

Rain puts a damper on early baseball games



Photo by Anjanette Booth

Eric Boley fires the ball to a Cougar teammate in the Randall Gym. The men have had to practice in the gym almost every day because of poor weather conditions.

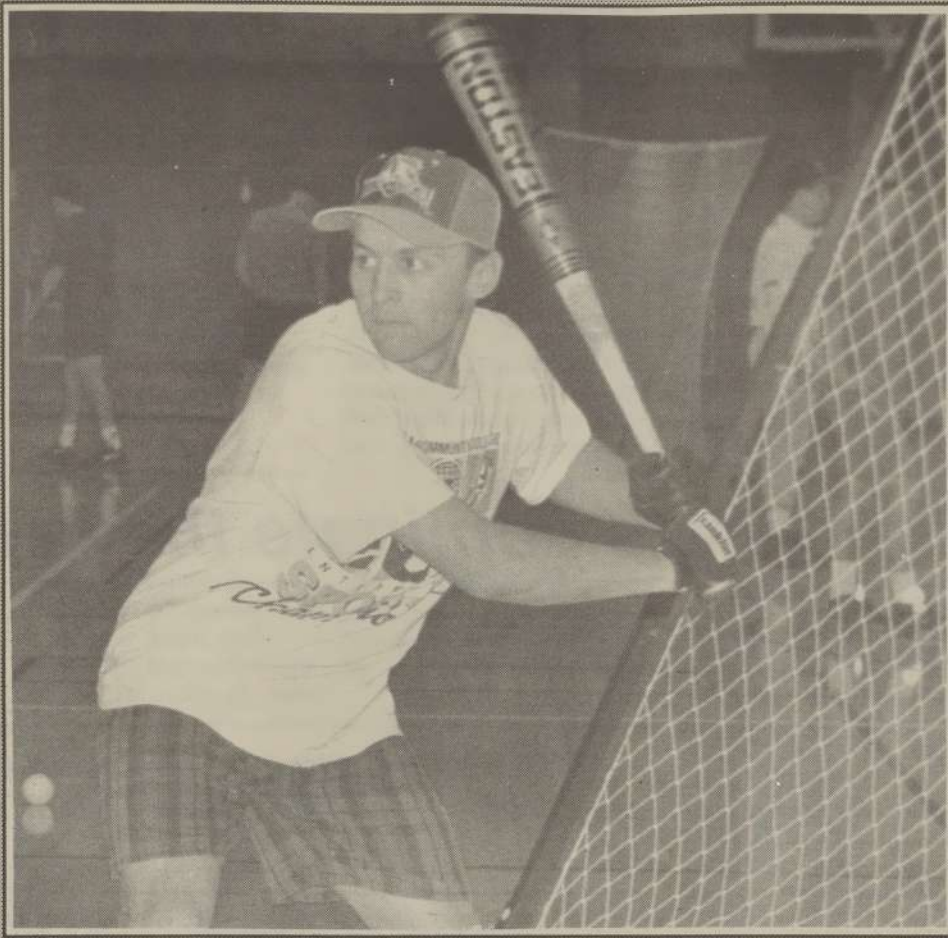


Photo by Anjanette Booth

Freshman Kevin Miller prepares to swing with a determined look. The Cougars have had nine consecutive games canceled due to the continuous spring rain. This leaves them with six league games to reschedule.

Lady luck lures

Athletes practice superstitious behavior

by Justin M. Fields
Staff Writer

Did you ever notice that first-base coaches in professional baseball always kick first base before entering the coach's box? What possible reasoning could be behind this ritualistic behavior?

According to sports psychologists and professional coaches, superstitious behavior can provide an important boost to an athlete's confidence. Performing a ritual or routine can have a calming effect, which will give the athlete the assurance they need to remain confident. This can also prevent distracting or negative thoughts, leaving them free to concentrate on the actual competition.

For example, over-confident sports trivia buffs may boast that they know everything about Buffalo Bills' quarterback, Jim Kelly. But one thing they may be surprised to hear is that Kelly will not even leave the locker room before a game without first vomiting. That's right sports fans, before losing his third consecutive Super Bowl this year, Kelly first lost his lunch.

Kelly's ritual is unique only in its severity. Several other notable sports figures and organizations also have sports-related superstitions. Marvin Johnson, a three-time heavyweight champion boxer, never washes during the week before a fight. Now that superstition really stinks.

Professional athletes are not the only believers in the manipulation of fate. At Clackamas,

many student-athletes practice rituals all season. Cougar pitcher, Brad Brenneman, is no exception.

"For luck, I wear the same T-shirt under my uniform, and I let my goatee grow, but if I do bad I shave the goatee," Brenneman said.

When asked if others on the baseball team engage in grooming for games, Brenneman replied, "Nobody shaves on game days." Nolan Ryan, Hall of Fame pitcher and reknowned Gillette spokesperson, was not available for comment.

But why are athletes in particular so susceptible to the charms of "Lady Luck?" For some, superstition is based on uncertainty and fear of the unknown. Athletes have only limited control over the outcome of their efforts, so they are dependant on good fortune to prevent such tragedies as the bad bounce, the bad call, or the unexpected injury.

Many athletes find themselves practicing pre-game rituals without being aware of it. Superstitions become spontaneous. Take for instance, a player who combs his hair differently or whistles a particular tune -- then plays the best game of his life. To continue that same good luck, he must repeat the same routine. B.F. Skinner, a reputable American psychologist, observed the same behavior among animals. The behavior of the animals were reinforced by the result of their actions. In other words, if the magic worked once, it may work again.

The spontaneous superstition idea can be seen in Detroit, where supporters of the Red Wings professional hockey team traditionally throw an octopus on the ice before each game. The time-honored tradition dates back to 1923 when the arena also served as a fish market on weekdays. One evening during a hockey game, a forgotten octopus slid onto the ice from a nearby packing area. The Red Wings went on to win that evening, despite the 8-0 deficit they suffered before the surprise appearance of the octopus. Instant superstition. Supporters now say that the octopus has special symbolism, and was always destined to be part of Red Wing lore. The reason being, it took eight wins to capture the Stanley Cup and an octopus has eight tentacles. It all makes perfect sense, unless of course you happen to be the octopus.

Superstition will always remain a big part of sports because an athlete's lifestyle makes him vulnerable to it. Athletes do the same things every day because important parts of their lives are ordered, such as practice. From this type of organization, little rituals develop into obsession, and obsession develops into superstition. So whether your idea of fortuitous behavior be vomiting or just wearing your lucky T-shirt, I'm sure it will be beneficial. Knock on wood.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE

MISC.

Attention math students! TI-81 calculator \$60, Melisa ext. 2576 or 659-0163.

Selling an, all lift, day/night express ticket to Mt Hood Meadows \$20, Toyna ext. 2247.

Fly to Phoenix, land of the sun, round trip ticket leave 5-17 return 5-24, a steal \$161, Dee 824-3640.

Baldwin-Hamilton piano like new \$1695, Mike 656-2717.

1984 Chrysler Lebaron, 2 dr., AM/FM, tilt, AC, 83k, ext. cond., \$1975, Betsy 292-8776.

1983 Mustang GL, 4 cyl., navy blue, right front damage, CC, AC, automatic, very clean, runs good, \$700 obo, Julia 632-6447.

1990 Honda Civic LX, 5 speed, AC, PW, PM, PDL, cruise, tilt, Kenwood stereo, alarm, bra, ext. cond., \$8195, Rob 692-8247.

1961 Pontiac Bonneville CONVERTIBLE, low miles, 100% complete, extra parts, needs total restoration, \$1500 obo, Dave 656-0028.

Extra \$500 to \$1000 a month, sports minded individuals call Curtis 652-0404.

HELP WANTED, Long distance services associate, will train right people, part time, competitive pay, 229-3671.

HAVING TROUBLE MAKING ENDS MEET? NEED PART TIME JOB WITH FLEXIBLE HOURS? Encyclopedia Britannica, We have leads where people have requested information and retail outlets. Two sales will bring \$600 commission. CALL FOR CONFIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT! Mr. Taylor 293-9259.

"Occasional parent" wanted, responsibilities are negotiable, college age to senior citizens welcome, Diana 650-0544.

ALASKA SUMMER EMPLOYMENT-fisheries. Earn \$600+/week in canneries or \$4000+/month on fishing boats. Free transportation! Room & Board! Over 8000 openings. No experience necessary. Male or Female. For employment program call 1-206-545-4155 ext. A6057.

Job hunting? If you need a resume that will get results, give us a call! We offer laser printed resumes and cover letters at the lowest price in town. You'll get top quality and personalized service guaranteed. Lea 650-6053.

HAVE YOUR PAPERS TYPED FOR YOU! Term papers typed and title pages generated, laser quality, reasonable prices, Nolan ext. 2577

WANTED: Caring homes for year-long foreign exchange students. Students are 16 to 18 years old, Female and Male from Belgium, Japan, Brazil and South Bohemia. If interested in a rewarding experience, contact Amy Gaskell at 557-1016.

WANTED: Host families for summer-long foreign exchange students. Caring homes please contact Amy Gaskell at 557-1016 for more information.