

OSC Tabbed as ND Favorite

by Jim White
Emerald Sports Writer

Idaho and Oregon, two of the Northwest's top basketball teams, open the 1954 Northern Division race at Eugene this week. No one can say what will happen over the two colorful months of cage action ahead but everyone has their pet theory. It usually starts with OSC and ends with WSC.

The season looks like it could shape up into a thrilling battle for second place with Oregon and Washington fighting it out and Idaho lurking in the background as a possible dark horse. The gangling giants of Corvallis are rated as favorites for the title because of their abnormal height advantage; and, of course, Washington State has little or no hope of rising from the cellar.

Oregon State's beanpoles showed up very well in pre-season competition against some of the country's best. They racked up a record of seven wins against three losses, including wins over the NCAA champs, Indiana, Ohio State, North Carolina and Nebraska. The Beavers lost one to Indiana, Duke and Tulane, all by close scores.

Halbrook Well Known

The Orange men boast the most publicized college cager in recent years, Swede Halbrook, 7'3" tall. In addition the Beavers have two 6'6" forwards, Tex Whiteman and Tony Vlastelica, and "the two fastest guards on the coast," Johnny Jarboe and Bill Toole.

Which all adds up to one thing. The OSC team is something of a dream team. There has been some question as whether or not such an inexperienced team can go all the way. The Beavers seem to have answered that question in the Indiana series but it won't be easy going—even in the Northern Division race.

Destined for Runner-up

Even though Washington is no longer on top, Oregon appears destined for their habitual runner-up spot. Oregon's likable coach, Bill Borchert, put it this way. "I don't see any normal sized team in the Northwest that can beat us consistently, but . . . what can you do against guys like Halbrook?" And we're not inclined to disagree with him.

Oregon has three veterans and two fine sophomores on its starting lineup. Ken Wegner, All Northern Division guard leads the list with Ed Halberg and Barney Holand. Up from last year's frosh squad to fill in the holes are center Max Anderson and forward Ray Bell.

The Huskies don't look very good at first glance, in fact they don't even look like title contenders if you stare at them all day. The main reason of course is the loss of their All American center Bob Houberts. Washington compiled a preseason record of eight consecutive defeats without a win. Nevertheless, they must be picked over the once beaten Idaho Vandals because they played top teams, whereas Idaho competition was ridiculous.

The Huskies lost two games to Stanford, three to Kansas State, and once each to Oklahoma, Colorado and St. Louis besides finishing last in the Big Seven tournament. The most noticeable thing in this record is that none of these games were what you might call a "run away."

Idaho Rates High

Idaho was rated 17th nationally a few weeks ago, which points up the worthlessness of polls and very little else. The Vandals did very well against third rate competition, downing Gonzaga, Hawaii, Loyola and taking Montana three games out of four. Idaho wasn't particularly impressive in any contest but they have the material to make things hot in the Northern Division.

The Vandal's welcomed back almost exactly the same team that tied Oregon for second place in the conference last season. Dwight Morrison, 6'8" center, is the big gun, with Bob Falash, Tom Flynn and Harlan Melton supporting him admirably. Idaho's first big test of the season will be the Oregon series and unless they can show more class than in pre-season competition, they seem destined to lose.

WSC Picked for Cellar

The Cougars finished last in the conference last year and are headed for the bottom spot again, barring the upset of the decade. WSC rolled up a 6 and 4 record in preseason play with victories over Eastern Washington, EWCE, Montana, Gonzaga and Whitworth. The Cougars lost to California, Hawaii, and Sacramento State. Even at that, Washington State beat Eastern Washington by only 1 point and Gonzaga by a slim two.



DWIGHT MORRISON
Idaho Tall Timber

Oregon, Idaho Vie in Opener

The lid pops off Northern Division basketball tonight when the University of Oregon and Idaho go to the post at 8 p. m. in McArthur court. This is the first game in a two game Vandal series in Eugene.

Everybody's Drug of Eugene, who last year upset the Phillips Oilers in the national AAU tournament, and Philco of Portland meet in the 5:45 prelim.

The Vandals come to Oregon as favorites, according to a pre-season poll of the Northern Division coaches. The Vandals have lost only one game out of their first seven and at one time this season were rated 17th nationally.

WIN FIRST SIX

The boys from the spud state won their first six with ease from Gonzaga, Hawaii, Loyola of Los Angeles and Montana. Their only setback came at the hands of Montana in the last of a four game series.

Coach Chuck Finley's quint has height and an accurate shooting eye from the floor. Dwight Morrison, 6 feet 8 inches tall, and Harlan Melton, sharp-shooting forward, lead the squad in points.

Coach Bill Borchert's Green crew, which was an underdog a week ago, saw its chances get even smaller over the weekend as Forward Jerry Ross and Guard Keny Wegner suffered badly sprained ankles.

Ross, a rapidly improving sophomore, saw a lot of action in the California swing and was being counted on as valuable bench strength for Oregon. He was limping badly Monday, however, and Trainer Bob Officer said he would definitely not see action against the visitors tonight.

Wegner, the only returning All-Northern Division selection, picked up a complicated ankle sprain in practice Saturday, and his appearance in the lineup tonight is doubtful.

The Ducks saw their seven game winning streak end over the holidays as the Oregon gang could win only one game out of four on the road trip to California. UCLA walloped the Webfoots, 89-74, and 79-53 on consecutive nights in Los Angeles, despite a 28 point outburst by Wegner in the first battle.

WIN LAST GAME

Stanford trimmed Oregon, 85-58, in the Ducks' third straight California loss, but the Green and Yellow came back to shade out Sacramento State, 59-53, in the last of the four game swing.

Deadline Today For IM Entries

Men's living organizations have until 3 p. m. today to submit entries for winter term intramural sports. Entry blanks should be taken to the IM office in the P.E. building.

The schedules for A and B basketball and handball will be drawn up at 3 p. m. today; according to Paul Washke, mural director.

Lou Bellissimo, S. U. recreation director, plans to have the bowling schedule made up by Wednesday.

Competition in the three winter sports will start Monday, for basketball and handball, and Tuesday, for bowling.

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