

■ In my opinion



CLAYTON JONES
SEVENTH INNING STRETCH

Selig took away my peanuts and Crackerjacks

My baseball soul suffered a tragic blow earlier this week.

No big league baseball in Portland.

The Montreal Expos are moving to Washington, D.C.

Ahhh, nuts.

Maybe I wasn't living in reality thinking Portland had a shot at baseball, but as a person who has lived and breathed the game since I could hold a baseball in my hand or swing a bat, this is dispiriting.

My parents even have pictures of me in my Cincinnati Reds gear as a toddler throwing a ball before I could even walk.

Washington, D.C. — much like it does with my money — stole my baseball team.

As a Portland native, I wanted a team so badly I already had ferocious taunts ready to shout at the visiting bullpen as long as they didn't have anything to throw back, e.g. folding death chairs.

But I'm not naive. I know I'm the exception rather than the rule. Portland couldn't have supported a baseball team. My 20-plus years living there has told me it isn't a baseball city.

Portland as a whole doesn't seem to have a passion for the game. The only time I saw a decent sized crowd at a Portland Beavers game was when it was Thirsty Thursday.

Translation — cheap beer.

Crowds of people would flood the beer garden at PGE Park and drunken insults could be heard from the far reaches of the stadium.

Major League Baseball didn't have anything to gain coming to Portland anyway, but with another major league city only 40 miles away in Baltimore, what do they have to gain in Washington, D.C.?

More importantly, why aren't the Baltimore Orioles steaming mad about their "baseball territory" being invaded?

Because one: Baseball is still going to pay the difference if the Orioles don't meet a minimum revenue to be named later.

And two: Orioles owner Peter Angelos will be guaranteed franchise value for his team if he decides to sell his team. This means if he tries to sell the Orioles and no one offers the predetermined franchise value, Major League Baseball will make up the difference.

This isn't good.

What incentive does this give Angelos to produce a winning, or at least a productive, team?

While Portland may not have the passion, Baltimore has a rich tradition with players like Brooks Robinson, Jim Palmer, Cal Ripken and many more. This can't make their fans happy.

Other cities could have just as easily taken the Expos. How fun would it have been to have a major league team in Las Vegas. It was one of the finalists and is one of the fastest growing cities in the nation.

Then again, having millionaire ball players in Sin City may cause a few problems.

"Hey coach. Uhh ... I blew my paycheck on gambling and strippers. Could I get an advance?"

Or: "I hocked my glove for some dough so

JONES, page 13A

Home again for women's soccer

Ducks hope playing at home for the first time in a month will mean a second win for the season

BY BRIAN SMITH
SPORTS REPORTER

The Oregon women's soccer team hosts its first match in more than a month when Wyoming comes to Papé Field tonight.

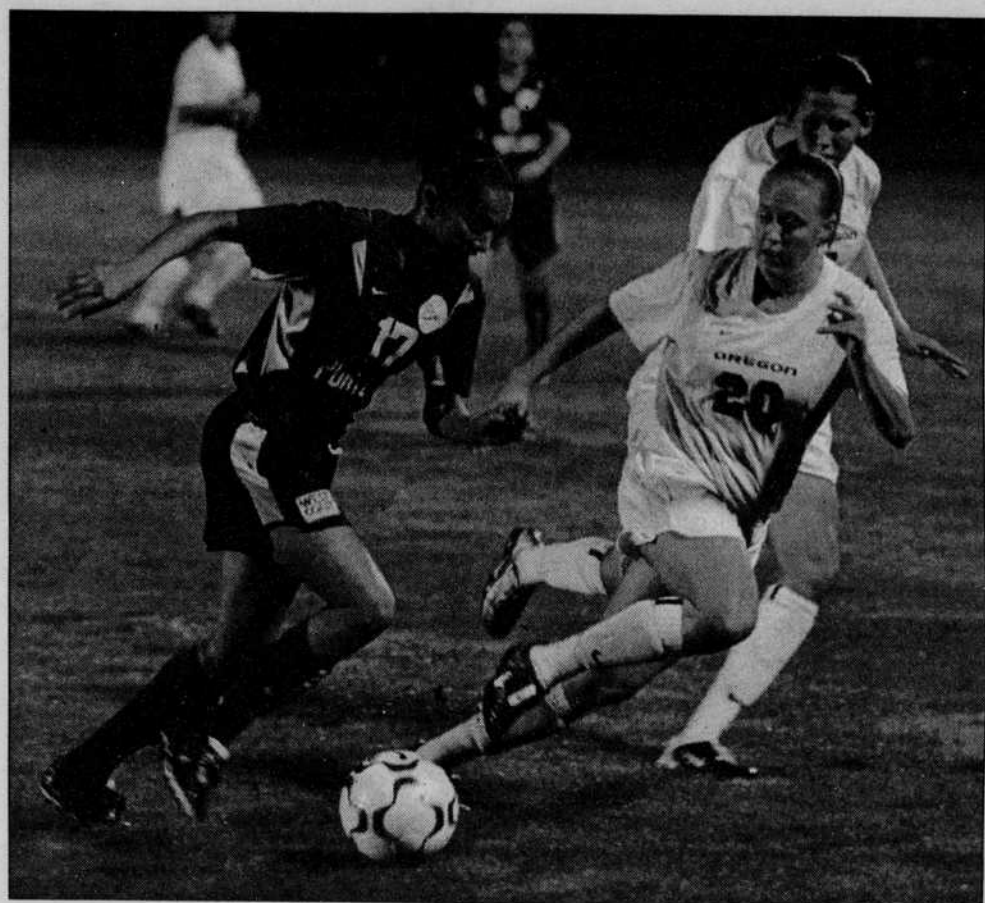
The last home match for Oregon came against San Diego State on Aug. 29. Since then, the Ducks have gone 1-5 with losses to the 2003 national runner-up Connecticut, 2002 national champion Portland, and NCAA tournament veterans Central Connecticut State and Utah. Oregon's last victory came on Sept. 3 against Weber State.

Having lost five in a row, the Ducks are looking forward to the boost that playing at home could give them.

"I definitely think (playing at home) will be an advantage, especially since the season we've been having so far," Oregon junior goalkeeper Dominique Lainez said. "It will be a great thing to be around our fans. I definitely think that we will be competitive this weekend."

**Oregon (1-6-1)
vs. Wyoming (5-2-3)**

Wyoming, like Oregon, is coming off of a 2003 campaign that saw the school set a record in victories. The Cowgirls also had a very strong spring season, in which they went 7-2-1. The Cowgirls faced the likes of Air Force, Colorado College, Northern Colorado and a pair of top 20 teams in Cal-Poly and San Diego.



EMERALD

Junior midfielder Cristian Higa, seen here last season against UCLA, has started in 45 out of the Ducks' last 46 games. She looks to continue the trend tonight against Wyoming.

"We had a very successful spring; we won some games but more importantly we got our younger kids some crucial experience," Wyoming head coach Anne Moore said. "I think they really accepted the responsibility and understand the direction everyone wants to go."

One of those young players, freshman goalkeeper Ashley Sheppard, has already stepped up big for the Cowgirls. Sheppard was named Mountain West Conference Defensive Player of the Week with 14 saves and two shutouts on Sept. 22 and Sept. 26 against Northern Colorado and Cal State Fullerton, respectively.

Oregon head coach Bill Steffan also noted the strong physical play of the Wyoming forwards as a key to the match.

"They are going to be a very physical, hard working team," Steffan said. "They have decent pace in the back and one or two dangerous players up top, so they will be a good test for us."

The play of defenders Kelly Baird and Christine Mintz will be equally important for the Ducks as they look to keep the Wyoming forwards away from goalkeeper Lainez.

"Kelly is a key leader for us defensively and a calming presence in the back," Steffan said. "She can play against anybody in the country and not get rattled. The team will benefit from her on-field experience and her ability to keep a high level of intensity through the whole season."

SOCCER, page 12A

Duck tennis opens first event of season

The men, led by Sven Swinnen, travel to Tennessee while the women go to California

BY ALEX TAM
FREELANCE REPORTER

Before the regular season starts up in late January, the Oregon tennis teams will first embark on their fall preseason schedules beginning this weekend.

The Oregon men will travel across the country to compete in the 2004 Icy Hot/ITA Men's All-American Championships in Chattanooga, Tenn., beginning today and ending Oct. 10. It is the first of three national championship events this season.

The 25th edition of the annual event will feature 350 players from more than 70 NCAA Division I colleges, making it the largest tournament in collegiate tennis today in terms of number of participants.

Several Ducks are scheduled to compete, including top returning seniors Sven Swinnen and Manuel Kost.

Interim head coach Ross Duncan, who took over the team after former head coach Chris Russell joined the University of Washington as associate head

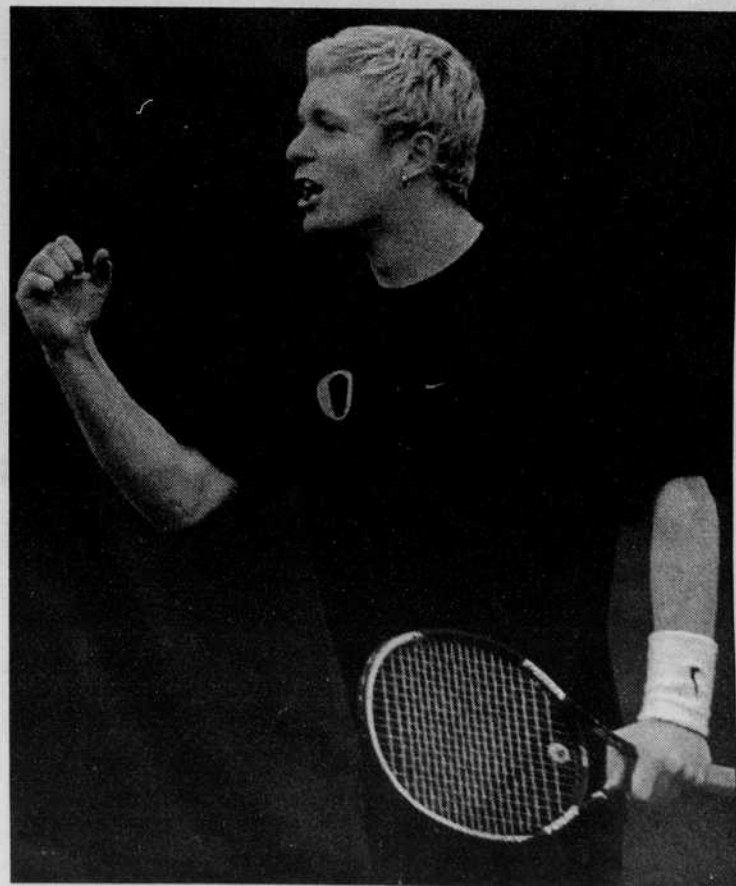
coach on Sept. 16, said he is expecting great things from his top two players this season.

"My expectations for them are very high," said Duncan, who is in his second year at Oregon. "They both made the NCAA Tournament last year, but they both lost in the first round. ... My expectations for them are really, really high."

Swinnen, who had a 22-8 record in singles last season, is currently ranked the No. 12 singles player in the nation, according to the Intercollegiate Tennis Association preseason poll. The No. 12 ranking is the highest singles ranking ever in Oregon men's tennis history.

Swinnen, a native of Würenlingen, Switzerland, said one of his goals is to repeat last year's success.

"I hope we do it like last year," said Swinnen, who was an All-Pac-10 member and an All-American last season. "We made it for the first time to the NCAA's. Now our goal this year is to do it again



DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Oregon senior Manuel Kost, seen here during a match last season, will begin the season ranked No. 30 in the country after an 18-10 record in 2004.

TENNIS, page 12A