

■ In my opinion



CLAYTON JONES
SEVENTH INNING STRETCH

Athletes go extra mile in tsunami relief efforts

With the Oregon men's basketball team reeling from being swept at home by the Arizona schools and now facing three games on the road, there are a lot of negative questions that could be asked, fingers that could be pointed and accountability that needs to be claimed.

Not today. After reading Monday's copy of the Emerald, I forgot about bad shooting, youth and inexperience.

Instead there is kindness, thoughtfulness and generosity.

Oregon basketball player Matt Short has decided, along with wrestler Jeremy McLaughlin and volunteer wrestling coach Tony Overstake, to go to Thailand at the end of the term to help with tsunami relief efforts. Friend and University student Ethan Holub will be joining them. They leave March 20 and return April 20.

It's good to see this.

There is too much in the world of sports about athletes making fools of themselves and being selfish. As hard as I laughed when I saw Randy Moss asking "what's 10 grand to me?" and talking about how he's going to be paying "straight cash, homey," in retrospect, it really wasn't funny. Moss must be living in a world where he doesn't remember when 10 grand did mean something to him.

While professional athletes have given a lot of money to the relief efforts in Thailand, there's something to be said about what these guys are doing.

It's easy to give money that might not mean much to someone in the long run. Formula One champion Michael Schumacher won't miss the \$10 million he donated. Schumacher is second on the 2004 Forbes list of highest-paid athletes making \$80 million in 2004, just behind Tiger Woods.

The San Francisco Giants are auctioning off a meeting with Barry Bonds during the 2005 season. Fans spent \$7,500 this past month to meet the slugger and Alex Rodriguez.

The Patriots gave playoff tickets to their Jan. 16 game to whoever donated \$1,000 to tsunami relief efforts through the New England Patriots Charitable Foundation, with a limit of 200 offered.

It's not only the athletes — movie stars, singers and the everyday Joe have been giving money for the relief effort.

These donations are definitely needed.

While Short and his buddies won't be donating millions, they will be donating something way more valuable: time and effort.

To go to a place with disease and dirty water to help people who are less fortunate is a selfless act of generosity.

Short, who hasn't seen much action this season on the court, could miss any postseason action if, and that is a BIG if, the Ducks make the tournament. But I hope he doesn't think twice about his decision, because the difference he'll make in Thailand will be much bigger than the impact he would

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■ Club Sports

Varsity lacrosse debuts at Oregon

Early team bonding should help the Ducks as they prepare for their first game on Feb. 12

BY BEAU EASTES
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

Last Thursday, following practice in the unseasonably warm January weather, Kate Fleming shot out of the Casanova Center and darted to the athletic building's parking lot.

Waiting in an old, small, maroon sedan were the freshman midfielder's teammates. Six of them. Fleming squeezed in with little room to spare, and the girls sped off.

Heading into a season full of unknowns, one thing is for certain: Oregon's first-ever women's lacrosse team is extremely tight-knit.

Head coach Jen Larsen, previously an assistant at traditional power North Carolina, will lead the first Division I women's lacrosse team in the Pacific Northwest. Larsen, who starred at Virginia in lacrosse and field hockey in the mid-90s, isn't bashful about what she expects from her young squad.

"I want success from the very beginning," the first-year coach said. "But success to me is academics, in the community and everything they're doing in life."

The Ducks, who started spring practice Tuesday, kick off their inaugural season Feb. 12 at 12 p.m. at Papé Field with a league match against Stanford.

"We're all focused," Fleming said. "When we're dying in sprints we say, 'this is for Stanford.'"

The Ducks will compete in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation, a league that includes California, UC Davis, St. Mary's of Calif., Denver and Stanford.

Stanford, who finished second in the MPSF last year behind Cal, is just the first of several formidable foes for the Ducks. Oregon will battle North Carolina, Ohio and No. 3 Northwestern — all on the road.

"I want our team to learn that's where we want to be," Larsen said. "You're not going to learn how to be there by sitting in the stands."

Like their coach, Larsen's players welcome the challenge. "No one expects anything from us," Fleming said. "We've got nothing to lose."

"We'll come out with everything we've got," senior goaltender Louisa Dorsch added.

The season, no matter what the win and loss record reads, is a true source of pride for Dorsch. The Hagerstown, Md., native helped resurrect a club sports team that "wasn't the best" when she arrived at Oregon in 2000 and led the Ducks to a national tournament birth in 2004. Dorsch was one of a few members of the club team invited to play on Jensen's varsity squad, capping what the senior called "a perfect lacrosse career."

On the field, Dorsch will battle freshman Allison O'Brien for the starting goalie position,



ERIK R. BISHOFF | PHOTOGRAPHER

Freshmen Jen May (12) and Carrie Bateman (22) battle for position in a fall workout. May and Bateman, two of nine players from Maryland for the Ducks, look to see significant playing time this year.

with the edge slightly in Dorsch's favor because of her previous club experience and maturity.

Offensively, look for junior Emma Thorborg, another Oregon Lacrosse club veteran, to provide a spark for the Ducks.

"We expect you to be better than you were yesterday and be willing to learn more tomorrow. I hope that's the foundation we can continue to move forward on."

JEN LARSEN | Lacrosse head coach

"(Emma)'s setting a pace, a tempo, in the offensive motion," said Larsen about the Portland native's practice habits. "It's been our biggest asset for our offense right now."

A pair of freshmen midfielders have also caught the eye of their coach.

"I've really been impressed with the consistent play of Jen May and Carrie Bateman," Larsen said. "(They) just have great lacrosse knowledge. When we need a spark, we

usually get it from one of them."

On defense, freshmen Cara Mead and Katie Tarlow look to see significant playing time.

"Cara's doing a great job on the defensive end," Larsen said. "She's solid."

"(Tarlow) is improving everyday. She's energetic, tenacious and just doing a great job."

Larsen, assisted by Robert Bray, Jr. and Beth Ames, sees herself responsible for not only leading a new program on the field, but also for introducing the traditionally East Coast sport to the Northwest.

"One of my goals is to educate fans ... and attract youth to our sport and get them as much teaching as I can," Larsen said. "I want to get knowledge of our sport out to all ages."

Case in point: Larsen and her squad held a free clinic for future lacrosse stars at the Moshofsky Sports Center this weekend.

Larsen is adamant about laying down a firm foundation for the Oregon program to grow.

"We expect you to be better than you were yesterday and be willing to learn more tomorrow," Larsen said. "I hope that's the foundation we can continue to move forward on."

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IN BRIEF

Freshman leads Stanford women to top of Pac-10

Going into the second half of the season, the Stanford women's basketball team sits atop the Pacific-10 Conference.

The Cardinal (17-2 overall, 8-1 Pac-10) scored a total of 194 points against the Los Angeles schools last week. It reached the century mark in points in a 100-75 victory against UCLA Thursday.

On Saturday, No. 4 Stanford was six points shy of reaching triple digits once more in a

94-58 effort that ended USC's seven-game winning streak. The Women of Troy (13-5, 7-2) were stalled at second place in the Pac-10 standings.

Freshman guard Candice Wiggins earned her second Pac-10 Player of the Week honor for Stanford on Monday. The La Jolla, Calif., native is third in the conference in scoring, leading her team's high offensive output with 17.4 points per game.

Wiggins played a combined 48 minutes in last week's explosive two-game homestand. She averaged 21 points per game, shooting 60 percent (12 of 20) from the field and 50 percent (5 of 10) from beyond the arc.

She was a captain of the USA Junior

National Team and a McDonald's All-American in 2004.

Stanford is the only team to reach 100 points against a Pac-10 opponent this season, something the Cardinal had not achieved since the 2001-2002 season. Arizona State is the only other team to score at least 100 points in a game this season (102 against non-conference opponent Prairie View A&M).

The Cardinal's only conference loss this season came against Oregon at McArthur Court. Its other defeat came one week earlier at the hands of No. 9 Tennessee.

— Stephen Miller