

"Enough is enough...I expect Joe Torre, his complete coaching staff and the team to turn this around."

Yankee owner George Steinbrenner on the Yankees' 4-8 start

■ In my opinion



CLAYTON JONES
SEVENTH INNING STRETCH

Numskull fans: Keep your seats in the stands

Really? More stupid fans?

In case you haven't heard, an idiot in Boston took a swipe at Yankees outfielder Gary Sheffield as he was fielding a ball into the right-field corner, and another moron dumped a beer on him during a game Thursday night at Fenway Park.

Sheffield said he was struck in the face by fan Chris House, then pushed him away and threw the ball back into the infield. He then turned back to House but restrained himself as a Fenway Park security guard got in between the two men.

The sports world hasn't moved far past the Detroit/Indiana melee that had players jumping into the stands and fans pouring onto the court.

Fans just don't seem to understand that they aren't part of the game.

Buying a ticket doesn't give a fan the right to have any effect on the outcome of a game.

So fans: Buy a ticket, shove down a sausage dog, chug a beer, boo, cheer — and keep your ass in the stands.

Don't get a high-and-mighty complex because you think you pay the athlete's salary and that gives you the right to say and do what you want to them.

A fan can still yell about someone's mama (though it isn't very tasteful), tell them how much they stink and how they couldn't hit water if they fell out of a boat.

Just stay out of the way of the game.

Trust me, I bet Cub fan Steve Bartman (who almost had to go into the witness protection program) wishes he had never stuck his glove in front of Moises Alou in foul ground during that fateful October night in the 2003 playoffs.

I mean, what's going to happen next?

I can see it now ... in Boston.

"Jorge Posada chases a pop-up toward the stands and, oh! He catches a clothesline from a fan and now has a hot dog stuffed down his throat and peanut shells tossed on him."

Or how about this ... in New York.

"Manny Ramirez runs back for a fly ball to deep left and, oh! A bucket of popcorn is dumped on his head, and he is being whipped by Yankee fans with red rope licorice."

Now that might be a little extreme, but you get the point.

But what (or who) is to blame for this incident? I've heard every excuse from alcohol sales to the proximity of seats to the field.

There is only one thing to blame in these incidents — the fan.

The Red Sox did a great job of disciplining the fans in this ordeal by revoking House's season tickets and prohibiting the fan that dumped beer on Sheffield from buying tickets for the rest of the season.

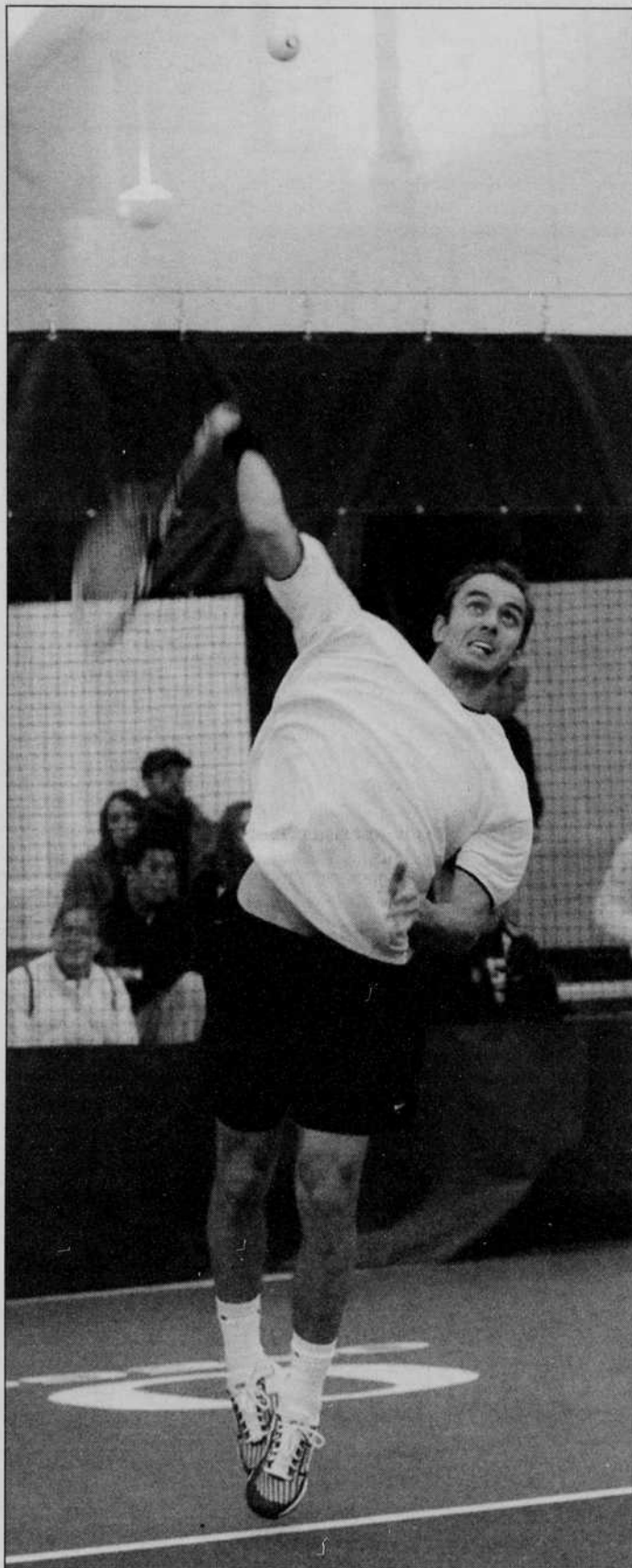
I also would like to applaud the quick reaction of that security guard. It could've gotten ugly.

My only hope now is that crowd I.Q. increases, and fans understand they pay to watch a game — not to become part of it.

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■ Men's tennis

Ducks fail to defeat Washington



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHER

Senior Sven Swinnen played his final home match Saturday and was defeated by Washington's Alex Vlaski in three sets, 6-2, 2-6, 6-3.

Seniors Sven Swinnen and Manuel Kost played the final home game of their collegiate careers

BY ALEX TAM
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

Washington associate head coach Chris Russell arrived in Eugene on Saturday for the first time since vacating the Oregon men's tennis team's head coach position last September — a month before fall season began — a decision that shocked many of his players.

Russell, who coached the Ducks for nine seasons, maintains it was the right decision for him and his family. However, he added that it was still difficult to leave behind a team he took to the NCAA Championships last season.

"It's a good situation for my family," Russell said. "That's what the whole move was all about. With my wife's family up there, it was the right thing to do."

After Saturday's match, in which the 11th-ranked Huskies defeated Oregon, 6-1, Russell walked over to each of his former players to hug them and wish them well. For two Ducks, seniors Sven Swinnen and Manuel Kost, the match was the last they would play at home in their college careers.

"You ask people around the country about Oregon tennis, and they know Sven and Manu at this point," Russell said. "As far as what they've meant to the program, to the success of the program, they have been the foundation. Without those two guys, we wouldn't have been able to recruit the other guys. It'll be tough to see them go."

Swinnen, 24, has had his finest season at Oregon, ranked No. 14 in the nation with a 16-4 dual singles record. Kost has also been a staple of the men's program with 54 career singles victories that ranks him seventh in Oregon history.

However, Swinnen and Kost endured defeats in each of their singles matches. Swinnen fell to the Huskies' Alex Vlaski in three sets, 6-2, 2-6, 6-3. Kost then lost his match to the nation's 57th-ranked player Christoph Palman-shofer in straight sets, 6-2, 6-4.

Swinnen nearly pulled out a victory after taking his match to a

third set, but two break points by Vlaski in the final frame sealed the win.

"It was a close match, but I had a little bit of a slow start in the first set, then I came back strong in the second," Swinnen said. "Then in the third set, he broke me, and he served it out."

While Swinnen was upset with the loss in his final home game, he emphasized overall enjoyment throughout his career at Oregon.

"It's been a great four years here, and there was an awesome crowd here," he said. "We played great doubles, but it was too bad we couldn't win in singles."

The Ducks took the doubles point to take an early 1-0 lead, but the Huskies came back to win all six singles matches.

Oregon head coach Kevin Kowalik said he was proud of the way his team competed, despite struggling through the season with an 8-15 overall record and 1-6 in Pacific-10 Conference play.

"They were just better than us; that was the bottom line," Kowalik said. "We came out with a lot of energy and won the doubles point, which is what we always need. For us to be this close and push them to this limit, it's good for us even though we lost."

Saturday's contest was also the most heavily attended of the season by fans for both teams. It helped create a "hostile" and "loud" environment, Russell said.

"Our guys did a very good job of staying focused," Russell said of his Huskies. "It was a tough environment. It was hostile, and you could feel the energy, and I thought we responded well."

When asked about the future of the program he helped build for nearly a decade, Russell said he has nothing but positive feelings for the Ducks and their coach.

"As tough as it was to leave here and to leave these guys, they're in good hands," he said. "The program is going in the right direction."

The Oregon men now prepare for the Pac-10 Championships, which begin Thursday in Ojai, Calif.

■ Men's golf

Oregon ties for seventh with Arizona

Sophomore Matt Ma led the Ducks with a score of 71 in the final round and 209 overall, putting him in a tie for second place

BY SCOTT J. ADAMS
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

The Oregon men's golf team ended its regular season with a finish equal to Pacific-10 Conference foe No. 24 Arizona last weekend at the U.S. Intercollegiate in Palo Alto, Calif. Both teams carded a combined team score

of 878 at the par 70, 6,742-yard Stanford Golf Course, giving Oregon its second consecutive seventh-place finish in tournament play.

Sophomore Matt Ma led the charge for the Ducks, shooting a final round 71 on Sunday that placed him in a three-way tie for second place with Rob Grube of Stanford and Taylor

Wood of No. 19 Southern California. Ma has finished in the top three in two of the past three tournaments, and his continued success has not gone unnoticed.

"Matt has been in a real solid groove for the last four tournaments," Oregon head coach Steve Nosler said. "It's really exciting seeing him get into that zone."

Ma's final score of 209 matched his best finish since donning the green and yellow