

■ In my opinion



CLAYTON JONES
SEVENTH INNING STRETCH

Fans take passion to extreme for fave teams

Everybody is passionate about something. For some it's cooking; for others it's flying, and for those who don't get out of the house too often or still live in their parents' basement, it's usually Dungeons and Dragons. (Those are also the same people standing outside for tickets to the new Star Wars movie — bring on the hate mail.)

Like I said, everyone has a passion. But for a lot of sports fans, it's more than just a passion.

Take those damn Cub fans for instance. Note: I'm a Cincinnati fan, and any allegiance to the Cubs would be almost as bad as saying something positive about Cleveland.

Every year I have to hear about how the Cubs are going to turn their season around because of their great pitching staff (who, mind you, has never been entirely healthy) or over-hyped lineup.

And every year something goes wrong, and the Cubs fall apart, blaming injuries, sports announcer Steve Stone (who was their best commentator, giving it to fans straight) or their own fans (i.e. Steve Bartman getting in the way of a foul ball in the playoffs).

But the one thing I got to respect about Cubs fans (and I hate saying this) is that they are loyal.

No matter how many games out of first place they are or how bad the team is, the Cubs always get fans in the stands, even during their day games.

And get this, even though it wasn't a classy or a real human being thing to do, poor Bartman had to go into hiding and avoid death threats at work, because these fans so desperately wanted to win.

While baseball is my passion, arguably this country's most popular game is football.

Plain and simple, football fanatics are crazy about their teams.

Take Green Bay fans for instance.

These people wear chunks of cheddar on their skulls and call themselves Cheeseheads (I know Wisconsin is a big cheese-producing state, but why they started putting cheese on their heads is beyond me).

At historic Lambeau Field, some of the fans go without shirts during the frigid Wisconsin winters and look like they are about 15 minutes away from hypothermia.

The worst part is, Green Bay fans aren't relegated to Wisconsin. They seem to be everywhere, and I have no idea why. There aren't a lot of people in the state of Wisconsin, yet the abundance of people with green and yellow jackets with giant Gs on them amazes me.

But who am I to talk? My favorite football team is the Cincinnati Bengals (don't hurt yourself laughing). This team hasn't had a winning season since the first Bush administration.

But the Bengals (please don't call them the Bungals; they have gone 8-8 in each of the last two years) are my passion, and I will stick with them to the end.

No matter what.

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■ Men's track and field

Teammates become rivals at Invite

Brandon Holliday and other former Oregon track athletes competed with current Ducks on Saturday

BY BRIAN SMITH & ALEX TAM
SPORTS REPORTER & FREELANCE REPORTER

Saturday's Oregon Invitational pitted a number of current Ducks against former ones in a variety of events. The highlight of the day was junior hurdler Eric Mitchum running against former teammate Brandon Holliday in the 400-meter hurdles.

Holliday finished his eligibility last season, ending his Oregon career as a Pacific-10 Conference champion in the 400 hurdles. The Beaverton native continues to train in Eugene and now represents Team XO, a team of mainly post-collegiate athletes who train in Oregon.

At Saturday's meet, Holliday won the 400-meter hurdle event, squeaking past Mitchum by .78 seconds. Holliday finished at 51.47, while Mitchum crossed the finish line at 52.15. Mitchum said that despite being opponents, it was not at all different going up against his former teammate.

"It's the same," Mitchum said. "But you know, we still train together, and he will always be my teammate."

Rupp bounces back after falling in debut race

Galen Rupp made his Oregon debut on Saturday and finished fifth in the 5,000-meter event with a time of 13 minutes, 50.1 seconds. Midway through the race, Rupp fell to the track and had to quickly bounce back after slipping to 11th place. He said it was unfortunate timing in his

first race as a Duck, but he'd rather have it occur now instead of later.

"It's going to happen sometimes, and you can't always expect to run a perfect race all the time," Rupp said. "I'm just glad that it happened to me early in the season as opposed to the NCAA's or regionals where it really matters."

Tight finish among Oregon runners in 400-meter event

The Ducks also placed well in the 400-meter event with three athletes finishing in the top four. Senior Kedar Inico won the event (46.56) by just a 10th of a second against teammate Matt Scherer (46.57). A.K. Ikwaakor placed fourth with a time of 47.59.

Inico said he and Scherer followed their coaches' advice to push one another in the race.

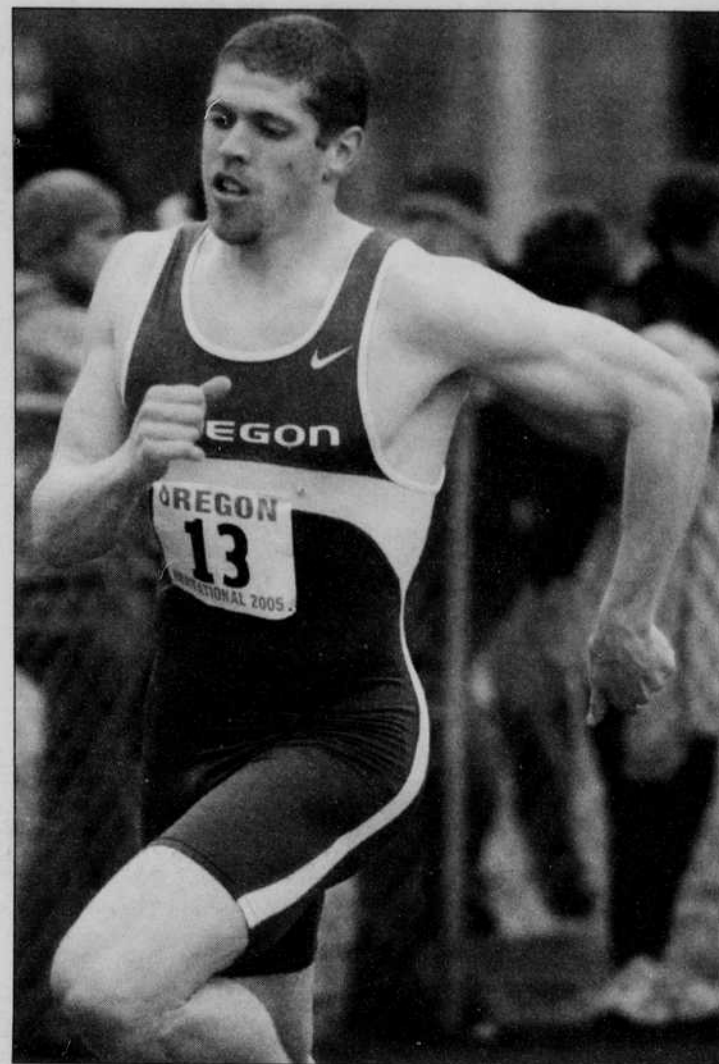
"I went with the coaches' plan to get out and stay with my teammate because he's fast, too," Inico said. "We were actually the two fastest competitors, so (if I) stay with him, we work each other."

Scherer said the goal of the race was to get Inico a regional qualifying mark, which they accomplished.

"And that's what we did," Scherer said. "We work together; I worked the first half of the race, and he worked the second."

Oregon keeps up with Pac-10 opponents

The Ducks stayed ranked in the top 15, securing the No. 11 spot for



DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Oregon junior sprinter Matt Scherer finished second in the 400 meters to teammate Kedar Inico at the Oregon Invitational on Saturday.

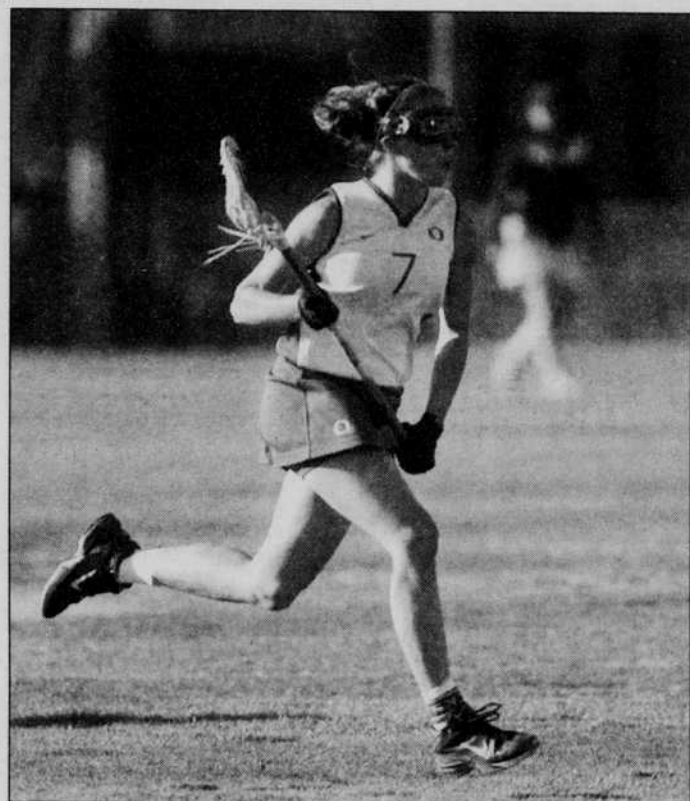
the week of April 26, according to trackwire.com. Five other Pac-10 Conference opponents are ranked, four of them in the top six. Arizona is ranked No. 3, followed by

Stanford at No. 5, Southern California and Arizona State tied for No. 6 and UCLA at No. 19.

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■ Duck lacrosse

Golden Bears overpower Oregon, 19-8



LAUREN WIMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Oregon's Jenny Browne, seen here earlier this season, scored two goals for the Ducks in a losing effort against California in Berkeley on Sunday.

Duck goalkeeper Louisa Dorsch made 13 saves despite facing 41 shots on goal from Cal scorers

BY STEFANIE LOH
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

The game started out close, but in the end, the Ducks just didn't quite have enough to clinch the victory.

Sunday afternoon in Berkeley, Calif., the Oregon women's lacrosse team was overwhelmed by California, 19-8.

The Ducks (4-10 overall, 1-4 Mountain Pacific Sports Federation) started out strong, virtually matching Cal goal-for-goal toward the end of the first half after both teams rode out a stagnant 15 minutes of opening play.

Oregon co-captain Jenny Browne had a strong first half. Twenty minutes into the game, she scored two goals within minutes of each other to give the Ducks a 3-2 lead over the Golden Bears.

Cal soon regained the lead, and the Bears never looked back. At the half, Cal led the Ducks 7-5.

"We played well in the first half. We had so much more in ourselves to give, but we just couldn't get

there in the second half," Oregon head coach Jen Larsen said.

Cal came out strong in the second half and simply outlasted the Ducks. After an initial goal exchange brought the score to 9-7 in Cal's favor, Oregon fell behind.

The Bears went on two five-goal runs in the second half, in which senior Molly Brady, junior Leanne Zilioli and sophomore Laura Cavallo completed hat tricks.

At the same time, a stellar performance between the pipes by Cal goalkeeper Hilary Lynch limited Oregon to just three scores out of the Ducks' ten shots on goal in the second half.

"I have to give credit to their goalkeeper. Hilary was very good," Larsen admitted after the game. "She just shut us out."

Cal also appeared to have the more potent offense, taking a whopping 47 total shots on goal. Oregon goalkeeper Louisa Dorsch put in a