

Duck Tracks

By Bob Robinson
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What has happened to the University of Oregon basketball team? That has been the question on the tongues of almost every Duck basketball fan for the past two weeks. After ripping through league opponents with relative ease for half of the season and compiling a seven won and two lost record for their first nine games in Northern Division play the Webfoots suddenly fell apart at the seams and lost three straight encounters.

Washington State, a team that the Ducks had beaten three straight times, was the first to knock Bill Borchers' five off their perch with a 74-68 win at McArthur Court two weeks ago. Then, after a ten day rest, the Webfoots travelled to Moscow, Idaho and absorbed two consecutive shellackings from the Vandals, 68-54 and 79-65.

These losses cost the Oregon quintet dearly, because, before they took place the Ducks were firmly entrenched in first place. Now, with a seven and five won-loss mark, they are in second place, one full game behind the OSC Beavers. In order to win the Northern Division crown, the Ducks would probably have to win all four of their remaining games or at least three of them.

Seattle Jinx

The possibility of Oregon winning all the rest of their tilts is next to impossible. This weekend, when the Webfoots invade Seattle, they will be encountering a jinx that has plagued them for many years. The last Duck win over the Washington Huskies in Edmundson Pavilion came in 1947, when Dick Wilkins tossed in a long howitzer just before the final gun to give Oregon a 49-48 victory. Since that time, the Huskies have won 13 straight.

If that isn't a formidable enough obstruction, the Ducks are faced with even a tougher problem in their final series of the season as they face the rangy Oregon Staters in a pair of tussles.

Since the Beavers are the team that is just ahead of Oregon in the N.D. standings it is almost certain that the Ducks will have to beat the Orangemen in both games in order to have a chance for the championship. To beat Swede Halbrook and his colleagues two nights in a row is a very rugged assignment for the shorter Webfoot five.

Champs to Chumps

But no matter what happens the rest of the way, people will always wonder why the Ducks changed from champs to chumps right in the middle of the season. There are a million different ways that one can speculate on this subject but we think there is one primary reason for the slump and we would like to take this opportunity to elaborate on it.

Probably the most obvious aspect of the situation is the Ducks' lack of bench strength. If one of the Oregon starters is having an off night Borchers has very few reliable men to call upon for relief duty.

But even this shortage of reserves is not the main reason for the "big collapse." At least we don't think so. The whole trouble, we believe, can be summed up with one word, TEMPERAMENT. Never in our life have we seen a more temperamental club than this year's Oregon team. If they want to play ball and win they can reach amazing heights of success. But, on the other hand, if they aren't feeling just right, they are the most pathetic team in the league, barring none.

Ducks Inconsistent

A good example of the Webfoot inconsistency occurred only a short time ago. The Ducks looked sharper than a tack in downing OSC 42-40 but only four nights later they looked lousy in absorbing their six point loss to last-place Washington State.

Center Max Anderson is one of the most temperamental players on the team. Against the Beavers, Max was a tiger on the boards and terrific on defense, besides scoring a very neat 18 points. In the WSC series Anderson was a different player. He lacked scoring punch, hustle, and he rebounded far below his capabilities.

An even better example is Duck Captain Kenny Wegner. Wegner, deemed as an All-American candidate before the season began, has looked good in some games but has been so poor in others that he will be lucky to get an honorable mention rating on this season's Northern Division all-star quintet.

Need "Will to Win"

We could elaborate on many of the other Duck players in the same way but it would be somewhat pointless. The main point is that the Oregons can be great when they have the desire to win but they don't always have this desire.

In their last three games the Ducks obviously have been lacking the old "will to win spirit." Will they have it back with them against the Huskies this weekend? Nobody knows. If they do they will be very tough to beat despite the "Seattle jinx." If they don't have it, well, heaven only knows how bad Washington will pour it on.

Webfoots Face Washington In Do-or-Die Cage Contests

With their last fading chances of a Northern Division championship hanging in the balance, the University of Oregon basketball team takes on the fast-improving Washington Huskies in an important two game series at Seattle this weekend.

The Ducks, who trail Oregon

State by one full game, need to win both contests in order to stay in the running for the league championship. The Beavers are playing two tussles with Washington State this weekend, but, the Gillmen are expected to win both battles and, if they do, it will make two Oregon wins necessary, also.

Although the Webfoots of coach Bill Borchers currently hold a pair

of wins over the Washingtonians, they will by no means go into the series as the favorite. The Huskies have improved constantly ever since they made their disastrous trek to Eugene one month ago and now are considered to be a much stronger team.

Ducks Win First Series

In their Eugene session the Ducks won both games, the first by a 77-76 score and the final by a 64-48 tally.

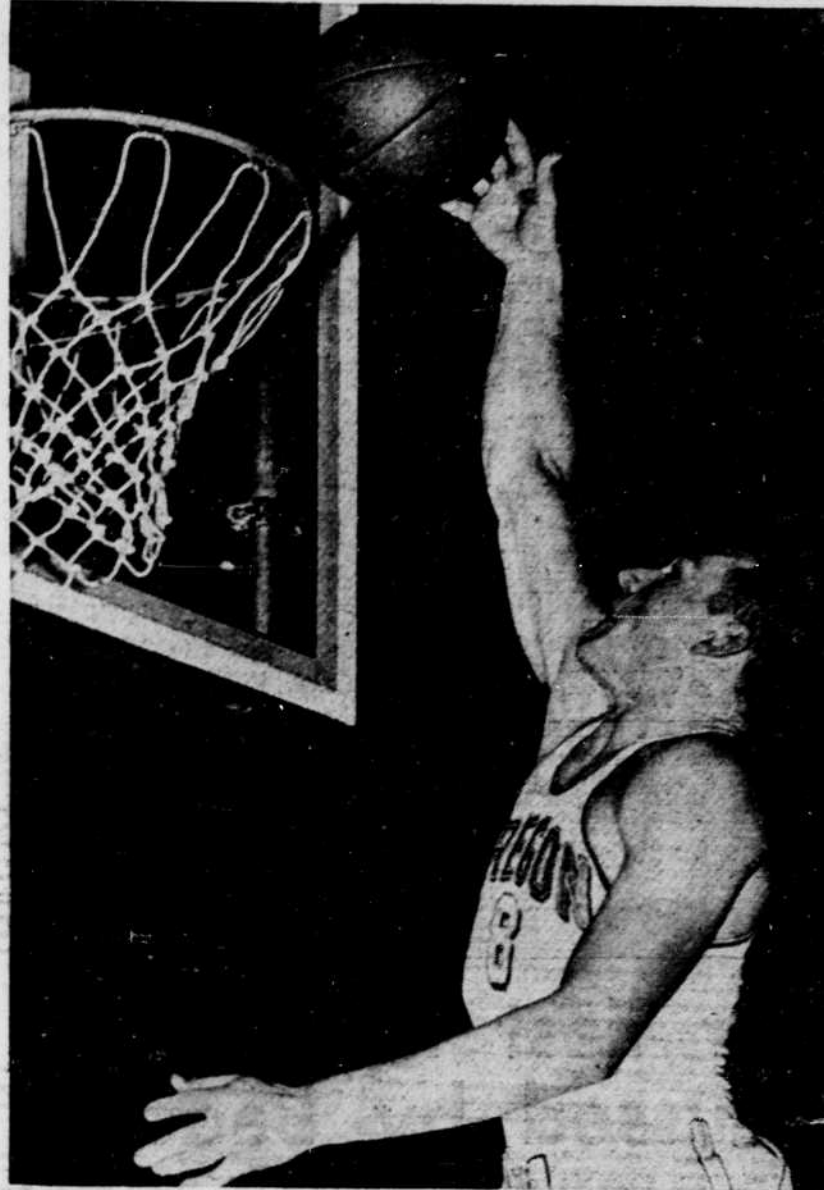
Borchers has been shifting his line-up around all week long in an effort to find a combination that will be able to break the three game Duck losing streak. Although he hasn't decided for sure it appears that the rangy Oregon mentor will start the fracas with Ed Halberg and Barney Holland, at the forward spots, Max Anderson at center, and Ken Wegner and Howard Page in the back-court.

Dye will try to match this team, with Karl Voegtlin and Jim Coshow at the forward posts, Dean Parsons at center, and Doyle Perkins and Jerry Johnson at guards. Perkins, who has been one of the Husky stars as of late, did not play in the first Oregon-Washington series.

Defense vs. Fast Break

The key to the outcome of the series will probably lie on just how well Washington's vastly improved defense can slow down the Ducks' lightning fast break.

Duck Captain



KEN WEGNER, Oregon guard and captain, will be in the line-up to-night and Saturday evening as the Ducks play a very important series with the Washington Huskies at Seattle. Wegner is a senior from Portland.

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