

Inglemoor girls lose

STATE PREPS TOURNAMENT, D 1

NIGHT FINAL

Dow closes down 16.19

STORY, C 1; TABLES, C 2

50¢ IN PUGET SOUND
AREA, 75¢ ELSEWHERE

ON THE WEB

WWW.
SEATTLETIMES.COM



The Seattle Times

WASHINGTON'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER

THURSDAY

MARCH 12, 1998

Copyright 1998
Seattle Times Company

Huskies show Xavier the exit



Asteroid may collide with Earth

BY PAUL RECER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It's not time to panic, but earthlings need to keep an eye on a mile-wide asteroid that will zip very close to the Earth in 30 years and could even smash into the planet, causing widespread destruction.

Tentative calculations are that the asteroid, called 1997 XF11, will pass within about 26,000 miles of the Earth's center in October 2028. Experts warn that there is a chance it could actually hit Earth. Such a hit would release energy equal to thousands of atomic bombs.

"The chances of impact are very small, but not impossible," said Brian Marsden of the International Astronomical Union (IAU), which issued an asteroid alert yesterday. "We've not had a case like this before."

Marsden said his calculations of the asteroid's path have a margin of error of about 180,000 miles, plus or minus, but he believes a pass within 30,000 miles of the Earth's center was the most likely, based on the current observations.

He said the closest approach would come at about 10:30 a.m. PST on Oct. 26, 2028.

Astronomers have never seen an object this big moving on a path that would carry it so close to the Earth, said Marsden, even though the IAU has identified 108 asteroids that orbit close enough to Earth to be called "potentially hazardous objects."

'The chances of impact are very small, but not impossible. We've not had a case like this before.'

BRIAN MARSDEN
Of the International Astronomical Union (IAU)

