Junior middle distance runner Bryon Lamorandier pushes towards the finish line. UCSB will now prep for the Big West Championships.

Are You Full Yet: UCSB Tanks #1 Titans in Series Win

The UCSB men's and women's track teams competed in two successful meets at Occidental College in Los Angeles and the Modesto Relays up north on Saturday. The two meets were the final chance for the Gauchos to strut their stuff before the Big West Championships occur throughout this week at Long Beach State. Multi-events will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, and regular preliminaries and finals are on May 18 and May 19.

Junior middle-distance runner Bryon Lamorandier jolted to one of the finest performances of his first year at Santa Barbara. Lamorandier ran the third fastest marked run in the Big West with a 1:51.99 while competing in the 800-meter event. Lamorandier normally competes in the 1,500 meter but quickly found a niche in the shorter race. Senior hurdler Ryan Blispough extended his hitting streak to 27 games with a single in the ninth inning.

Undeterred, UCSB came back strong in the ninth inning, scoring three runs to take a 4-1 lead. With two outs, Von Schell caught in a pickle between first and second, but Fullerton catcher Justin Smith was called for a balk, and Von Schell advanced to second. The Gauchos first baseman then came around to score on an RBI double from Warnecker. Making a rare start, junior left fielder Andy Camporella followed with a walk to left-center. From there the rout was on, with senior second baseman Chad Peskey lifting off for a solo shot and a 5-1 lead in the 8th inning. UCSB then added two runs in the seventh on a Blispough double, and two more in the ninth to finish the scoring. Sophomore right fielder Ryan Spilbrough extended his hitting streak to 27 games with a single in the ninth inning.

The nine runs were more than enough support for Garcia, who threw his fifth complete game of the season. The righty gave up only four hits and one run, lowering his ERA to a minuscule 1.48. With the win, Garcia also became the Gauchos’ first 10- game winner since senior center fielder Chris Stenfelow.

Sophomore right fielder Ryan Spilbrough swings for the fences. The UCSB baseball team felt short in its bid to sweep #1 Cal State Fullerton, but still took two out of three games.

Age 38 May Be Asking Too Much of MJ.

He was 99.9 percent sure. Ninety-nine point nine percent positive that his NBA career was over. But that .1 percent — it was always there, leaving the door open. Then the story broke that the man (Michael Jordan) was working out twice a day, trying to get in game shape. Then came word that his good buddy Charles Barkley has started dropping weight in hopes of a comeback. Next, M.J. hired his former coach, Doug Collins, to help him get in the shape he would return to. And finally, Jordan said he is only 85 to 88 percent sure that he won’t come back.

For the media, this was almost too much, and so the bombardment of questions mounted. A return from His Ainess (and Sir Charles in the mix) M.J. in the league again? It was almost too good to be true.

Of course, the NBA would love nothing more. One final fling for the greatest player in the history of the game. The bust.

So the question is: At his age, how much does Jordan want to play again? Does he want to win the big one? Does he want to win it with the Bulls, get his 6th ring and dominate the NBA? No one can answer that but Michael, but it does seem doubtful that he could return and lead the Wizards to the title. There is just too much young talent in the league today. A Jordan return would mean going up against players nearly half his age, and almost certainly more athletic.

To see what I mean, take a look at the playoffs this weekend. Philly’s Allen Iverson, the Answer, drops 54 on the Raptors. Vince Carter comes right back the next game and sets the NBA record with eight three-pointers in a single half in route to fifty points. Not to be outdone, Kobe scores the Kings for 48 and 16 boards on Sunday.

These are the players that Jordan will have to go up against. Sure, M.J. has the experience and knowledge of the game on his side, but that will carry him only so far. Eventually youth and talent will start to take over.

What if Iverson were to cross him over and drop a “J” on his head? What if Vinsanity blast past him for a dunk? What if Kobe, smug grin and all, smoked him for 40? What if Jordan couldn’t capture the magic of old and remain the best player in the NBA? That is the question. I can’t get out of my head. I can’t shake the terrible image of an old, defeated Jordan, limping off the court, whipped by one of those young guns.

So, while I have no doubt that M.J. could come back, average 24 points a game and lift Washington into the playoffs, it’s something I just don’t want to see. I don’t want to see a Jordan that is morose, who misses the game winning shot — a Jordan that can’t do the impossible.

I want my final memory of His Ainess to be that jumper against Utah to win the Ritz last night. The crossover. The step-back. The buz.

M.J.’s hand suspended in the air for that final one second face to face to purchase the career of the greatest player in the history of the NBA.
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Senior closer Jamie Gonzales brings the heat. UCSB moved to within one game of Big West-leading Fullerton this weekend, with Gonzales recording a save in the second game.
BASEBALL

"Every really-good team has a number one guy who is their ace, and Garcia is our go-to guy. When he throws, we feel we're going to win."

Game two lasted late into the ninth, and UCSB came within an inch of a hard fought extra-inning win. With the game knotted at all-as after nine innings, Von Schell ripped a single off Fullerton closer Chad Cordero to start the 10th. After Cordero retired, senior shortstop Jeff Bannon and junior designated hitter Jed Stringham got on base before Warrecker delivered a two-out RBI double to give UCSB a 7-6 lead. "That was just peachy hittin' from Donnie's part," Stringham said. "Without that we wouldn't have won. It was a great team effort, and Donnie played the hero." Senior closer Jamie Gonzales closed out the Gauchos' win in the bottom of the tenth. Gonzales sent the Titans down in order, striking out the final batter of the game to secure his eighth save of the season. [Gonzales] is dominating," Schumaker said. "We always throw a ball over to him in the ninth. If we've got a one-run lead or more in the ninth we know we're going to win because of [Gonzales]."

Santa Barbara jumped on top early once again in the second game, taking a 2-0 lead in the second inning. This time Fullerton answered, tying the game at 2-2 in the bottom of the inning. The Titans then went on top 3-2 in the third before UCSB claimed a 6-3 lead with four runs in the sixth, all coming with two outs.

Senior designated hitter Mike Kobelka got the Gauchos going, leading off the first inning with a single. Peddle followed with a single of his own, and after a Molidor strikeout, Von Schell doubled off the center field fence to score Kobelka. Von Schell made it 6-0 on a quick three-pitch strikeout. The Gauchos then tied it with a run in the seventh, and the two teams remained scoreless until the Gauchos scored in the bottom of the 10th. The Titans sent their ace to the mound Sunday, attempting to prevent a Santa Barbara sweep. For eight innings the strategy worked with Kirk Saarloos holding the high-scoring Gauchos scoreless for eight innings. But trailing 6-0 in the ninth inning, UCSB staged a spirited rally. Senior designated hitter Mike Kobelka got the Gauchos going, leading off the final frame with a single. Peddle followed with a single of his own, and after a Molidor strikeout, Von Schell doubled off the center field fence to score Kobelka.

Donovan Warrecker then surrendered two runs in the bottom of the sixth, as Fullerton pulled to within 6-5. The Titans then tied it 6-6 in the seventh, but the Gauchos scored again in the ninth to grab the lead. Von Schell got a one-out ground ball before a two-out walk. With runners on first and second, Von Schell tripled off the center field fence to score Kobelka and Bohnon then delivered a three-run bomb to make the score 6-4 and chase Saarloos from the game.

Fullerton brought in Mike Nuenez to turn away UCSB, but the reliever had little luck bringing the game to the ninth. Nuenez then got the weekend star Warrecker to pop out to short to end the game, giving the Gauchos a sweep and a single through the right side to extend his hitting streak to a team-record 28 games.

With runners on first and second, Schumaker commented the Gauchos hit para-sing as hitting the bases. Kolbach then came up for the second time in the inning with a chance to tie the game at six, but the Anaheim native lined out to center to end the game.

"Our pitchers are always going to duel, and we needed that today," Stringham said. "Bullard gave us that today. He just left one or two pitch­ ers up, but he threw great [Sunday]. Our bats just came up short."

Though UCSB didn't become the first team to sweep Fullerton at home since 1993, the Gauchos proved to the country that they are a force that can't be overlooked. "I don't see a team that is much better than us in the entire nation," Schumaker said. "If we're not a top 15 team, then I don't know who is. Slowly and surely we're start­ ing to get some respect."