



Inside the lines

By JEFF WEISINGER
Sports editor

Poor reception

On Saturday, the infamous Black Hole became just that. A hole.

Many Raider fans throughout the country turned in their silver and black when they heard these exact words from NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell:

“With the seventh pick of the 2009 NFL Draft, the Oakland Raiders select... Darrius Heyward-Bey, wide receiver, Maryland.”

With the cameras on Texas Tech wide receiver Michael Crabtree, ready for him to be picked by whom everyone thought would be Oakland, the Raiders went, once again, for the fastest guy in the draft.

The announcement shocked just about everyone, including Heyward-Bey himself, who had the cameras on him at his home with his family. There was no excitement on Heyward-Bey's face on camera, just simple shock.

Heyward-Bey was projected to be a late first-round pick to, probably, the New York Giants, who were also in need of a wide receiver since cutting Plaxico Burress a few weeks ago.

The 6-foot-3, 208 pound All-ACC honorable mention as a junior with the Terrapins only caught 43 balls last year for 609 yards with just five touchdowns. However, he ran a 4.3 40-yard dash time at the NFL Combine, but his lack of consistency brought concern to many NFL teams.

However, the sleeper pick that many didn't approve of is safety Michael Mitchell from Ohio.

The 6-foot-1 safety was picked in the second round, 47th overall by Oakland. He only recorded 62 tackles and three interceptions in 2008 and wasn't invited to the NFL Combine, however in Ohio's pro-day, he ran a 4.43 40-yard dash and benched 225 pounds just over 20 times.

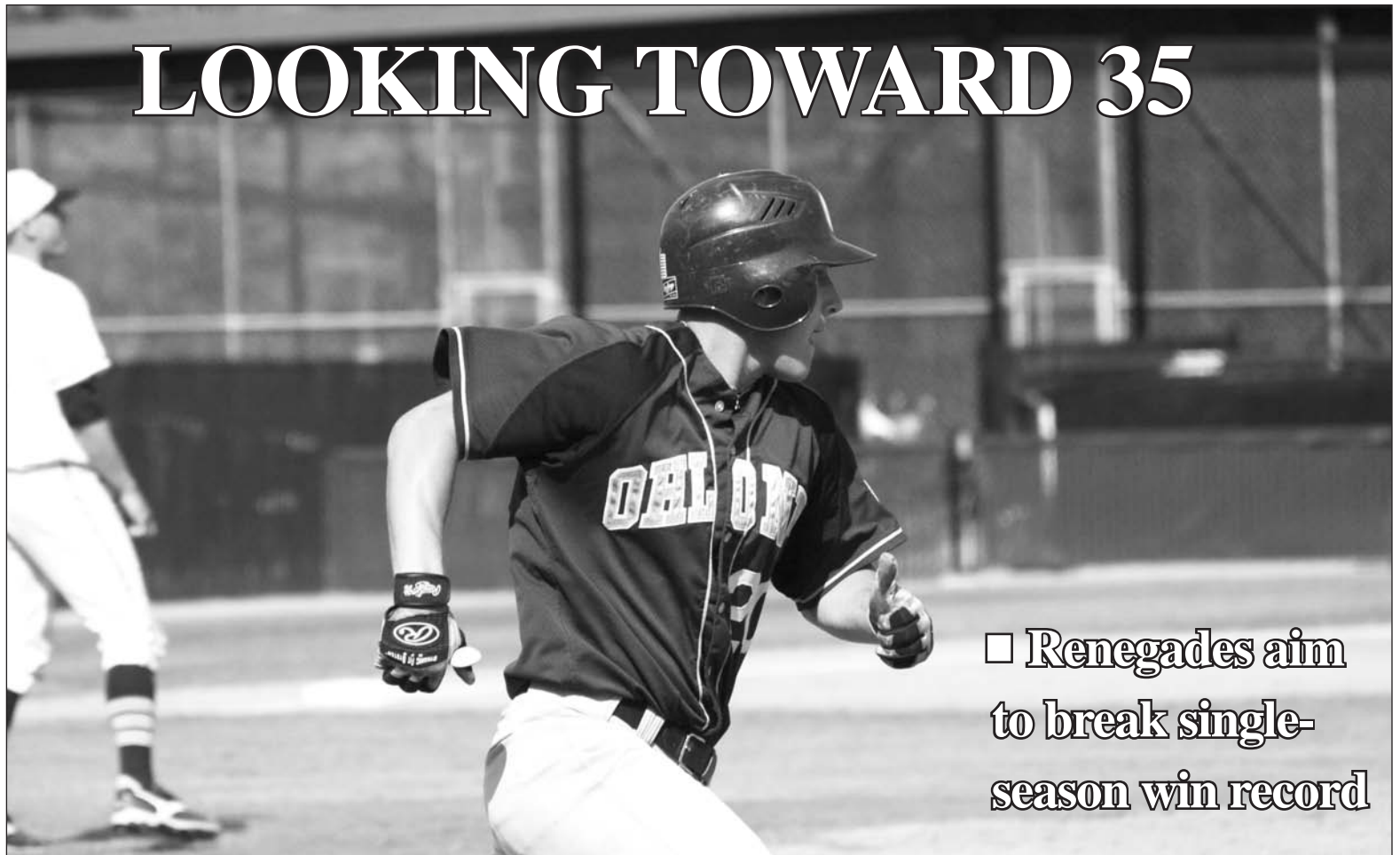
Long story short, Oakland made it clear that to them, speed beats out production.

Oakland took a big risk passing on Crabtree in the first round of Saturday's draft, a risk that could bring Oakland back to the top 10 in next year's draft.

Instead of getting a complete receiver who's physical enough to go over the middle, with hands sure enough to catch what's thrown to him, the Raiders took another speedster for JaMarcus Russell or Jeff Garcia to try and throw deep to.

Heyward-Bey has to start in order for him to be successful, otherwise he'll be considered as a bust.

Both might be 6-foot-3, however speed isn't everything.



Renegades aim to break single-season win record

Photo by Tara Lynn Lanning

Zach Johnson, below, sparked Ohlone's late rally, then Jeff Johnson, above, hit a two-run home run to score the Renegades' only two runs as Ohlone lost to West Valley 6-2 Tuesday.

Renegades drop two of three on road

By JEFF WEISINGER
Sports editor

With the playoffs just about in sight, the Ohlone baseball team went on their final road trip of the 2009 regular season before hosting Thursday's regular season finale against Skyline.

The Renegades (34-9, 19-5) entered the three-game road trip riding a three-game win streak, momentum much needed going toward the end of the season.

What they didn't need was to lose two out of three through last weekend.

Ohlone lost 3-2 at Monterey Peninsula last Thursday, ending their three-game win streak. However, the Renegades came back from the loss on Saturday, defeating Gavilan College 18-6, giving the Renegades their 34th win of the season, tying the 2002 Ohlone baseball team who holds the school record for wins in

a single season.

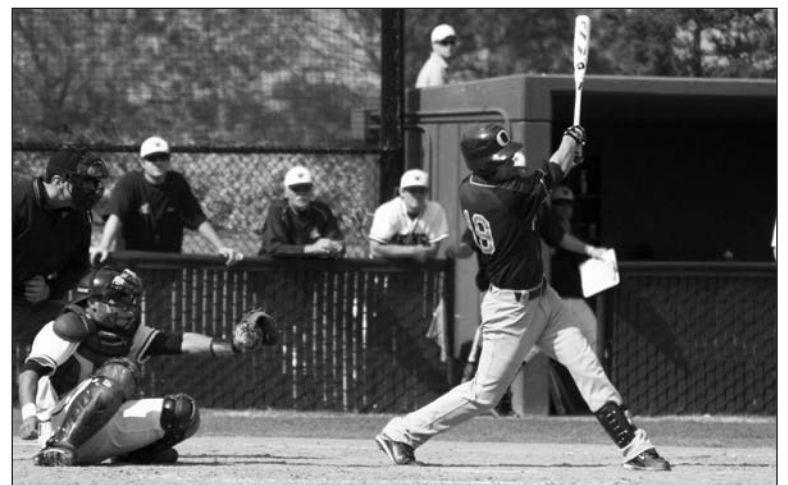
Ohlone, with a chance at breaking the single-season win record and winning the Coast Conference title outright for the first time in 18 years, traveled to Saratoga Tuesday to take on the West Valley Vikings.

The Renegades sent sophomore right hander Ian Hoff (7-2) on the mound to take on the Vikings.

The usually "lights-out" Hoff was anything but that on Tuesday as the Vikings knocked Hoff around, collecting 10 hits and scoring four runs on Hoff as he only lasted through four innings as the Renegades lost to the Vikings 6-2.

Freshman lefty Roberto Padilla relieved Hoff and pitched a solid four innings, allowing just two runs on two hits while striking out three batters.

West Valley took the early 3-0 lead against Hoff after the first two innings, and shut out the Renegades for almost the whole game as the



Renegade offense simply could not get anything going against Vikings starter Chris Balcom-Miller.

Ohlone third-baseman Zach Johnson started the late rally in the ninth inning by hitting a hard line-drive single. His brother Jeff Johnson sent a 3-2 pitch over the fence for his 16th home run of the season, scoring Ohlone's first and

only two runs of the game.

Ohlone will have one more shot at breaking the record and winning conference as they'll host Skyline College today at 2 p.m. in the season finale.

The Renegades are 1-1 against the Trojans this year, winning the last meeting 10-3 at Skyline back on March 26.

Lady Renegades eager for playoffs

By TOMÁS ORTEGA
Sports writer

The Ohlone Softball team hasn't played in a game since its final season victory against rival Chabot College two Saturdays ago.

There's been no standing around or waiting, though, for battery mates Kelly Colker and Kat Sumner and the rest of the Coast North Conference Champion Ohlone Renegades.

The seeds for the playoffs have been set and Ohlone is slated to face off against Merced College this weekend in a best of three series, hosted at the Ohlone Softball field.

Ohlone did not face Merced during the regular season this year, but a few of the players recall a meeting in the fall.

Freshman outfielder Ashley Nahale remembers the fall match up against their Regional playoff foes. "Yeah, I remember we played them and beat them in the fall," Nahale said. "But we're a much stronger team than we were then."

Nahale speaks for more than just her team in that sense. In 43 games played, Nahale is batting .361 including four home runs. She along with teammate Kim Cawley are in the top eight among batting average leaders in the Coast North and are determined to lead their squad past the Regional playoffs.

Sophomore pitcher Kelly Colker, who is likely to get the game one nod against Merced Saturday afternoon, is excited for the first wave of playoff games.

"We've never played them before," Colker said. "We don't know

what they're like so we need to be disciplined against them."

Colker mentioned that one of Merced's pitchers has at least two different ways she throws her change up. Though it was strange for Colker to mention that when the Renegades have never faced them.

"Word gets around," Colker said. "I've never heard [of four spins on a change up] before."

"I think it's all mental preparation if she does have lots of change ups," Nahale said. "We're a good team though, so we can adjust."

"It's interesting to go into a game we don't know anything about the team we're playing," Colker's battery mate, Kat Sumner said. "We have no choice but to be peaking right now."

The Renegades have a variety of

things in their favor.

On paper, they were given the sixth highest seed in Northern California, which comes with a home game to open the playoffs.

On the ball field, the Renegades have the leadership of head coach Donna Runyon.

"If they knew all the answers, there wouldn't be anything to work on during the week," Runyon rebutted when briefed on her team's feelings of the "unknown" team.

"We're going to work on moving in the same direction and play well."

The first game of the Regional Playoffs starts at 2 p.m. Saturday afternoon and will continue through Sunday.

Sunday's first game begins at noon and a second game will be played at 2 p.m. if necessary.