

"You know I've got one of those wonderful ideas ... women should be dressed in white like all other domestic appliances."

Formula One President Bernie Ecclestone in response to Danica Patrick, a female racecar driver

■ In my opinion



SHAWN MILLER
FULL-COURT PRESS

Minimum NBA age promotes love of the game

The National Basketball Association has finally backed up its voice with action in the most recent collective bargaining agreement: a fresh six-year deal signed on June 2 set to begin next season, which has provided reassurance that it wants what is most important for the game of basketball.

The highlighted topic in the agreement was raising the age limit of draftees from 18 to 19 years old, which has created water cooler arguments across the country.

The new rule states that American players are eligible one year after their high school classmates graduate. International players must turn 19 by the end of the calendar year in which they become draft eligible.

"This will encourage our scouts to spend time in D-league gyms rather than high school gyms," NBA Commissioner David Stern said.

By not having the option of making millions after picking up a diploma, the student-athletes will have at least one year to invest in the student half of their title. This will allow a year to feel out the enjoyment and excitement of the college experience and evaluate their future with knowledgeable options.

I have often heard that instituting this age change is "un-American" and that if the option to sign a contract worth millions is available, making that person wait for one year would be counterproductive to the "American dream."

The bottom line is money. Professional sports have become increasingly based solely on monetary issues rather than the love of the game.

While the NBA is making a valiant effort to improve the options of its future employees and break the trend, the positive is possibly overruled by university presidents with cash registers flashing in the back of their minds.

These athletes will improve a handful of select university basketball programs across the nation, therefore bringing in more revenue to the school, program and city.

There is a slight chance that some of these student-athletes will stay for a second, third and even more remote, a senior season. The most important thing isn't whether they stay for an extended period of time, but that they will gain valuable life lessons that college coaches seem to teach better than professional coaches, which will prepare them for the future that begins after NBA paychecks end.

Tonight marks the final NBA draft, barring any future changes, that players straight from graduation can be selected. And in my book, that is a positive thing not only for college basketball but also for the athletes that represent the sport.

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Emeralds slide by Spokane in series

The Eugene Ems narrowly beat the Spokane Indians in a series full of defensive mistakes

SHAWN MILLER
SPORTS EDITOR

Defensive miscues have wreaked havoc on the Eugene Emeralds to open the 2005 season.

The Spokane Indians (2-3) took advantage of two Eugene (3-2) errors, a wild pitch and an errant throw from Eugene starter Jon Link that skipped past second baseman Jodan Rivera to win 3-2 Saturday night at Civic Stadium.

"You can't give them (the opponent) more than 27 outs," Eugene manager Roy Howell said. "We gave them two runs on two errors. Those plays have to be made."

Spokane scored the game-winning run in the top of the ninth inning on a wild pitch by Neil Jamison. German Duran led off the inning with a walk. Joe Kemp slapped a bloop single into the outfield, which allowed Duran to escape to third base. Jamison induced a groundout to end the inning after throwing the wild pitch.

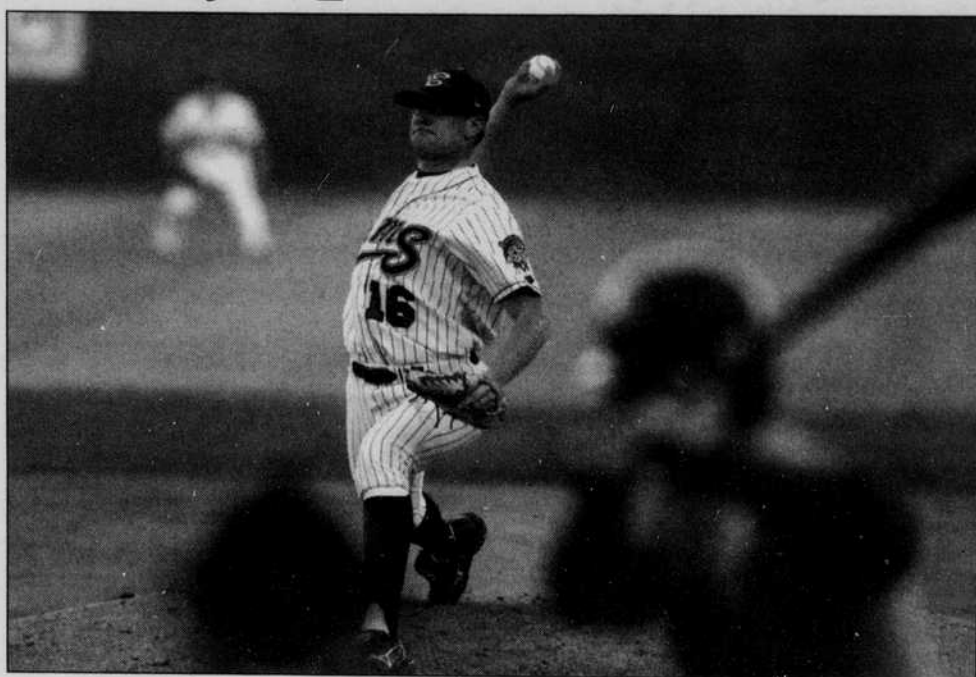
Howell said "making defensive mistakes that cost us runs" was the deciding factor in the loss.

The Indians scored the game's first two runs in the fifth inning. John Mayberry, Jr. beat out an infield single to lead off the inning. Following a groundout that allowed Mayberry to advance to second base, Link threw the ball into the outfield while trying a pickoff at second. Two pitches later, Jonathan Higashi drilled an RBI double that scored Mayberry. After a groundout by Freddy Thon, Higashi scored on an error by Eugene first baseman Daryl Jones.

"They are going to make mistakes," Howell said. "The bottom line is that we are battling. You are not going to win all of the close games."

Eugene answered in the sixth inning as Nick Hundley's triple skipped by Mayberry in right field. Santiago Guerrero grounded out, which allowed Hundley to score the Ems' first run.

Brian Cavanaugh singled to open the eighth inning before Hundley drew a



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTO EDITOR

Eugene starting pitcher Jon Link earned a no-decision during the Ems 3-2 loss to Spokane on June 25. Link allowed only four hits and two runs in six innings of work.

full-count walk. Guerrero advanced the runners with a sacrifice bunt before Billy Richardson hit a sacrifice fly to right field that scored Cavanaugh to tie the game.

"If it is a base hit you get two (runs), if it is a sacrifice fly you get one," Howell said of Richardson's at-bat.

Jones struck out to end the inning. Josh Alley smashed a ball into the left-center gap, but it was caught to end the game.

"I fouled a few off and the last one he (Spokane pitcher) got in on me a little bit," Alley said. "You've just got to tip your hat to him."

Alley, a former University of Tennessee outfielder, went 3 for 4 with a walk in his professional debut Saturday.

"Any time you can go out there and have three hits you've got to keep your head up," Alley said.

June 21: Ems win 3-2 over Spokane

Stevie Delabar pitched a scoreless two-hitter through five innings to pick up the 3-2 victory for

Eugene on opening night.

The Ems grabbed an early 2-0 lead after the first inning. Mike Sansoe led off with a double into the right-field gap. Following a strikeout by Richardson, Drew Davidson hit an RBI double that scored Sansoe. A wild pitch advanced Davidson to third base before a passed ball allowed him to score.

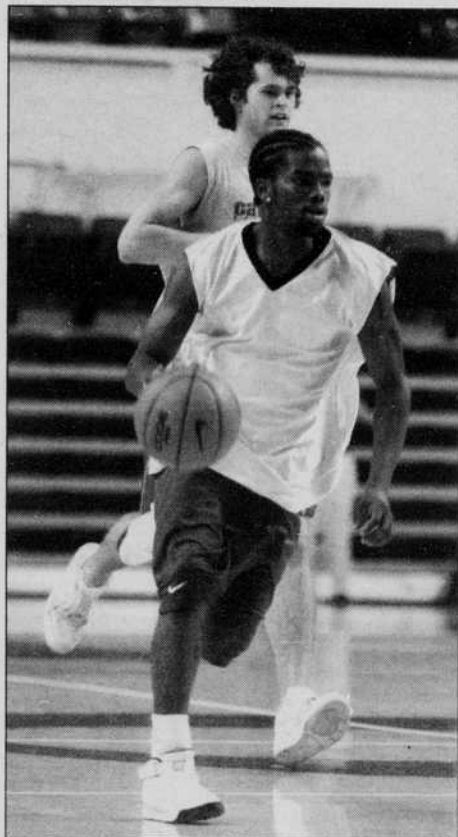
"To come out and score early is huge," Delabar told The Register-Guard. "The guys were hitting the ball pretty well tonight."

Guerrero, who earned a leadoff walk to start the bottom of the second inning, moved to third base on a fielder's choice by Billy Killian. Rivera hit a ground ball to the right side of the infield, which allowed Guerrero to score the Ems' winning run.

Spokane tightened the score with a two-run homer by Mayberry in the sixth inning, but failed to capitalize on opportunities presented. The Indians had runners in scoring position in the seventh, eighth and ninth innings. With one out and the bases loaded in the eighth inning, Spokane batters struck out with a full count back to back.

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■ Men's basketball



CRAIG VOLPE | FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHER

Junior point guard Aaron Brooks (with the ball) leads former Oregon star Luke Jackson down the floor in a recent scrimmage. Brooks, along with teammate Malik Hairston, was selected to try out for the USA Basketball Men's U21 National Team July 21-23 in Dallas, Texas.

Men's basketball team faces tough schedule

The Ducks announce a competitive line-up for the 2005-06 season with games against Illinois, Santa Clara and Georgetown

SHAWN MILLER
SPORTS EDITOR

After a disappointing campaign last year, a competitive 2005-06 Oregon men's basketball schedule was recently announced.

The Ducks, who ended last season with a 14-13 overall record and a tie for eighth place in the Pacific-10 Conference standings, face a non-conference schedule that includes six participants in the postseason last year.

"This team definitely needs to learn how to win," Oregon coach Ernie Kent said. "As a young team, they never folded (last season). We went through a lot of adversity."

Highlighted by NCAA runner-up Illinois, Oregon's opponent at the Dec. 10 Papé Jam at the Rose Garden in Portland, the home schedule includes four teams coming off postseason play.

The regular season begins with the Ducks hosting the Hispanic Classic, a round-robin tournament where Oregon plays Tennessee Tech (Nov. 20), Savannah State (Nov. 21), NCAA participant Pacific (Nov. 22) and Georgetown (Dec. 3).

Oregon also hosts Rice (Nov. 26), Santa

Clara (Dec. 13), Howard (Dec. 20) and Portland State (Dec. 27).

The Ducks' road schedule includes Vanderbilt (Nov. 30), New Mexico (Dec. 17) and Portland (Dec. 22).

"If we can manage our schedule, we are going to have tremendous confidence," Kent said.

League play begins with Oregon hosting in-state rival Oregon State on New Year's Eve. The longest conference road trip is three games - The final three of the league schedule (Feb. 23 at USC, Feb. 25 at UCLA and March 4 at Oregon State).

"Everybody knows what to expect," Oregon point guard Aaron Brooks said. "We've matured so much."

The Pac-10 Tournament, March 8-11 in Los Angeles, Calif., was expanded to include all 10 teams this season, a decision that pleases Kent.

"It's something that us coaches have been pushing for the last three years," Kent said. "It's the Pac-10 tournament, not the Pac-8."

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