

still **IN** the **GAME**

Marcus Kent has exhibited an undying dedication to the game of basketball despite his injuries

SHAWN MILLER
SPORTS EDITOR

Marcus Kent has suffered through knee injuries, media scrutiny and living life on a pedestal as a son and former student-athlete of Oregon men's basketball coach Ernie Kent.

Determination combined with religion, a strong support system, an interest in people and love of athletics have created a dynamic individual who is changing the world one person at a time.

"Athletics has always been a huge part of my life, and the experience from athletics has made me who I am," Kent said.

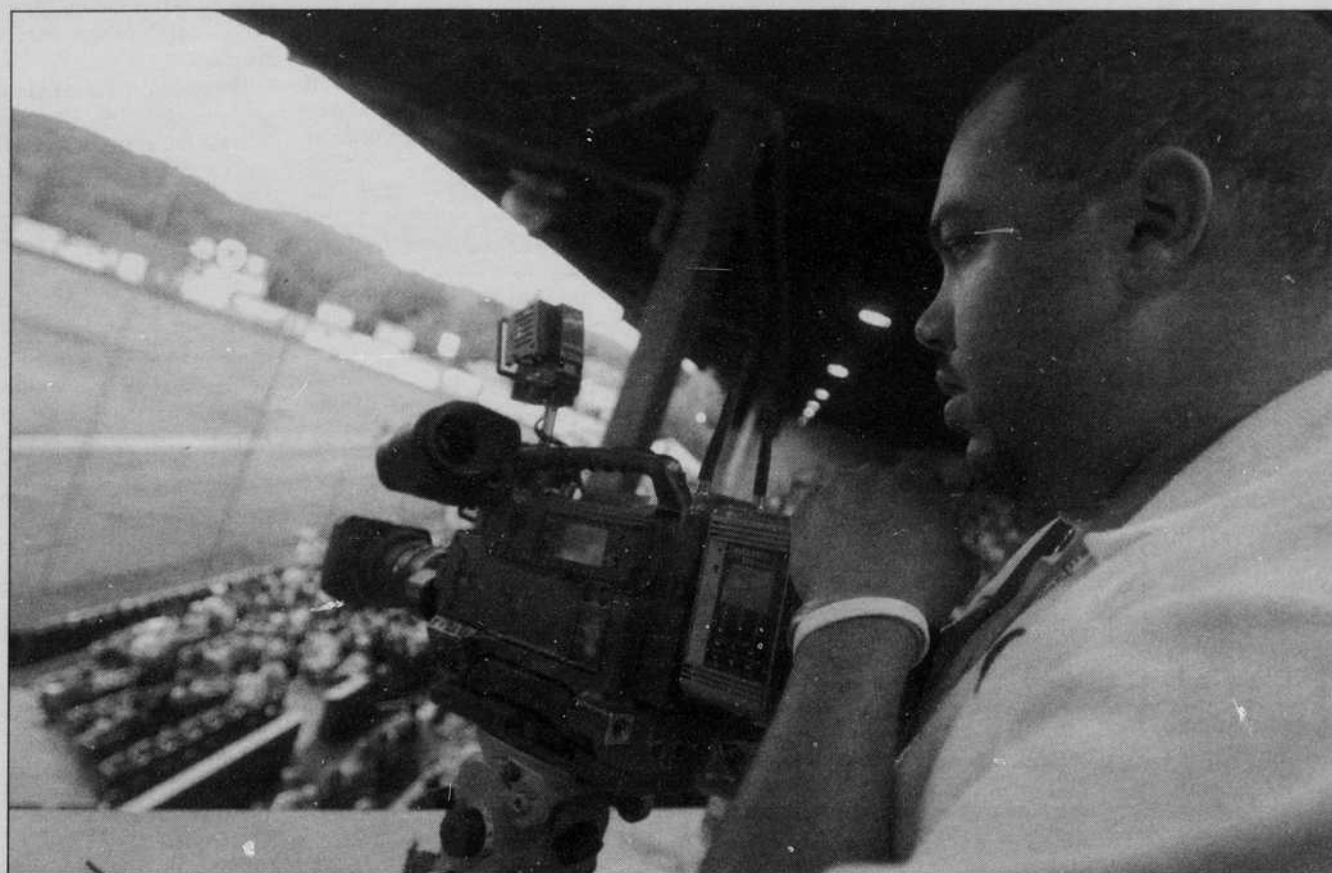
Kent is in his final year at Oregon, expecting to graduate next spring with a degree in sociology.

"Just knowing how different personalities and backgrounds work together" intrigues Kent, he said, an interest that he can use in various outlets including bringing teams together in locker rooms as well as co-workers in break rooms.

That knowledge is also helpful at home.

A family in the spotlight

If there is a family that is known from father to children in Eugene, it is the Kents. Dad, Ernie, heads one of the winningest basketball



Marcus Kent, son of Oregon men's basketball coach Ernie Kent, reviews the playback at a recent Eugene Emeralds game. Kent is currently a part-time videographer for KEZI. He will join the Oregon men's basketball staff as an undergraduate assistant next season.

TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTO EDITOR

programs on the West Coast. Youngest son, Jordan, is a star for the Oregon track and basketball teams. Daughter, McKenzie, is a cheerleader for the Ducks. Marcus is the oldest of the Kent children.

The Kents value the family role and try to spend as much time together as possible.

"We try to get together once or twice a week for a family dinner," Kent said. "Family is definitely something we make time for."

That bond is important, especially in a town that can become immersed in and sometimes obsessed with the "love of the game."

"This town has a tendency to gobble you up," Kent said. "You find you are sacrificing yourself to live up to other people's expectations."

With only one professional sports team in the state (the Portland Trail Blazers), Kent said collegiate athletics fills the void that many Oregonians feel; he believes this is both positive and negative.

"It's the only show in town," Kent said. "Everybody gets psyched out of their minds. You have die-hard fans that have grown up here and have been feeding this stuff to their kids. It kind of multiplies over the generations."

On the flip side, the fans "hold you to a higher expectation," he said.

"When you do make a mistake and they find out you are human, they are more disappointed than they would be otherwise," Kent said. "I always thought it would be interesting to show up at the fan's job at a coffee shop with the team, and ride his tail every time he made a latte."

Spending parts of his childhood in different areas of the country, Kent said the comparison of Oregon fans to California fans is very different.

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Ems come close to perfection despite one loss

Only two weeks into the minor-league system, the players came together to defeat Salem-Keizer

BY SHAWN MILLER
SPORTS EDITOR

Putting together a flawless complete game, including pitching, hitting and defense, is nearly impossible in baseball.

Despite the challenges of only playing together for two weeks in a minor-league system, the Eugene Emeralds almost pulled off the impossible Friday night in a 5-3 victory over Salem-Keizer.

"The hardest thing to do in a short season like this is to pull the band together," Eugene manager Roy Howell said. "They are coming from across the country. These guys have come in with the understanding that when they walk in those clubhouse doors, they are ready to play baseball."

Eugene first baseman Daryl Jones keyed the offensive attack with two extra-base hits, including the game-winning two-run homer in the sixth inning to give the Ems a 4-0 lead.

"I didn't think it was going to go out at first," Jones said of his first home run of the season. "It feels good to get one out of the way, especially at home."

Jones has admittedly struggled in the first two series of the season, both at the plate and in the field. Friday didn't begin particularly well either.

"The day started off bad," Jones said. "I lost my cell phone."

Day might have been ugly, but night turned into celebration after Jones earned player of the game honors with two runs and two RBIs.

"I feel great," Jones said. "I'm still bummed about my cell phone, but you can't turn down two hits."

The Ems got on the board in the first inning when Mike Sansoe scored on an RBI single by Brian Cavanaugh. Sansoe earned a seven-pitch walk to get on base, stole second and slid under the tag on a play at the plate.

After slapping a double down the third-base line in the second inning, Jones scored the Ems' second run of the game when Josh Alley tore into a two-out RBI single.

Ems' pitcher Stevie Delabar improved his record to 2-0 after allowing two runs on six hits in six-plus innings, while striking out three batters.

"Another good outing," Howell said of Delabar's performance. "He just tried to throw strikes and use his pitches."

"He's throwing strikes with his two-seam and four-seam (fastballs) and mixing in a slider."

Delabar started the seventh inning, but didn't last long. He gave up back-to-back singles before reliever Brandon Higelin came in. Higelin lasted one batter, sending him to first base with a four-pitch walk to load the bases. John Madden replaced Higelin and gave up



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Salem-Keizer Will Thompson (37) slides under the tag of Eugene first baseman Daryl Jones. Jones scored the Ems' second run after belting a double in the second inning and added a two-run homer in the sixth to propel the Ems to a 5-3 victory on Friday.

an RBI single before a controversial play allowed Salem-Keizer to score two more runs.

D.J. Dixon hit a possible double play ball into the infield. After getting the out at home, Eugene catcher Nick Hundley was taken out as he threw the ball to first base. The ball lofted into the outfield, giving Hundley an error and Salem-Keizer its second and third runs.

"As a baserunner he did exactly what you want him to do," Howell said. "I was contending that he was too

far out from the base.

"It was a good play on their part."

Madden enticed the next batter into a groundout, and with the tying run on base, induced a flyout to get out of the jam.

Eugene added an insurance run in the eighth inning when Alley hit a sacrifice fly to score Drew Davidson. Davidson, who walked to start the bottom of the inning, was moved to second base on a sacrifice bunt by Billy Richardson. A wild pitch was thrown

during an intentional walk to Jones, allowing Davidson to third. Jodan Rivera was walked to load the bases before Alley's sacrifice fly.

"It is a different guy every night," Howell said in reference to collecting the big hit. "That is what makes a good ball team."

Alfredo Fernandez earned his league-leading fifth save of the season after pitching a scoreless ninth inning.

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