

"I'm just here to play and win. I'm a gangster."

Boston Red Sox outfielder Manny Ramirez after changing his mind about wanting to be traded

Kickin' BACK

Every Saturday kickballers gather at Skinner's Butte Park to relive the playground days

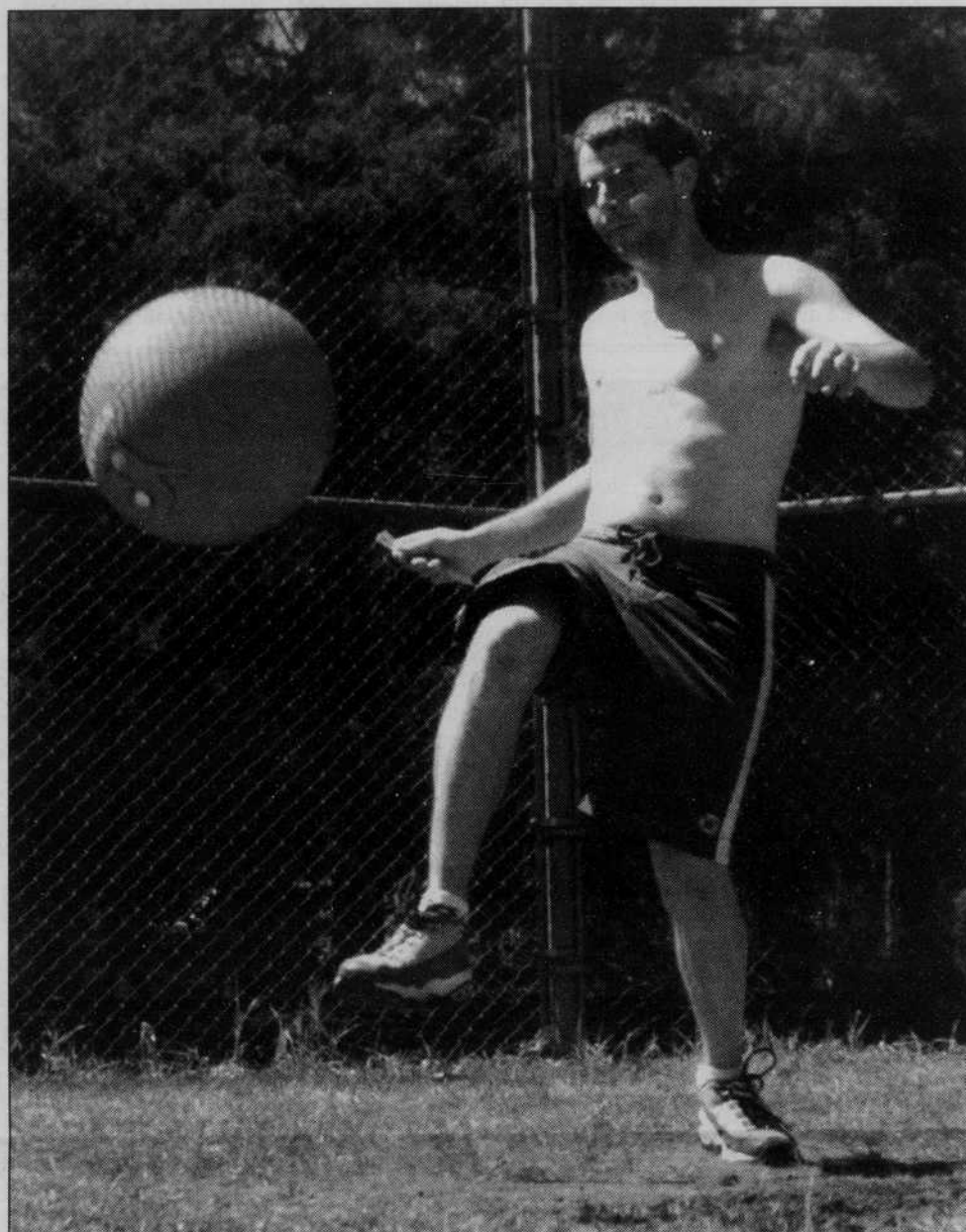
BY SCOTT J. ADAMS
FREELANCE REPORTER

In today's wide world of sports, the trend of bringing playground sports into the mainstream continues to stretch its grammar-school-sized arms across America, and thanks to adult kickball, Eugene is in its grasp.

This phenomenon found its second wind with last year's release of the movie "Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story." The film was a hit in the box office and at video stores and created the foundation for a rise of recreation and adult leagues specializing in sports you may remember playing on the blacktop at recess. Oregon's recreation center followed suit last spring when dodgeball was added to its list of sports students could sign up to play. Dodgeball may be the staple playground sport, but at Skinner's Butte Park on Saturday afternoons, kickball is king.

Kickball is kept alive by the Northwest Association for Adult Competitive Kickball, or NWAACK for short. The league is composed of a ragtag cadre of individuals who are as colorful as the game itself. The pothole-littered field where they play can make nine innings seem grueling in the summer heat, but the players, whose sole form of identity comes from nicknames coined by their peers, are always in high spirits. Speaking of spirits, beer and liquor help pass the time on the scarcely shaded benches flanking the rusty backstop.

One of the more outspoken players in KICKBALL, page 6



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTO EDITOR

Brett Polevoi, also known as "Chicken Chaser," kicks the ball in his first kickball game at Skinner's Butte Park. Games are held at the park every Saturday at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

IN BRIEF

Tamika Nurse, Carolyn Ganes shine on Canadian teams

Tamika Nurse, an incoming freshman for the Oregon women's basketball team, helped Canada's Under-19 women's team to a ninth-place finish at the FIBA World Championships on July 23 in Tunis, Tunisia.

Nurse started all seven games, in which Canada was 3-4, and scored 18 points against Australia and bronze medalist China.

She also scored 12 points during a 71-64 victory over Puerto Rico in the ninth-place game on July 23.

Oregon teammate Carolyn Ganes was named to the Canadian senior women's national team, while Kaela Chapdelaine was chosen as an alternate.

"I'm really excited and, as a fellow Canadian, proud of both Carolyn and Kaela," Oregon coach Bev Smith said. "It's a terrific honor for those two."

Ganes scored six points Friday as Canada fell to Poland 83-57 in the team's opening game of a tournament in Lorient, France. Ganes nailed a clutch overtime bucket to help defeat Hungary 86-82 Saturday and also recorded a game-high 16 points during a 77-48 loss to France on Sunday.

Canada is scheduled to play Belgium, Spain and Finland in a tournament held in Belgium beginning today. The team will play in one additional tournament before the FIBA World Championships Qualifying Tournament in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Sept. 14 through 18.

Yurkovich, Noble win gold at junior championships

Future Oregon track athletes Rachel Yurkovich and Becca Noble each recorded victories in their respective events to win gold at the Pan American Junior Athletics Championships in Windsor, Ontario.

Yurkovich set a PAJAC record Sunday with a javelin toss of 172 feet six inches.

"It was a great way to end my season and my high school career," Yurkovich said. "To win gold here is very special."

Noble won the 800 meters Saturday, while Galen Rupp ended his season with a fourth-place finish in the 1,500 meters.

Chris Winter, who will redshirt at Oregon this fall, earned the bronze medal with a time of 8:58.49 in the 3,000 steeplechase.

Brooks misses cut for USA's U21 team

After making the final 15, Oregon men's basketball guard Aaron Brooks wasn't named to the 12-man USA Under-21 Men's World Championship Team.

Despite scoring 11 points in 14 minutes against Ukraine on Wednesday, shooting 4-5 from the field and 2-2 from the free-throw line, Brooks didn't make the roster the following day.

Saint Joseph's University (Pa.) coach Phil Martelli, head coach of the USA U21 team, announced the roster Thursday morning. Nevada's Nick Fazekas is the only player from the Western half of the United States selected.

Duck golfers fly to U.S. Amateur championship

Oregon men's golfers Derek Sipe, Gregg LaVoie and Ted Whitney each advanced to the U.S. Amateur Championship held Aug. 22-28 in Ardmore, Pa.

Sipe shot a 7-under 137 to earn medalist honors, joining LaVoie, who shot a 2-over 146. Whitney shot a 3-over 147 and defeated Chander Cocco on the fourth playoff hole to secure the bid.

Moretti, Snyder sign National Football League contracts

Former Oregon football players David Moretti and Adam Snyder each signed a contract to play the upcoming season in the National Football League.

Moretti signed with the Kansas City Chiefs, while Snyder agreed to a three-year deal with the San Francisco 49ers, who selected him in the third round of April's NFL Draft.

—Shawn Miller

Bears smash Ems further into slump

Yakima handed Eugene its eighth loss in the last 13 home games with a 7-4 win on Sunday

SHAWN MILLER
SPORTS EDITOR

Offensively, averaging five runs per game is solid. Defensively, five runs allowed every nine innings can lead to a lot of losses.

After allowing at least five runs in six of its last seven games, the Eugene Emeralds (18-22) have lost five of those seven, including Sunday afternoon's 7-4 loss to the Yakima Bears (17-23).

While most teams look forward to home games to break out of a slump, Eugene manager Roy Howell believes a road trip might be just the cure.

"There is no homefield advantage or disadvantage," Howell said. "It doesn't matter where it is happening, the game is played the same."

With that said, Eugene has lost eight of its last 13 home games.

"The fans here are great fans," Howell said. "You want things to go well at home. You lose and not too many fans show up."

The Emeralds are scheduled for an eight-game road trip, beginning with a five-game series at Tri-Cities (18-22) starting today at 7:15 p.m.

"It is 27 outs, and whoever has the most runs after that wins," Howell said.

Simplifying the game and not allowing themselves to "think too

much" might be what the Emeralds need for a jump start.

With 36 games to play in the season, Eugene sits nine games behind Vancouver, the West Division leader. That jump start will need to come quickly.

"Every game is really critical," Howell said.

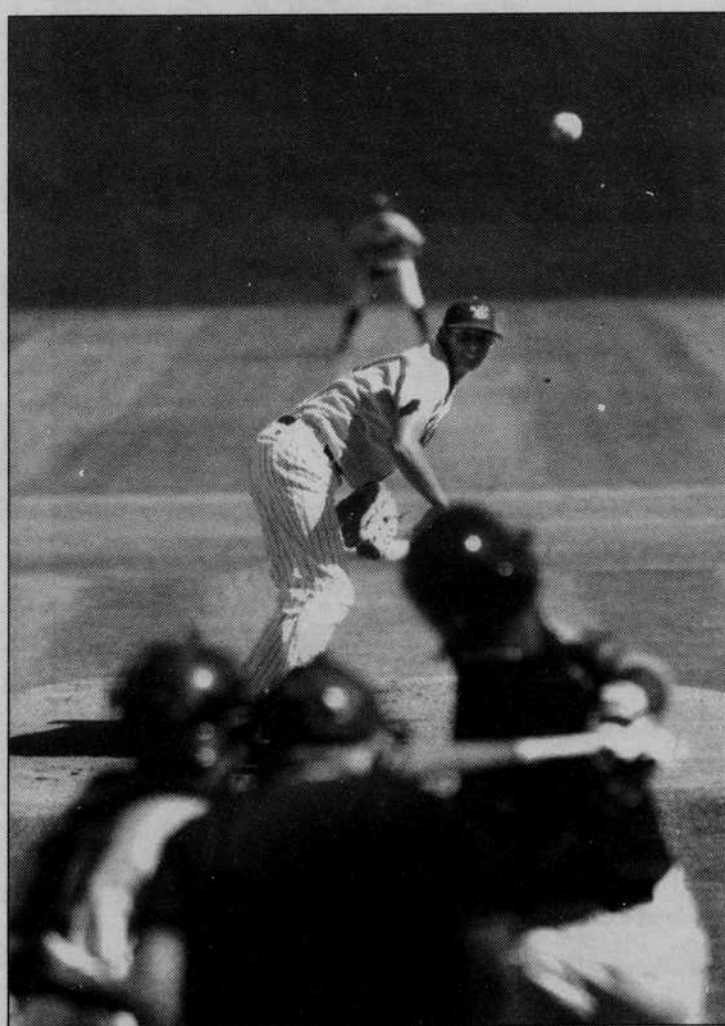
Eugene hasn't won more than two consecutive games since a five-game winning streak was snapped on July 3. The Emeralds will need to string victories together in order to get back in the chase for the playoffs.

"Confidence is the greatest thing you can have in this game," Howell said.

While confidence is ideal, it is hard to find after the Emeralds suffered through six and four-game losing streaks during the month of July.

"You go out there with the attitude of winning the ball game," Howell said. "Sometimes you get in streaks and sometimes it goes the other way."

Yakima jumped on Eugene early with three runs in the top of the first inning and two more in the second. After a run in the first inning, the Emeralds scored three runs in the third inning to close the



HASANG CHEON | FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHER

Eugene starting pitcher Ben Krosschell gives up one of seven hits Sunday during a 7-4 loss to Yakima. Krosschell, who allowed six runs in five innings, was the losing pitcher.