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Best bet:
U.S. Men's Basketball vs.
Turkey's National Team
1 p.m. Tuesday, ESPN

Tuesday, August 10, 2004



ALEX TAM
HOLDING COURT

Olympic basketball approaches level field

The world is catching up.

The U.S. men's Olympic basketball team is finally figuring that out on their pre-Olympic basketball tour around Europe before the Olympic Games which begin Aug. 15 in Athens, Greece.

No longer will we see the United States roll over its international opponents in the consistent 30- to 40- point blow-outs we were accustomed to just 12 years ago.

In 1992, the U.S. men's squad known as the Dream Team—which featured legends such as Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird and Clyde Drexler—effortlessly stomped the opposition by more than 40 points per game.

However, this year has been a complete turnaround from those days.

Last week, the United States suffered a humiliating loss to Italy when the team was defeated 95-78.

Not one player on Italy's team currently plays in the NBA. How was it possible that a group of no-names defeated 12 of our nation's best in a 17-point blow-out?

In fact, an Italian player named Giacomo Galanda (I know you're asking, "Who? How do you pronounce that? Is he a real person?") matched the total points scored by Allen Iverson and Tim Duncan combined.

Yes, combined.

Galanda scored 28 points in the victory, while Iverson had 13 points and Duncan added 15.

Let's remember that Iverson and Duncan have won three of the past four NBA Most Valuable Player awards, which in theory go to the best basketball player in the world's top basketball league.

That loss has started to raise eyebrows about the quality of basketball being played here in the United States compared to the basketball being played overseas.

Questions have arisen about whether basketball played here is more about flash and style, rather than substance and quality.

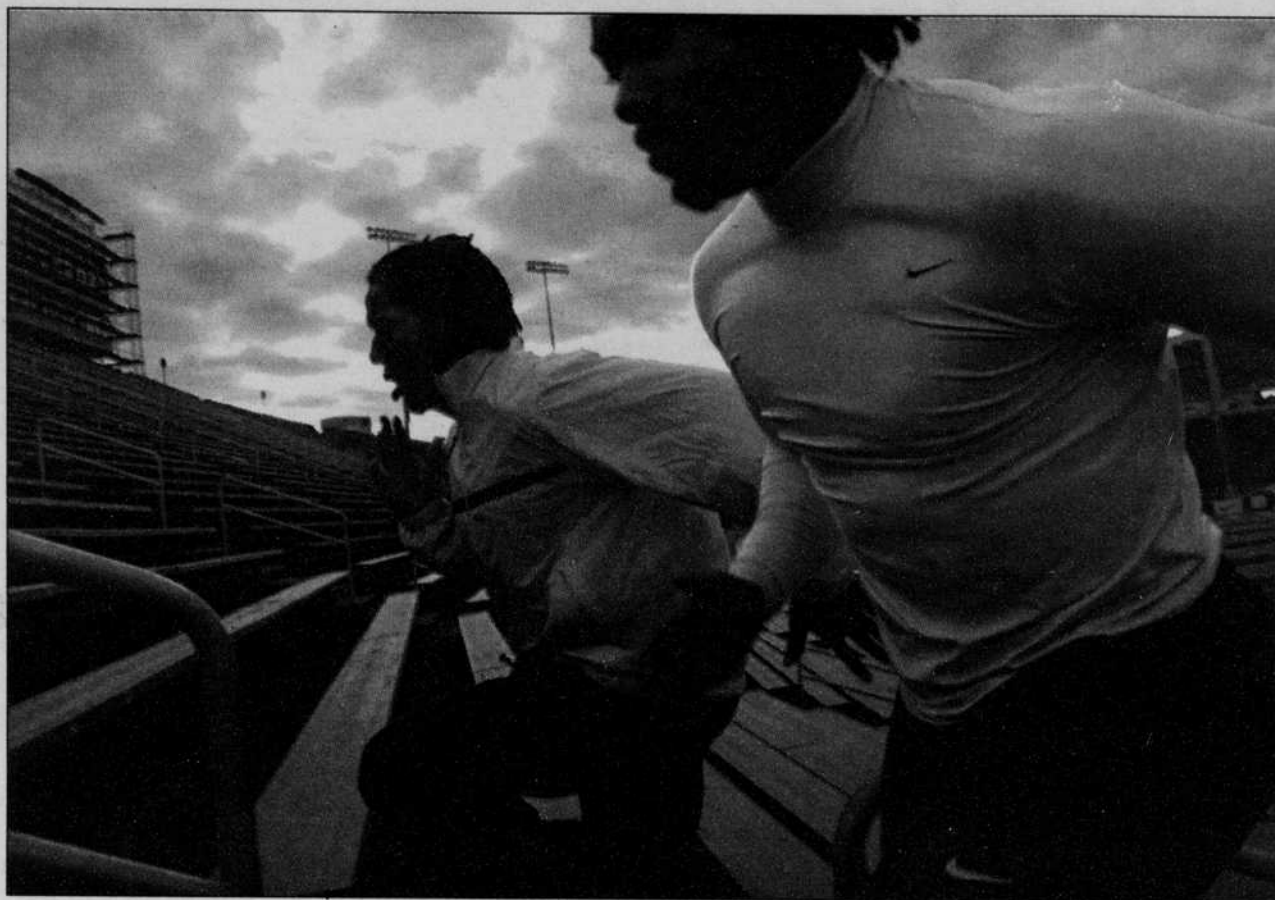
There is the assumption that basketball in Europe, Asia and everywhere else, except the United States, is more fundamentally sound and team-oriented than it is here. Many people believe coaches in other countries emphasize and focus on shooting and playing as a team. Some see the United States as focused on making the highlight reel on that night's SportsCenter broadcast.

U.S. men's basketball head coach Larry Brown told www.ESPN.com his team should be aware that international basketball is a lot different than what his players are used to in the NBA.

"There's great coaches everywhere and

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GETTING AHEAD



Oregon's Justin Phinisee (left) and Chris Vincent (right) have organized 6:30 a.m. workouts that include running up and down the bleachers at Autzen Stadium. Phinisee said each of them was unsatisfied with last season and want to get a head start and prepare for an attempt at the Pacific-10 Conference title.

Tim Bobosky
Interim Photo Editor

Devoted Ducks

Oregon football players initiate their own workouts and keep their goals in mind

CLAYTON JONES
FREELANCE REPORTER

Among the early morning shadows of an empty Autzen Stadium, there are Ducks that have worked all summer for their moment to shine this fall.

Oregon football players have been beating their feet up and down the bleachers at Autzen Stadium at 6:30 a.m. getting themselves prepared for a run at a Pacific-10 Conference title.

There are no coaches to yell or fans to cheer. Just them.

Junior cornerback Justin Phinisee and sophomore running back Chris Vincent are two of the regulars in this player-organized workout routine.

"It shows a good element of our team that we can be pull guys together and be self-governed without the coaches setting something up," Phinisee said.

Phinisee and Vincent said they believe the key to success at this level and beyond is the extra work put in outside of team practices.

"My body needs a lot of running and I just can't do the stuff that coach puts out there for us and think that will be enough," Phinisee said. "When I step out on the field I need to be a step above the rest."

DUCK FOOTBALL

The players say that every year they try to do something that gets them prepared for the season. Last year they ran hills, particularly the one at 30th and Hilyard.

During workouts this year, they made their way to the swimming pool.

"We swam some laps and for everyone who doesn't think that swimming is conditioning they need to come pool with us," Phinisee said.

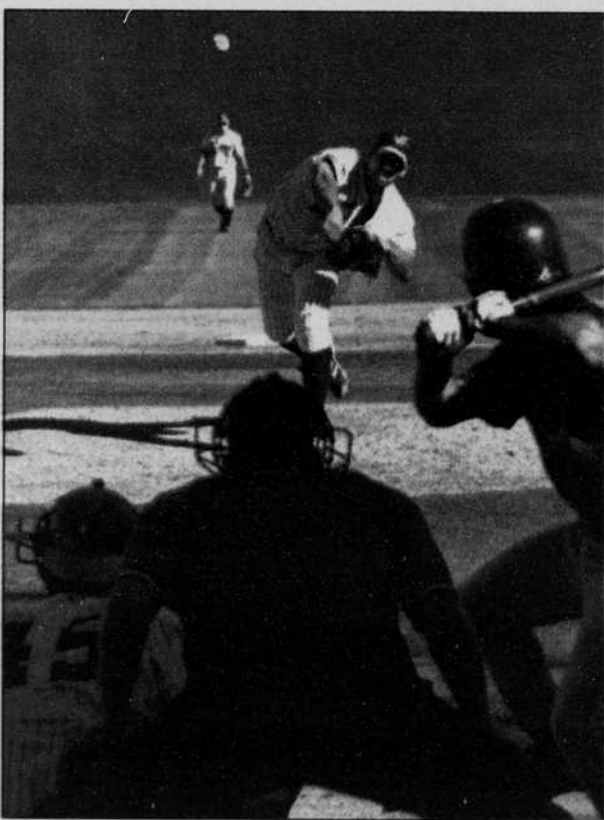
For some players, it was the first time using swimming as conditioning.

"We were pretty crazy out there and we had the lifeguards laughing at us but we had a good time," Phinisee said.

Phinisee and Vincent said staying in good shape is key to keeping the team's momentum rolling.

"The train is already moving as far as the team and we need to make sure we can hop on the train and not be behind the rest of the guys when

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Tim Bobosky Interim Photo Editor

Eugene starting pitcher Vern Sterry surrendered five runs in Sunday's 8-3 loss to Yakima. Sterry is 2-3 with a 3.96 ERA this season.

Emeralds continue to fight losing record

Eugene lost Monday to the Yakima Bears, ranked last in the East Division

ALEX TAM
SPORTS EDITOR

A new week has started, but the same old story has played out for the Eugene Emeralds.

Plagued by inconsistencies in all aspects of the game — pitching, defense and hitting — the Emeralds (17-33 overall) are floundering in last place of the West Division in the Northwest League. Eugene has lost 4 of its last 5 games, including a 7-3 loss to the Yakima Bears in Eugene Monday evening.

In their first game back from the all-star break last Thursday, the Emeralds defeated first-place Everett 7-2 in the first game of the series. However, the Emeralds proceeded to lose the last two games in the three-game series, including a 12-1 loss Saturday.

Eugene manager Roy Howell said his

young team, consisting of players ranging from 20 to 23 years old, is struggling, but is still learning what it takes to be successful at the major-league level.

"When we get good pitches, we got to hit them," Howell said. "We're not hitting the good pitches. We're swinging at the bad pitches and then we get behind and the opposing pitchers have the advantage."

Eugene's offense has struggled all season long to score runs with a league-low 4.9 runs per game through Sunday. The Emeralds are the only team averaging fewer than five runs per game and are also last in batting average (.241).

Everett is first in the league in runs per game (6.3) and batting average (.278). The Aqua Sox currently lead the West Division in wins.

"When we do get a good pitch, we can't miss it and that's what they're doing," Howell said. "They're missing the good pitches."

In Eugene's first game back at home

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