Clemens needed was the chance. Once he got out of Jason Fife's shadow, Clemens emerged. Some have said he's got certain intangibles that made Joey Harrington such a great leader at Oregon a few years ago.

Clemens capped off his season with a 32 of 42 for 363-yard performance at the Sun Bowl in December. That was after leading the Ducks to three straight wins over California, UCLA and Oregon State to end the season.

Rookie of the Year: *Tommy Skipper.*

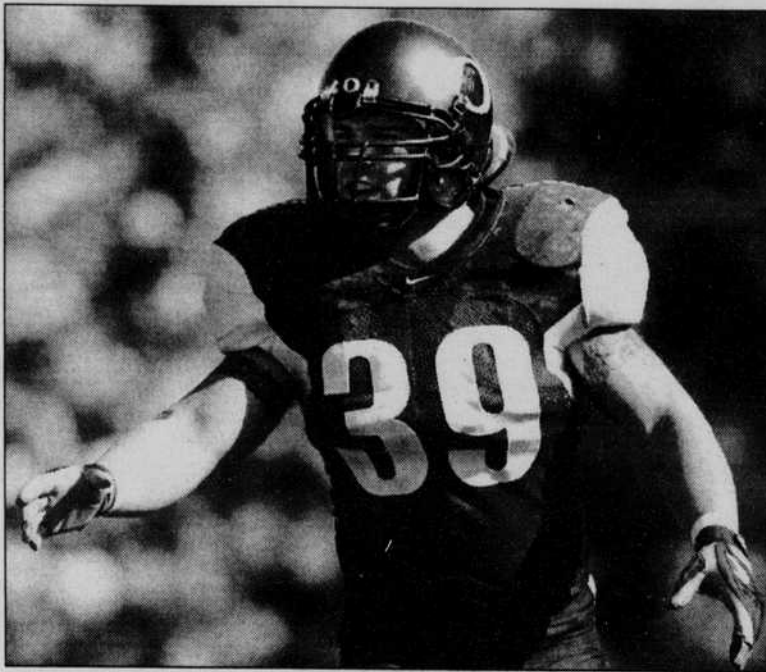
Are there any words to describe Skipper? Yes. Oregon pole vault record. Pac-10 pole vault record. Serious contender for the NCAA Championship later this week. Potential member of the 2004 United States Olympic Team.

All Skipper did was come in as the most heralded of Oregon recruits and live up to the name. Freshmen are doing some pretty amazing things these days.

Best Play: *Ashley Richards home run vs. Arizona.*

Bottom of the eighth, no score, Ashley Richards at the plate.

The junior led off the inning with a shot off Arizona pitcher Alicia Hollowell, who entered the game with a record



TOP: Emerald RIGHT: Erik R. Bishoff Photographer

TOP: Linebacker Kevin Mitchell spent five years on the Oregon football team. RIGHT: Ashley Richards hit a game-winning home run for the Ducks against Arizona.

of 32-0. Not only did the blast give Oregon its eighth Pac-10 victory and 34th win of the season, it enabled the Ducks to defeat Arizona for the first time since 2000.

Can't forget: Arizona was ranked No. 1 in the country at the time of the home run.

Best Individual Performance in a Game: *Luke Jackson vs. Colorado in NIT.* Twenty-nine straight points.

Let's just say that again: 29 straight points. No matter how many times you think about it, it really never seems to sink in. Of course, all Jackson did against the Buffaloes that fateful night at McArthur Court was score 29 straight points for the Ducks, leading them to a comeback.

Jackson's rally in that game started at the 15:57 mark of the second half and extended into overtime — 14 of his points came in the extra period. He finished that night with 40 points, just two off his career high that he had set earlier in the season.

Best Game: *Oregon vs. Colorado in NIT at McArthur Court.*

A stunning performance — as listed above — by one of the greatest players to don an Oregon jersey. A team, Colorado, with something to prove against an Oregon club that knew it had a down year.

A non-sellout at Mac that turned into the loudest crowd of the year.

Oregon's 77-72 win over the Buffaloes was by far the best game of the year. Not because of Jackson, not because of how the Ducks came back to beat Colorado in overtime.

Everything came together perfectly for the Ducks.

Coach of the Year: *Kathy Arendsen.*

Forty-two overall wins, 10 coming in one of the best conferences in the na-

tion. A second straight trip to the NCAA Regionals.

Four wins in those regionals, with just two runs in a game against a strong Atlantic Coast Conference club — Florida State — keeping the Ducks away from the Women's College World Series.

Arendsen has led a revival of the Oregon softball team. She's got the Ducks on a two-year upswing.

Most Valuable Female: *Daria Panova.*

Two years ago, we named her the Best Player You've Never Heard Of. Now, she's the best of the best of Oregon athletics.

Panova won 32 singles matches for the Ducks this year, the second straight year she's posted that total. That, by 10 wins, puts her first in Oregon history with 84 victories for her career.

She'll be a senior next year. That says enough right there.

Most Valuable Male: *Jackson.*

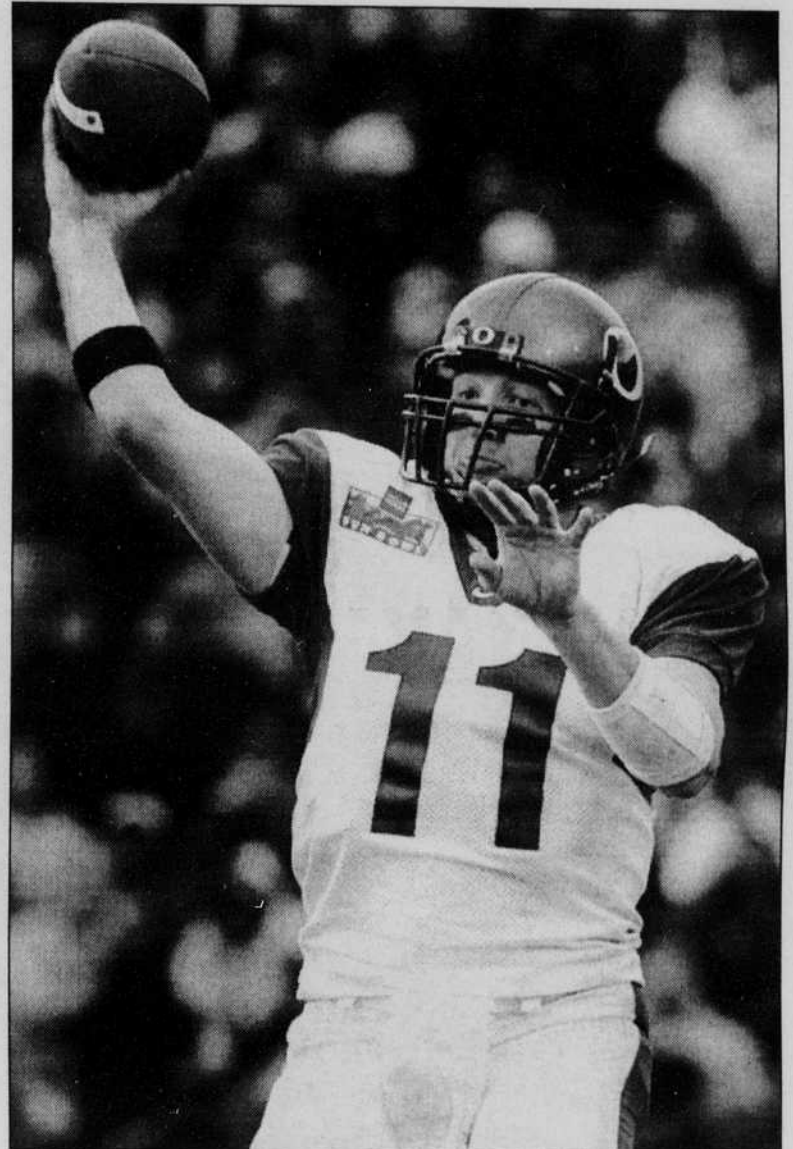
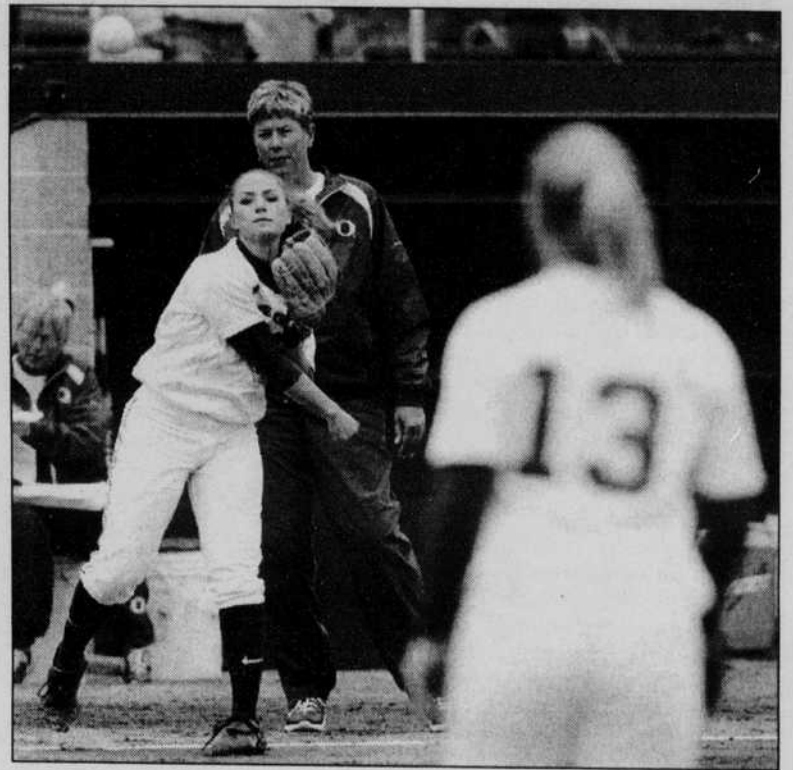
The best in Oregon history? Some could argue that, or some could simply say Jackson was the perfect player for the perfect time in Oregon basketball history.

Jackson's contribution to the team is certainly noticed. His 29 points against Colorado placed in the record books. We all thought his 39 points against Oregon State early in the season were going to be enough for a career high.

Not even close. The Ducks lost 100-87 to Arizona on Feb. 19 at McArthur Court, but Jackson scored 42 against the Wildcats, just one point below Greg Ballard's record.

We all feel better for having seen you play, Luke.

Contact the sports editor at hankhager@dailyemerald.com.



Emerald

Quarterback Kellen Clemens threw for 363 yards on 32 of 42 passing in Oregon's 31-30 loss to Minnesota at the Sun Bowl in El Paso, Texas.

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