

SPORTS MONDAY

Daily Nexus

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Softball Sluggers Close Out Season With Three Victories, Two From NMSU, One Over CSUF

Atwood Stars on the Mound and at the Plate, Notching Three Victories and Belting a Homer

By Michael Cadilli
Staff Writer

"It was nice to go out with a bang." — junior pitcher Stacy Atwood

The UCSB softball squad ended its 1995 season at home this weekend with a sweep of the New Mexico State Roadrunners on Friday and a split with #4 Cal State Fullerton on Saturday.

It was the Stacy Atwood show all weekend as the Gauchos' top hurler and leading hitter pitched two shutouts (4-0, 2-0) against NMSU (18-43 overall, 7-23 in the Big West) and used her big bat to go 3-6 with a double, a triple and a three-run homer, helping Santa Barbara nearly sweep the Titans (40-15, 18-8). The Gauchos (24-35, 10-21) took the first game of the twin bill, 2-1, before losing a tough 5-4 game after blowing an early 4-0 lead.

"It was a good way to end our season. Stacy threw great and kept [both NMSU and CSUF] hitters off balance," said UCSB Head Coach Liz Kelly. "You can't ask one person to carry the team. Jennifer Merlo came in and got an RBI hit, and Johnna Mike got a key hit. It was a great win. [CSUF is] #4 in the nation, and that says a lot."

With Atwood's dinger, she moved into first all-time at Santa Barbara in both home runs (8) and RBI (60), after just three years at UCSB.

"I felt honored and happy, and a little surprised," Atwood said.

The Gauchos took an early



GEORGE LEE/Daily Nexus

Junior Gauchito third baseman Maria Costa comes up firing after fielding a groundball from a Titan batter. UCSB took both games from NMSU on Friday and split with #4 CSUF on Saturday.

lead in the second inning in game one against the Titans. Atwood hit a one-out triple to right center field and junior right fielder Merlo promptly lined an RBI single to center, putting UCSB up 1-0.

CSUF tied the game in the sixth frame when Atwood (15-19) gave up her first run in 20 innings to Titan designated player Senetha Thomas, who cracked her seventh homer of the year.

However, Santa Barbara scored a run in the bottom of the sixth to take the lead and the win, 2-1. Sophomore designated player Michelle Ray singled to

start off the inning and was moved to second on sophomore catcher Mike's groundball. Atwood then nailed a deep fly ball that the center fielder almost gloved, but which instead reached the wall, scoring Ray from second.

Atwood shut down the Titans in the seventh for the complete-game win, giving up only six hits and a walk while striking out four. Jennifer Mortinsen (17-6) took the loss, also giving up six hits and fanning four.

"When I was warming up, I was frustrated because my pitches weren't moving. But then in the first inning my

pitches started working," Atwood explained. "Our team played good defense. Maria [Costa] made some nice stops, and our outfield made the plays."

The second game started out much the same. The Gauchos drew first blood in the bottom of the first when junior center fielder J.J. Cannon singled to right and was advanced to second on a fielder's choice. Mike came up and singled to right center off Titan starter Gabby Guerrero to take the lead, 1-0.

The excitement came in the

See WINS, p.3A

PHOTO-GEEKS
by Curtis
Kaiser &
Daniel
Solomon

Waking up in the morning is usually much easier in Spring Quarter because, unlike most times during the year when you dread getting out of bed, this time of the year presents something worth waking up for.

The alarm sounds and a sudden burst of adrenaline rushes through your body as you sprint to the front porch to find the L.A. Times or the Santa Barbara News-Press. Frustrated by the white string that never seems to come off easily enough, you toss aside the front page and business sections and go straight for the sports.

Forget the nice color picture on the front. Forget the headlines. Forget the columns by Jim Murray, Mike Downey and, of course, Mark Patton. Flip the section over, open the last page and see hundreds of numbers organized meticulously on the newsprint.

With no regard for the score of

But, as you wipe the drool from your mouth, you notice that it drops on the New York Mets box score, specifically on the line of Bret Saberhagen: 2 8 7 6 2 1. The drool quickly turns to tears.

the game, you hunt deep into the Chicago White Sox box score and look up Frank Thomas: 4 4 3 6. A closer look reveals that the "Big Hurt" blasted two home runs and swiped a rare stolen base. Life is good!

But, as you wipe the drool from your mouth, you notice that it drops on the New York Mets box score, specifically on the line of Bret Saberhagen: 2 8 7 6 2 1. The drool quickly turns to tears. Welcome to the roller coaster world of Rotisserie League Baseball, AKA fantasy baseball.

For those of you unwise in the ways of fantasy baseball, Thomas' numbers translate into a stellar performance of four at bats, four runs scored, three hits and six RBI. For Saberhagen, his numbers indicate two innings, eight hits, seven runs, six earned runs, two walks and one strike-out. That hurts!

Unlike major league baseball, where the bottom line is a team's wins and losses, fantasy baseball's bottom line is individual player statistics. Thus, Thomas' performance is enough to carry your team, while Saberhagen's is enough to sink it.

Since its conception in a New York restaurant just over 10 years ago, fantasy baseball has evolved from a mere hobby into a religion (or cult). But like all religions, fantasy baseball has its pros and its cons.

Pro: An oftentimes slow and meaningless ballgame can have significance. For example, some baseball fans might be inclined to switch the channel during a 15-1 dismantling of the California Angels at the hands of the Detroit Tigers. Not so for a fantasy baseball owner. He's suffering through the four-hour marathon so that he can see Tim Sal-

See GEEKS, p.2A



Seniors Celebrate With Wins at Caesar Uyesaka Stadium

By Curtis Kaiser
Staff Writer

With six seniors closing out their careers at Caesar Uyesaka Stadium Sunday, freshman right-handed starter Matt Klein figured that the best way to send them out in their last home game would be with a win.

Behind Klein's (1-0) strong seven-inning performance, the Gauchos (22-24 overall, 8-13 in the Big West) earned an 8-1 victory over the University of the Pacific on Senior Day. On Saturday, Santa Barbara won 5-3, while UOP posted a 7-6 win on Friday.

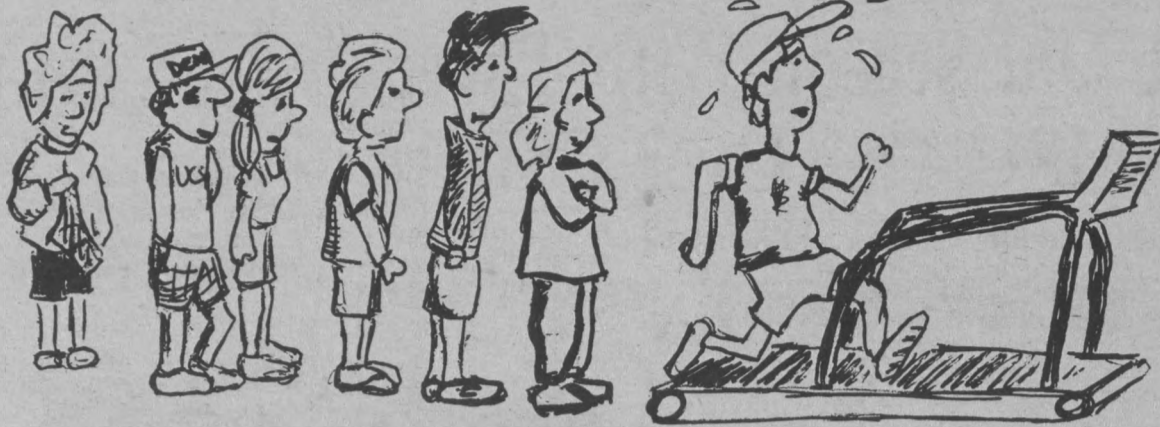
Seldom-used senior infielder Herman Merchan took advantage of a Senior Day start at designated hitter to pace the Gauchos with three RBI in the victory.

"I've been waiting for it," said Merchan of his first opportunity to start this season. "I accomplished what I wanted to do and had fun with the rest of the seniors."

Gauchos seniors left fielder Chris Prince, pitchers Ryan O'Coyle, Pat Treend, Steve Lane, center fielder Doug Smaldino and Merchan were all honored in a ceremony before the contest. Prince and Smaldino started the contest, but Treend and Lane had already

See SENIORS, p.3A

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GEEKS

Continued from p.1A

mon swinging for the fences on 3-0 counts or Cecil Fielder stealing a meaningless, stat-padding base, which you covet.

Con: Team loyalty is thrown out the window. If it's the last game of the season and your beloved Dodgers are playing the Giants for the final playoff spot, who are you going to root for? The Dodgers? Try again. You're rooting for your star player, Barry Bonds, to take Tom Candiotti's weak-ass knuckleball out of the park because your roommate (a die-hard Giants fan) has already seen his franchise player, Mike Piazza, go yard two times that afternoon.

Pro: Like a real baseball owner, power over the team is everything for a fantasy league owner. As the owner, the general manager, the scout and the field manager, all of your pride, ego and shrewdness is on the line when you draft Wil Cordero over Cal Ripken Jr. or trade Kenny Lofton for Marquis Grissom.

Con: Marriages with wives and relationships with girlfriends are doomed to suffer for a six-month-long period, if they should last that long. For instance, if she even thinks about saying, "Let's go get something to eat..." at 7:30 when ESPN's *Baseball Tonight* starts, it might be time to tell her, "Don't let the door hit you on your way out." As well, if she asks, "Do you care more about your team and players than me?" it is probably time to sit down and have that heart-to-heart talk with her. Look deeply in her eyes and say, "When you make the 'Going, Going, Gone' home-run list, then I'll worship the ground you walk on. Until then, 'Go, Go, Get Out of the Way!' of the TV."

Pro: Male bonding. No explanation necessary or wanted.

Con: Statements like "Albert Belle ... you're the man. You helped me win my rotisserie league" and "I just wish Todd Zeile would break his arm so that I could pick up Eric Karros!" may lead some observers to characterize fantasy league owners as heartless wannabes who would sell their soul for the #1 pick in their yearly draft. Lord knows we've tried, but the most we could get for our souls were #3 selections.

Pro: Draft day in April is the second coming of Christmas. Each draft selection is a best friend for the coming six months. As in all friendships, some days are bad, while others are good. But, when things get too bad, you can trade your friend to your roommate for a friend to be named later.

Con: Bitter insults like "Roto-Geek," "Fantasy Freak" and our personal favorite, "Loser."

However, a 5 4 4 7 line from Kirby Puckett on any given morning makes being a single, friendless, baseball nerd all worthwhile.

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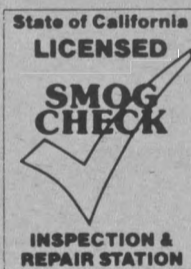
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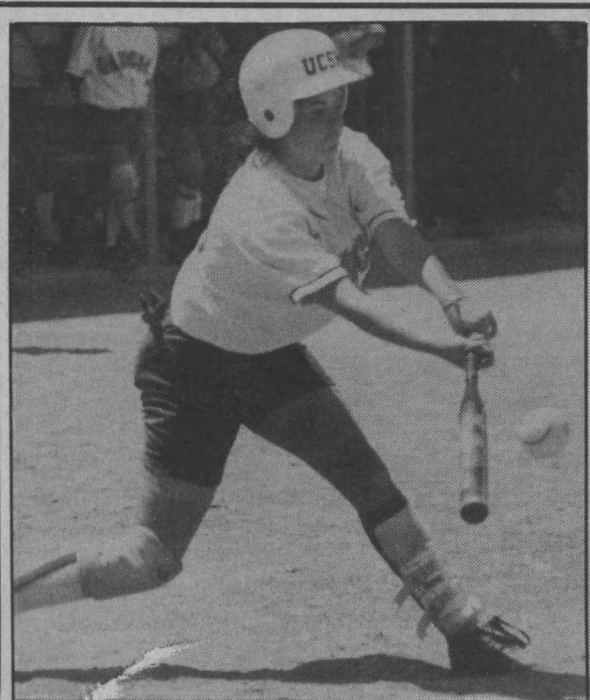
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GEORGE LEE/Daily Nexus

Sophomore catcher Michelle Ray connects with an offering from a Cal State Fullerton hurler.

SENIORS

Continued from p.1

pitched in the series, and O'Coynne had received the start on Wednesday against Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

Smaldino closed out his home career in style, going 2-3 with an RBI and two runs scored. He also stole three bases in the game, giving him a team-leading total of 14.

Smaldino had warm feelings about his career at Caesar Uyesaka Stadium.

"It's nice to end my Gaucho home career with two victories," he said. "It's been a good four years. I'll miss this place."

While the seniors were the focus of the day, Klein was the one who shined on the cloudy day, mowing down the Pacific lineup. The hurler allowed only one run and six hits in his seven innings of work, walking four and striking out five. Junior Dax Groves threw two innings of scoreless relief to notch his first save of the season, while UOP's Kevin Sumter (4-4) took the loss.

Relying on his fastball to overpower the UOP batters, Klein's outing was successful despite the fact that his curveball and change-up weren't working as well as he might have hoped.

"My fastball was really working. It was my best pitch today," he said. "I just showed my change and curve and then located my fastball."

UCSB Head Coach Bob Brontsema was pleased with the performance of his young starter.

"We plan on him being a big part of our future," Brontsema said. "We hope to get him to start again at Stanford [May 19-21]."

In the first three innings of the game, Klein was spotted a 3-0 lead by the Gaucho attack when UCSB put up one run in each frame. Santa Barbara added a run in the fourth and exploded for four in the eighth.

Junior shortstop Zach Elliott (2-3, two RBI) and junior third baseman Lou Tapia (2-4) combined with Merchan and Smaldino to provide the bulk of the eight-hit Gaucho attack.

Pacific, which scored its only run in the contest in the fifth inning, had six hits, three of them from first baseman Ron Lewis.

On Saturday, UCSB's pitching and the game itself got off to a slow start. The contest was delayed for over half an hour because of an accident on U.S. Highway 101 that slowed UOP and the umpires from arriving at the ballpark. Senior right-hander Pat Treend suffered from control problems in the early innings, walking five Tigers in only two innings. Despite not having allowed a hit, Treend got the hook from pitching coach Tim Montez in favor of sophomore righty Jorvic Salazar.

Salazar did not fare well himself in the early going, giving up a run in his first inning of work. However, he was able to settle down and give a magnificent performance

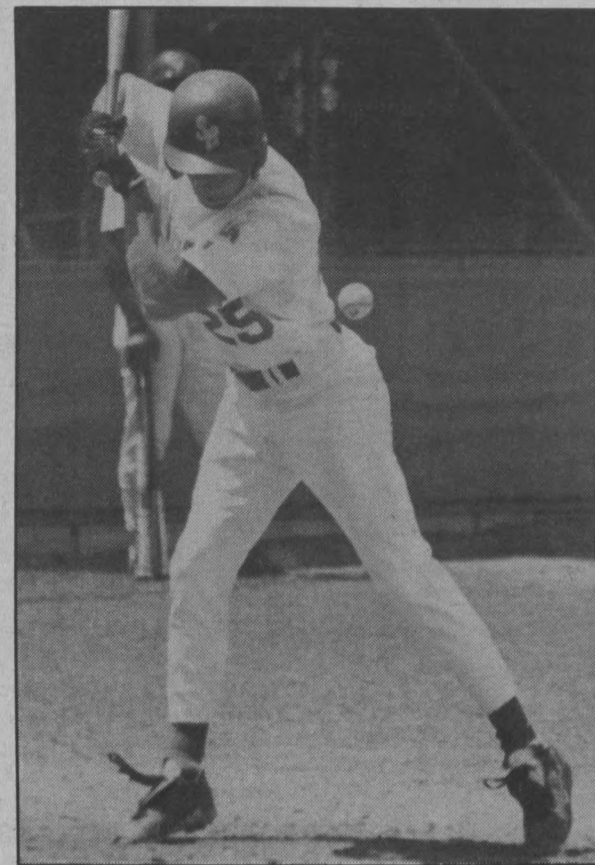
the rest of the way in earning his fifth victory of the year. Ron Lewis (7-5) suffered the loss for the Tigers.

Salazar ran into some trouble in the ninth inning when Pacific loaded the bases with two outs. Although he appeared to be tiring, Brontsema made the decision to stick with his starter and not go to the bullpen.

"I'm very proud of him," he added. "We did some poor things, we did some great things, but the story is Jorvic Salazar."

Pacing the 11-hit Gaucho offensive with multi-hit games were sophomore first baseman Brett Hardy, Prince, junior shortstop Joe Kemper and sophomore second baseman Clark Parker, who also added three RBI.

On Friday, UCSB lost a 7-6 heartbreaker after holding a 6-3 lead for three innings. Senior right-hander Lane threw a complete game, allowing 12 hits and seven earned runs, dropping his record to 5-3. UOP's Dan Reichert (8-5) picked up the win, while Scott Mitchell threw hitless ball for two innings to notch his second save.



GEORGE LEE/Daily Nexus

Senior center fielder Doug Smaldino grimaces in pain after being hit by Pacific pitcher Ron Lewis.

WINS

Continued from p.1A
third when Cannon and Ray singled to start the inning. Atwood then slammed her fourth homer of the season to dead center field, clearing the bases.

Santa Barbara sophomore starter Megan O'Brien kept CSUF off the board until the top of the fourth, where she struggled, giving up two runs on three hits. Kelly put Atwood back in the game, hoping for some damage control.

"It was obvious [I needed to make the change] because they had three [consecutive]

hits, and so I had to bring in Atwood," Kelly said.

Atwood also gave up two runs to the Titans, tying the game in the next inning, and both teams failed to score again in regulation. However, Fullerton took the lead in the ninth as third baseman Chris Zboril knocked in left fielder Christina Wagy to take the 5-4 lead.

UCSB got a runner on in the bottom of the ninth but failed to move her over and lost the game.

"I knew they had the capability to come back," Kelly added. "We've got to be able to put the bunt down. We had our chances to win."

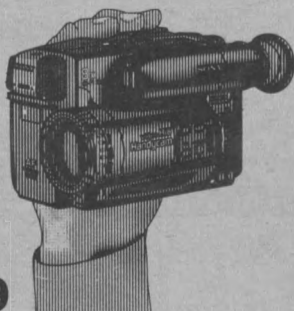
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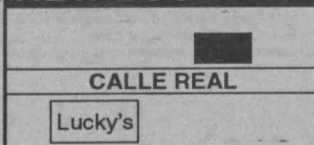
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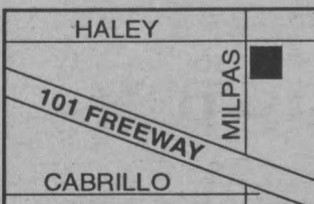
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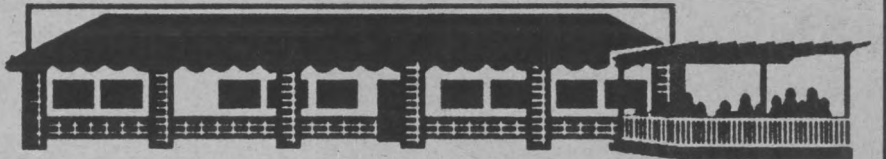
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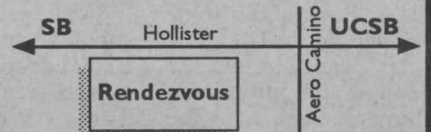
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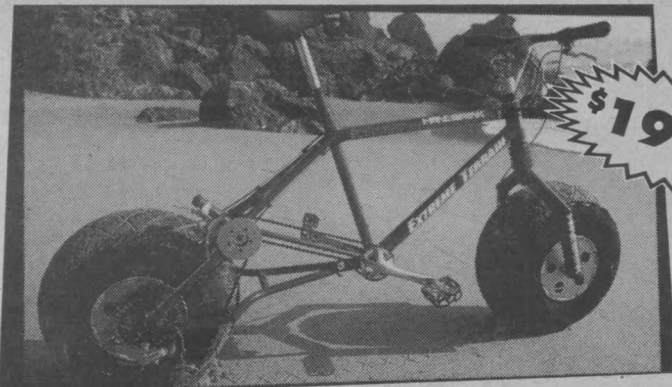
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