

Straight Down braves murky waters to claim Oozeball championship

Wendy Saxton wins third championship in as many years.

By SCOTT GULBRANSEN
STAFF WRITER

A bit of advice for 1994 Oozeball participants: get Wendy Saxton on your team.

Straight Down defeated the Baby Mudslingers, 12-7, in the title match to win the third-annual Oozeball Tournament championship on Saturday. Saxton won her third consecutive title in the process.

Straight Down scored 10 unanswered points in the title match, overcoming a 6-1 deficit and winning the title match handily. Straight Down finished the tournament with a 7-0 record.

Saxton competed for the 1991 champ, Low Down & Dirty, and last year's title winner, Pearls Before Swine. What makes the feat more amazing is that a total of 174 teams have vied for the Oozeball title in its three-year existence.

"It's really neat. I have been lucky to have a bunch of nice people call me to play for top teams," Saxton said.

"We put together a fun, diverse team and came out victorious finally," Straight Down's captain Tait Rafat said.

Speaking of diversity, Straight Down's six members represented three fraternities, one sorority and one independent.

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The men were Rafat and Jacy Sharbaugh of Sigma Chi, Tau Kappa Epsilon's Stephen Gruner and Kappa Sigma's Brad Packer. Saxton (no affiliation) and Shannon De Witt (Alpha Gamma Delta) were Straight Down's two women.

Rafat and Sharbaugh played for Straight Down last year, which was runner-up.

"We didn't get any prizes for taking second last year so we're happy now," Rafat said.

Straight Down's championship victory was the 126th game of the one-day tourney. Winners were decided when a team reached 12 points or whichever team was ahead at the end of 12 minutes.

The Baby Mudslingers, which had to play a bundle of games in the loser's bracket to meet Straight Down, were just happy to be in the championship match.

"Playing in the mud is the best. I loved it," Baby Mudslinger Lena-Jo Marin said.

Mike Panganiban, Kymm Gay, Conrad Serrano, Greg Vandepol, and Steve Sinko were the other Baby Mudslingers. Panganiban was a member of the Pearls Before Swine championship team a year ago.

UNLV Intramural Coordinator B.J. Burris slaved 12 hours in making the event happen.

"It's been a terribly long day," the ruffled intramural coordinator said at the day's end.

Contributing largely to the intramural event were sponsors 98.5 FM (KLUC), Rebel Pub & Grub, and Alphagraphics.



PAUL GUTIERREZ/REBEL YELL

The third-annual Oozeball Championship took place last Saturday at UNLV Intramural Field.

1993 OOZEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Straight Down 12 vs. Baby Mudslingers 7

In My Opinion

By SCOTT GULBRANSEN

Hockey is the No. 1 sport in the U.S.

Reading that statement you might think I am crazy, but the numbers are there. Hockey is the fastest growing sport in America and there are many reasons why.

First, the game is pure. While there might be too many fights, the game stays true to its tradition. You do not have the equivalent of Michael Jordan. There is no one NHL player who gets away with what that overgrown NBA demigod does. Not Gretzky, not Lemieux.

Second, the game of hockey is exciting. The NFL has gotten boring and unimaginative, baseball players have lost touch with reality, and the NBA is one big Hollywood production. Hockey's appeal is with the sports purist.

It is straight-forward, in-your-face action that never stops. This excitement is what catches people's attraction initially. Once they become a student of the game there are many more things that keep a hockey fan hooked.

The lack of imagination by the other three major sports has only helped the game of hockey. Fans want a game they can get close to and see. In most cases, hockey tickets run far less than football and basketball. This has been appealing to individuals and families alike.

The perfect example of this is the newly formed Anaheim Mighty Ducks. The Ducks are

owned by the Disney Corporation which knows a few things about family entertainment. The Ducks' ticket prices are slightly high, but Disney offers several packages which include hockey games and a stay at Disneyland. Families will "flock" to see the Ducks.

Hockey, in particular the NHL, seems to be doing everything right. The popularity of the sport is reflected in sales of hockey related equipment and NHL related sportswear. Hockey equipment sales have jumped 43 percent in the last four years. NHL related sportswear has jumped 78 percent in the last two years. This tells me either hockey is becoming America's sport, or the NHL has better taste than Calvin Klein.

I grew up a hockey fan living in Kansas City, watching the NHL Kansas City Scouts (the Scouts are now the New Jersey Devils). Those games left a lasting impression on me. The game got into my blood and has been there ever since. This feeling is growing throughout the country, even here in Las Vegas.

The Las Vegas Thunder is the International Hockey League team, that will begin play next month at our own Thomas and Mack Center. If you have never seen a live hockey game you owe it to yourself to see one this year. Once you attend it you will see why hockey is America's No. 1 sport.

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