

Peterson reflects and moves forward

By NICK ZAMBRANO
Sports editor

The loss to Antelope Valley in the Elite Eight marked the beginning of the next step for Ohlone Head Coach John Peterson. On the whiteboard in his office there are names and phone numbers; those names and numbers belong to possible recruits to replace his sophomore-heavy team of this season. Some of the numbers are local, while others are beyond the confines of the Bay Area.

However, Peterson still finds the time to sit back and reflect on the remarkable 28-4 season that belonged to his Ohlone Renegades. "It was a great year," Peterson said. "In all aspects, they're (the team) on track to graduate and they're all being recruited by four-year schools. So, there are so many positives to it, even the way we lost, it's really insignificant." Any other coach will tell you that there are almost as many negatives as there are positives, but Peterson would be the one to say not with my team.

His team, a group that has been together for the good chunk of two years, were nothing short of extraordinary. Every game the Renegades played this season, we saw someone new step up. Whether it was Sean Amos' spiritual performance against the College of the Redwoods or Bert Whittington's clutch free-throw shooting against San Joaquin Delta, Ohlone was definitely an opponent that was challenging for any coach to prepare for.

"There was kind of a quiet arrogance to them, they expected to win," said Peterson of his squad. "The biggest deal was definitely that they were unbelievable in practice. The practices were more entertaining than the games in many ways. The talent level was obviously the best we've had it's not even close."

Peterson even saw a few of his players rake in the awards. The obvious was sophomore guard Willis Gardner. Gardner was elected the Coast Conference MVP and was on the All-Conference first team. Gardner averaged 11.3 points, 4.2 assists and had a free-throw percentage of .811 in conference play. Second-year player Renardo Bass was also given honorable mention by the Coast Conference. Gardner was one of five Renegades that averaged over 9 points for the year. Sophomore Jermaine Smith averaged 9.4 points while leading the team in rebounding with 7.3 a game. Guards Allen Hester and Bert Whittington - both sophomores - also averaged 10.5 points a game. But there is one big thing about this Ohlone squad. All but three players are sophomores.

When Peterson recruited all his sophomores last year, he knew they would be leaving almost as quick as they arrived.

"Well, it's just the nature of the beast," Peterson said. "Every year it's the same thing, they leave and they go on. Their best years are usually their last two, that's just

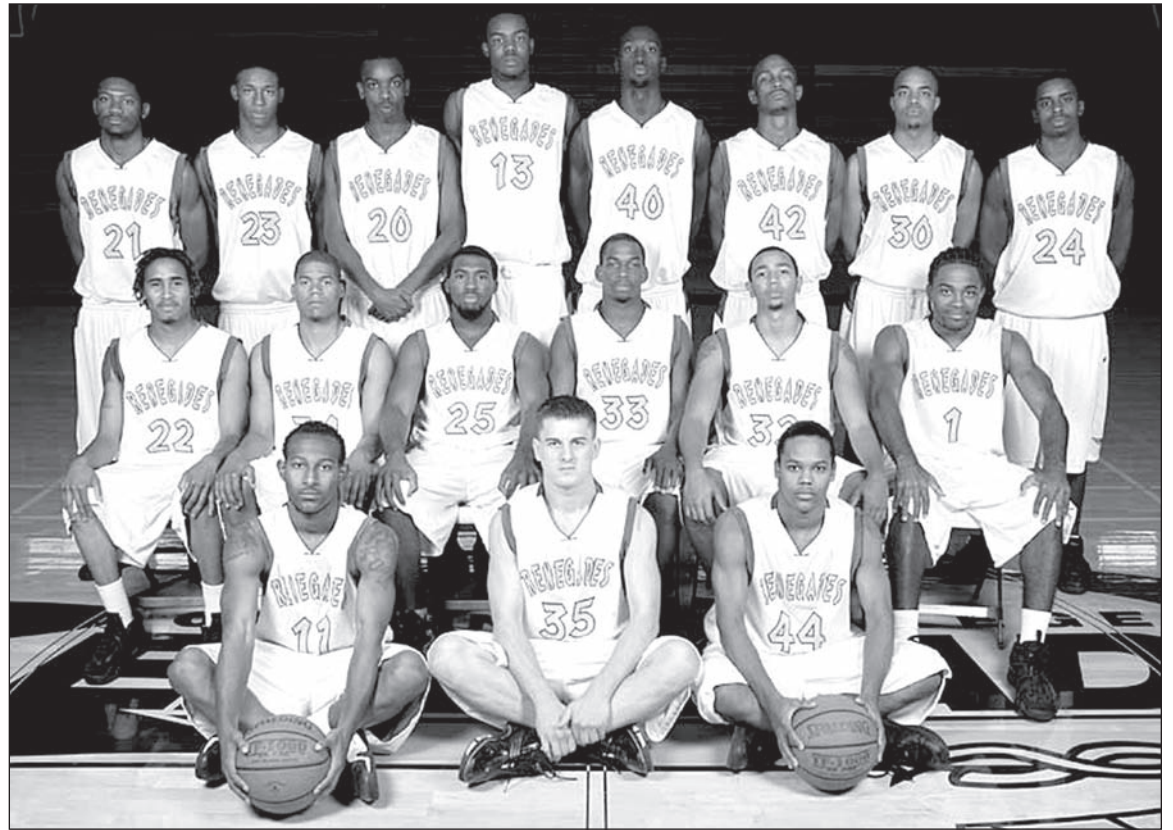


Photo provided by men's basketball team

The 2006-'07 Renegades were undeniably one of Peterson's best teams.

the way it goes. If we can get them prepared, to take that step to the four-year level and then they blossom and do well there, then we've done our job."

All of Peterson's departing sophomores will continue to play after they leave Ohlone. Since the game against Antelope Valley, Peterson's office phone has been ringing non-stop. After every season ends he begins to get his sophomores set for the next level, almost like a parent

teaching their child how to ride a bike. And after those bikes are gone, he sets his sights on those new kids ready to learn.

It won't be easy filling a roster predominantly filled with sophomores, but Peterson has been through this sort of deal before. This is why he recruits in his own way.

Limiting himself to just the Bay Area would barely give him a starting five. With only three returning freshmen, thinking outside the box

obviously fills the roster quicker.

Even though, he'll most likely have a roster of all freshmen next season. His team filled with freshmen last season went on to win 21 games. Peterson, however still believes that another conference title is within arm's reach. "Hopefully we reload and not rebuild," Peterson said.

Once again, congratulations to Peterson and his team and good luck to that special group of sophomores.

Injuries plague swim team

By JEFF WEISINGER
Sports editor

Riding a .500 record going into this Friday's meet against Fullerton (2 p.m. at Ohlone) the Ohlone Swimming Team is by all means "hanging tough" with the men at a 2-3 record and the women at 3-2.

Injuries and illness have plagued the team throughout the season. Wynn Grotegut has been out for a while with a fractured wrist, while Lance Green has also been out with an illness. Dolly Walters, the team's fastest swimmer, just came back from a shoulder injury that sidelined her for a few weeks.

However, the loss of those two swimmers has not stopped the team, especially in last week's big meet in San Luis Obispo as the Renegades went against Cuesta College.

For the men's side, James Logan alum Cody Angeles did well in the 50 and 100m freestyle and the butterfly events. For the ladies, Ashley Rogers, also out of James Logan, shined in all of her events.

Coming up for the Renegades after this Friday's meet against Fullerton, Ohlone will travel to Cabrillo College in Aptos on March 30.

Regardless of the injuries on the team, the Renegades overall look good going into the conference championships on April 26-28 and the state championships come May 3-5.

Ohlone launches two against Monterey

By TOMAS ORTEGA
Staff writer

The Ohlone Men's Baseball team took full advantage of the good weather to pull out a victory over Monterey Peninsula on Saturday afternoon 7-4.

While the weather was hot in the early going, you couldn't say the same for MPC's bats. Ohlone's Shane Murchinson held MPC hitters to just two hits through his first four innings. He wound up getting the win with a final line of five innings, yielding two runs on five hits along with a walk and strikeout.

Manager Eric Kahoalii said after

the game, "Shane did a good job; he struggled a bit with his command but he found a way to get the outs."

Murchison was helped by both timely hitting and a few "gifts" from the MPC defense.

In the third inning, with Ohlone at bat and one out, Matt Wiseman and Derek Helenihi hit back-to-back home runs to give the Renegades the lead. Not only were the fans in the stands blown away, Coach K later described the feat as "awesome."

That pretty much summed up the moment, considering Wiseman was still shaking hands in

the dugout when the second ball took flight.

Not to take any credit away from Wiseman and Helenihi, but Matt Langseth had the heads up play of the game.

In the sixth inning, Ohlone leading 5-2, Langseth drew a one out walk with a runner on third, only he decided to sprint out of the box and take second as well, knowing the catcher would have to make a sudden decision of whether to throw to second and have the runner on third break for the plate. MPC's catcher decided to hold the ball. Renegades on both second and third with nobody out. After the miscue,

MPC changed pitchers who then allowed both runners to score, 7-2 Renegades.

Before attending to his post game field duties, Langseth remarked, "I noticed during my at bat that the infield was all in, and decided that rather than steal a few pitches later, I would take second right away and take them by surprise."

Ohlone would yield two more runs in the seventh inning, on a two run home run by MPC's Mitch McDonald. But the eighth and ninth innings would be nailed down by freshman Joe Gardiner, recording 3 strikeouts and earning the two inning save.

Youth equals more victories for Giants

"We'll make a concerted effort to get younger and healthier, and in almost every area of the ball club, there is a cause for improvement." These were words spoken by Brian Sabean, general manager of the San Francisco Giants, in early November.

I'm not going to lie. I was ecstatic when I heard these words coming from the same GM who decided to sign three outfielders over the age of 40.

Only problem is that the Giants ownership didn't exactly get much younger.

The youngest player the Giants signed this off-season was former Oakland A's pitcher Barry Zito at age 28. But then again, this was an off-season where too much



Triples alley

By TOMAS ORTEGA
Staff writer

money for free agents was being thrown around, with Alfonso Soriano and Carlos Lee getting north of \$100 million contracts. So I'm glad the Giants didn't end up signing either of these two or even Gary Matthews Jr. I really don't think the Giants need any more negative publicity about steroids in their clubhouse.

But free agency is not all that has transpired in the last few months.

The growth of Tim Lincecum, the Giants first-round pick of the 2006 draft, is getting many Giants fans riled up. Behind Zito, Matt Cain, Noah Lowry and second-year player Jonathan Sanchez, Lincecum is the next big thing. I know he is young and unproven, but one thing that Sabean has been able to do over the years is find good, young starting pitching.

The 22 year-old Lincecum has been seen throwing in the mid-to-high 90's along with a devastating 12-6 curveball. With a guy of this kind of potential, the Giants will not try and overwork him early, but I'm sure we will see him around by the time the season comes to a close.

And then there's Mr. Bonds.

Honestly, I didn't want him back at the end of last season. But after examining his numbers this spring, it has grown on me that maybe this will be the year he decides to hang 'em up. If he does though, it will be because he finished the season with a .300 average, more than 30 home runs, and 80-90 RBIs. That may seem a bit extreme when you consider his age.

But may I remind you that Bonds has not been completely healthy the last few seasons.

With his legs feeling much better than the 2005 season, when he had arthroscopic knee surgery, I am positive that Bonds will go out with a bang this year. And when I say "bang," I'm implying 755+.