

Barnett: One of the 'Good Ones'



By LYNN MUCKEN
Sports Writer

Well, Jim Barnett got his scoring record Saturday night, scoring 25 points against Oregon State in the season's finale to snap Charlie Warren's mark of 1,322 by three counters.

And he deserved it.

Barnett was not the typical college basketball star. Instead of being adored and revered by the fans, as is many a ball player of lesser talents, he was the object of much criticism and ridicule.

Jim was constantly under attack by the fans, including those who support Duck athletics, as

well as the crowds at away games.

At the Far West Classic, when it was announced that Jim would not play because of an injured hand, a small cheer went up in some parts of the Duck rooting section.

Name Draws Boos

At home games, Barnett's name always draws a few boos from scattered voices in the seats.

At Corvallis, his every move and action was responded to by jeers and shouts of "hot dog."

At Pullman the harassment

grew so strong that he lost his temper and slapped a Cougar fan.

Saturday night, instead of cheering him on, there were a great many Duck supporters who were hoping that Barnett would fall short of the record.

And all this for a man who was one of the best, if not the best, basketball player to ever put on a University uniform.

These fans were, in a way, attacking the Barnett of previous years.

During his sophomore and junior seasons Jim was "Mr. Let Me Shoot" of the Webfoot squad. He was definitely not a team man, and the Ducks as a team responded with poor seasons, including a dismal 9-17 record in 1965.

Team Captain

This year Barnett was appointed team captain by coach Steve Belko and responded by being the total team leader, which is completely different than being the team leader in scoring, rebounding, or assists.

But still the jeers continued. Why?

The truth of the matter is that Jim Barnett was not a crowd-pleaser. Fine player that he was, Barnett had none of the appealing qualities of a Nick or Jim Jones.

Sure he overplayed the role of Jim "Team Leader" Barnett a little. Sure his facial expressions, especially after making a mistake, failed to endear him to the crowd.

But these were the small idiosyncrasies of an excellent ball-player, one that put out every minute he was on the court.

The fans that booed Jim Barnett were unfair. They would jeer at his actions wrought from disappointment, then fail to appreciate what he might do on the same floor in the very next minute.

Good Magician

They failed to appreciate that Jim Barnett could do more things with a basketball than many a magician can do with a top hat.

His long pretty jump shots demoralized many opponents, including Stanford and UCLA, within the last month. His twisting, turning, seemingly sloppy, but al-

ways unbelievable lay-ins kept every defense honest.

He was not always spectacular, but he was always there, making a key pass, grabbing an errant rebound, or dropping in a crucial field goal.

Barnett led the team to a successful season, despite the ordinary 13-13 record. He and his hard-working teammates made believers out of a lot of Duck fans, and brought paying customers back into Mac Court. Four losses at the end of the season can not destroy the faith the Barnett-led Ducks instilled in their followers.

Yet Jim Barnett was booed.

In this case, that well-worn, yet true axiom holds even truer, "They only boo the good ones."

Emerald SPORTS

Gymnasts Eye PAC Tourney

By DICK JONES
Sports Writer

With a winning season and a second place finish in the Northwest Championships behind them, the Oregon gymnastics team began preparing themselves this week for the PAC Championships in Los Angeles, March 19.

Gymnastics coach Dick Smith predicted that the University of California is probably favored over Washington's Huskies, but that the Huskies could upset the Golden Bears with a good effort.

Last year the Duck gymnasts finished sixth, a half point behind Washington State, but the Oregon team should finish ahead of the Cougars this year. Smith picked California to win, then Washington, UCLA, USC, Oregon, Washington State, and Stanford. Oregon State does not have a gymnastic team.

Commenting on his team's second place in the Northwest Championships Smith said, "I was a little surprised; the boys were more confident than I was that they could do it. I hope they carry that same confidence into the PAC's," Smith added.

Still a question mark for the Duck team is the availability of all-around gymnast Al West. West tore his shoulder muscles in the meet against Washington a few weeks ago and he has so far only been working out on the parallel bars. The Duck coach hoped that West would be able to compete in some other events, but has already ruled out the all-around event for West.

Smith hopes to enter five men in each event. All competitors perform in the preliminaries, but only the top eight men in each

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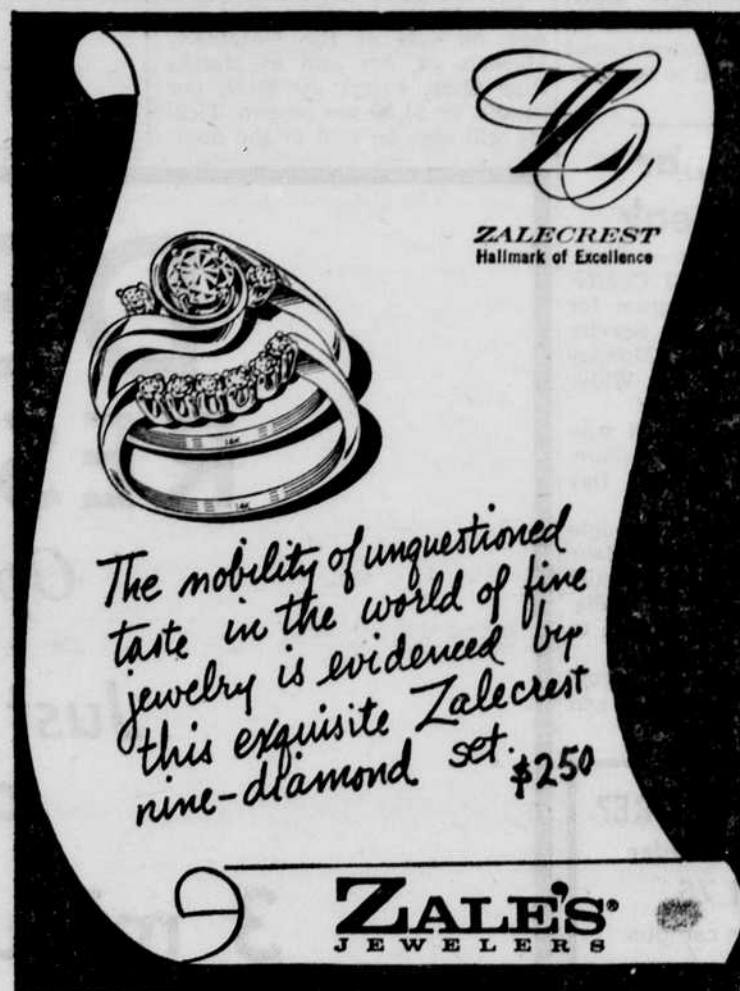


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