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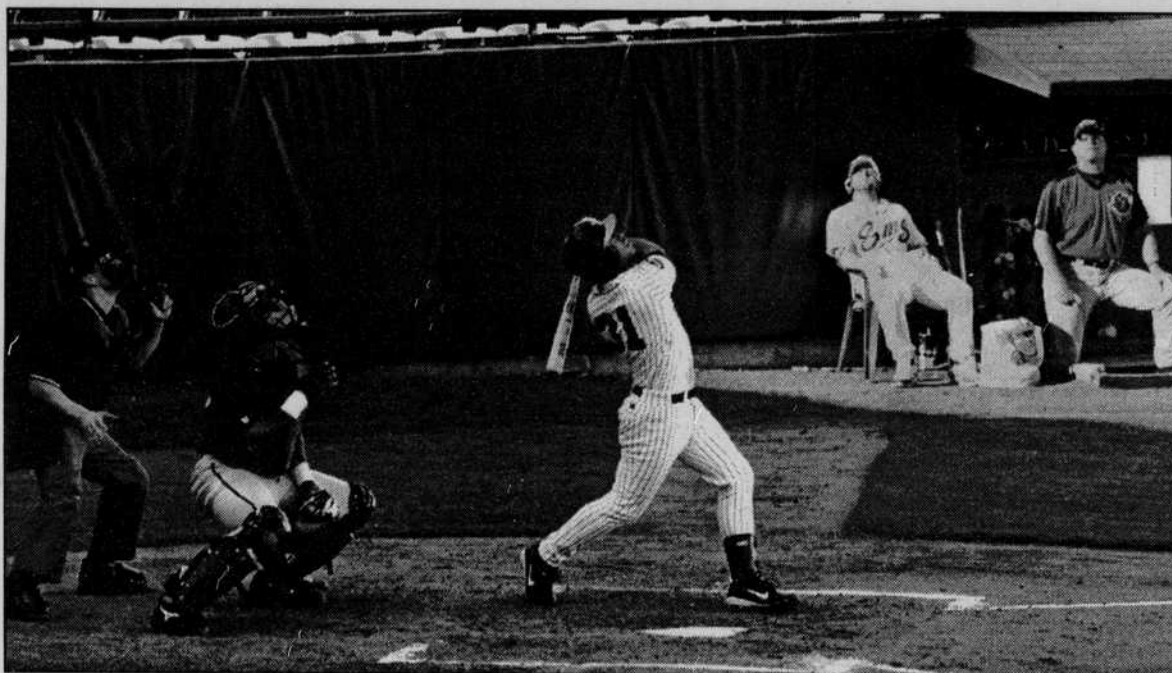
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Tim Bobosky Interim Photo Editor

Eugene first baseman Orlando Diaz pops one up in Sunday's 8-3 loss to Yakima. Diaz is hitting .214 with one home run this season. The Emeralds' offense has struggled this season and the team ranks last in the league in batting average and runs scored per game.

**EMS**

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on Sunday, the Emeralds lost to visiting Yakima 8-3 in front of 2,270 at Civic Stadium. The Bears sit in last place in the East Division standings.

The game proved to be a typical Emeralds game in the season.

After a scoreless first five innings from both teams, Yakima jumped out to a 5-0 lead in the sixth inning off Eugene starting pitcher Vern Sterry.

Before that sixth inning, Sterry had given up only two hits and no runs, but the lack of offense placed undue pressure on him to continue keeping Yakima scoreless, Eugene catcher Colt Morton said.

"We got to find a way to get on base and get runs in, especially when Vern is pitching so well," said Morton, who is batting .294 with 13 home runs and 33 RBIs through Sunday. "We got to find a way to get runners in early. We wait too long to get on the scoreboard and it's really taking its toll right now."

Morton said that their poor offense has caused the pitchers to believe they have a small margin of error, which is having a negative effect.

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— **Colt Morton**  
Eugene Emeralds Catcher

good job," Morton said. "It's tough and you can't win with zero runs. It's tough for our pitchers to keep other teams at zero or one run."

The defense is also feeling the effects of the tough season.

During the ninth inning of Sunday's loss, second baseman Trino Aguilar forgot how many outs were in the inning. With one out, Aguilar had an opportunity to turn the double play to end the inning when a ground ball was hit toward him. Aguilar threw to first base instead, and got only the second out of the inning. Each Eugene player believed the inning was over and looked stunned when he realized there were only two outs in the inning.

Frustration in all areas of the game has settled in for each Emeralds player at this point in the season, Eugene

infielder Orlando Diaz said.

"Some guys are stressing to get that key base hit," said Diaz, who is batting .216 with one home run and 12 RBIs through Sunday. "We'll get hits toward the end of the game, but it's too late to make a run in the end."

**NOTES**

At the Northwest League All-Star Game Home Run Derby, Morton was defeated 3-2 in the event final to Yakima's Chris Carter, who received \$500 for the victory. Was Morton disappointed? "Absolutely, with \$500 on the line, you want to win," Morton said. ... Eugene fell to third in the league in average attendance (3,262 per game) behind Vancouver (3,300) and Spokane (4,591). ... Eugene is sixth in the eight-team Northwest League in team ERA at 4.77. First-place Everett has the league's worst team ERA at 5.17. ... Eugene also leads the league in total strikeouts for the season (437). Salem-Keizer has the fewest number of strikeouts on the season (314) — more than 100 fewer than the Emeralds.

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