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## A true natural

University student Dave Feldberg is one the top disc golfers in the nation

ALEX TAM  
SPORTS EDITOR

Disc golf is one of today's many lesser-known but increasingly popular sports.

University student Dave Feldberg is a participant in this emerging sport and is widely considered one of the top disc golfers in the United States.

The 27-year-old Springfield resident is ranked 14th nationally in the Professional Disc Golf Association's player ratings. The PDGA currently has 1,722 members.

Feldberg, who has earned \$8,865 in prize money so far this year, turned professional in 2000, and has won a total of more than \$48,000 during his four-year career on the PDGA tour. His biggest win so far in 2004 was at June's Kansas City Wide Open, where he won by four strokes and took home the \$1,600 grand prize.

Feldberg is now preparing for disc golf's biggest tournament of the year, the PDGA Professional Disc Golf World Championships in Des Moines, Iowa, that begin Aug. 9. Last year's winner, Barry Schultz of Sheboygan, Wis., won \$5,000.

The prestige of earning prize money and playing disc golf around the world wasn't on Feldberg's mind years ago.

Feldberg joined the professional ranks only three years after picking up the sport from his friends at Western Michigan University in 1997.

"They said they were going to play disc golf and I never had heard of it," said Feldberg. "[At the time], I hadn't thrown a Frisbee in years."

Feldberg took the game as a recreational activity with his friends.

"Just the social gathering of it all, my friends would come out after classes and we would walk around the park together and hang out and throw

Frisbees," Feldberg said. "It was pretty cool." In 1999, Feldberg joined a few professional disc golfers from Michigan to form a group who labeled themselves "The Winnie Crew" because they drove around the country to each golf event in a Winnebago motor home.

As time passed, members of "The Winnie Crew" came and went to embark on their own endeavors aside from disc golf.

During that time, Feldberg was united with fellow professional disc golfer Avery Jenkins. The two became best friends and are now roommates.

Feldberg said he found difficulties developing his technique. However, he was told he had a genuine feel for the game.

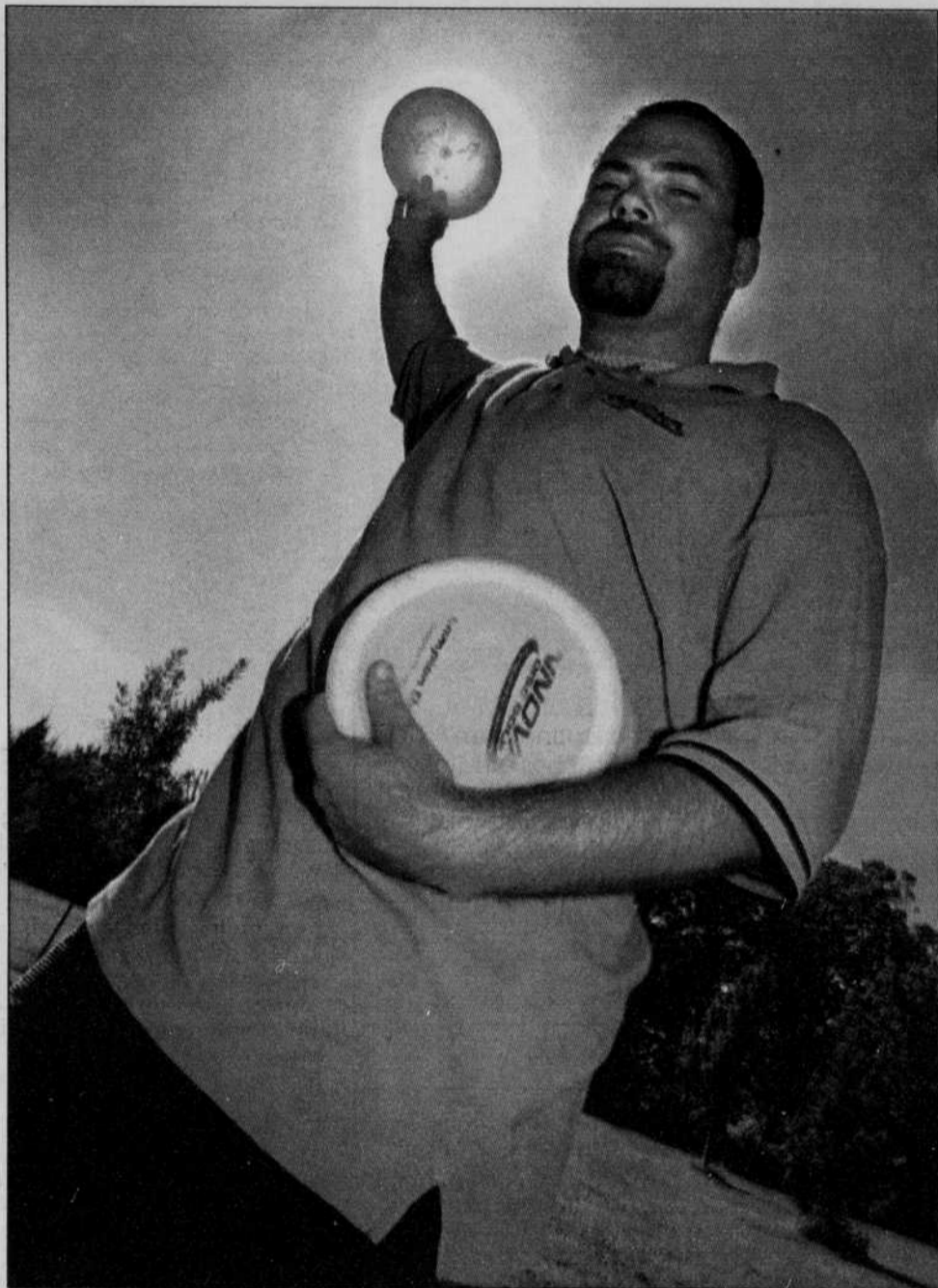
"I was kind of a natural, but I had struggles because I had developed all my own forms," Feldberg said. "When I got on the professional circuit, everybody had a similar form and it wasn't anything like mine. They could do a lot better than me."

Over time, Feldberg honed his skills by learning from some of the top disc golf players in the world, including Todd Branch, Al Shack, and Ken Climo. Climo, whom some considered disc golf's answer to Tiger Woods, is an 11-time PDGA World Champion and is the all-time PDGA tour money leader with earnings topping \$225,000 in the span of his 14-year career.

"All of the world's top players taught me different throwing techniques and I was able to practice and work it out," Feldberg said.

This year, Feldberg has made over \$1,000 in three of the 13 events he has participated in after finishing in the top three.

Please see FELDBERG, page 8



Dave Feldberg has won more than \$48,000 in career earnings since 2000 playing for the Professional Disc Golf Association. He is rated 14th in the nation, according to PDGA player ratings. The Springfield resident has been involved with the sport since 1997. Erik R. Bishoff Online & Photo Editor

## Lack of consistency plagues Ems

The Emeralds are in the bottom half of their division after 31 games

ALEX TAM  
SPORTS EDITOR

Unpredictability has characterized the Eugene Emeralds through the first 31 games of the season.

The Emeralds (12-19) sit in the bottom half of the West Division standings in the Northwest League after losing 7-4 to Everett on Monday in front of a crowd of 2,402 at Civic Stadium. Eugene is now seven games behind first-place Everett and have lost eight of their past 10 games.

Last week, Eugene lost three games of the five-game series against the Indians in Spokane.

Eugene manager Roy Howell said the inconsistency of his team has hurt the Emeralds' chances of putting together a winning streak.

"I'm not sure what I'm going to see," Howell said. "One day, they were swinging the bat very well and the next, they get punched out 10 or 12 times. They're very young and they're seeing different and better pitching than they have ever seen."

On Sunday, the Emeralds lost the opening game of the six-game series against first-place Everett, 7-5.

After Eugene tied the score 2-2 in the fourth inning behind Lachlan Dale's home run, Everett posted five runs in the sixth inning. In that sixth inning, the Aqua Sox sent nine batters to the plate, including Rob Johnson, who hit a two-run home run.

The Emeralds mounted a rally in the ninth inning after loading the bases with one out. However, the comeback attempt fell short when catcher and cleanup hitter Colt Morton recorded the final out with runners on second and third base.

Jared Paben Editor in Chief

Emeralds catcher Colt Morton blocks the ball at home plate in Eugene's 7-5 loss to Everett Sunday. Morton is batting .270 for the year.

Please see EMERALDS, page 6

## Oregon hurdler takes 14th at Olympic trial

Mitchum's first Olympic Team Trials experience brought him to the semifinals

ALEX TAM  
SPORTS EDITOR

Competing against several of the world's top hurdlers on the nation's biggest stage can be intimidating, especially for a college student finishing his second season.

But that wasn't the case for Oregon sophomore Eric Mitchum. The last of three Oregon representatives at the U.S. Olympic Team Trials in Sacramento, Calif., Mitchum finished 14th in the 110-meter hurdle semifinal on Sunday, ending his Olympics chances.

Mitchum placed seventh in the first of two heats with a time of 13.53 seconds in the semifinal. The time was his second fastest ever wind-legal time and third best overall in his career. Going into the meet, Mitchum ranked 11th after running the 110 meter hurdles in 13.38 at the NCAA Championships in June. The time set a new Oregon record.

In early April, Mitchum ran the 110 meter hurdles in 13.50 at the Texas Relays.

"I've been here since Sunday (July 11) and I'm glad I came early," Mitchum said.



Eric Mitchum Oregon hurdler

Please see TRIALS, page 6