

Frantic Pac-8

race starts tonight



Photo by Warren Morgan

Last year's 107-103 loss to the Bruins was intense, to say the least; expect nothing different tonight.

By JOHN HENDERSON
Of the Emerald

Ron Lee dashed into Dick Harter's plush office, dripping from perspiration in a sweatshirt, ragged blue jeans and sneakers.

"What are you doing, turkey?" asked Harter with a broad smile.

"Just playing a game of 21, coach," replied Oregon's All-American guard.

On the day before the legendary national champion UCLA Bruins come to town to open Pacific 8 play, most players turn to meditation to bury the thought of the Bruins' 10 national championships in 12 years, or sit in a tub of hot water all day to prepare for their potent running game. They do anything but play a pick-up basketball game in street clothes.

The Ducks, however, no longer stand in awe of the Bruins. After Oregon upset UCLA two years ago and John Wooden's resignation ended a 27-year reign, UCLA has come down to earth.

"I don't think about the UCLA mystique anymore," said Lee, slumped in a chair. "A win is a win and a loss is a loss."

Receiving the unenviable task of filling Wooden's shoes is Gene Bartow, who has gained a little fame himself. Bartow was 82-32 at Memphis State including a second place finish to UCLA in 1973.

With Bartow at the helm, the Bruins themselves feel different.

"He's easier to get along with in some ways," says UCLA junior Marques Johnson. "He doesn't hold the mystique that Wooden had. Everybody looked up to Wooden with such awe that you couldn't decide whether to go to him with your problems. Bartow doesn't have as much fame, which is kind of nice because it creates better rapport with the players."

Johnson won't need any Wooden pep talks to get ready for the 7-6 Ducks. It was in his freshman year that the Bruins lost to the Ducks 56-51. Last year, UCLA won 107-103.

"I didn't know anything about Oregon when I was a freshman," said Johnson, who carries a 17.5 average into tonight's

game. "After facing that Kamikaze play they have, I know what to expect. They play clean but rough and apply lots of pressure, just like in pro ball.

"It'll be a rough, physical game but we can adapt to the situation. Indiana was real physical but they didn't rough us up under the boards."

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The Bruins lost their first game to top-ranked Indiana but have won their last 10 in a row. Despite being new to the Pacific-8, Bartow feels Oregon is better than their record indicates.

"Oregon is a fine basketball team and is capable of winning anytime they go out on the court," said Bartow in a Missouri twang. "Lee is definitely one of the super players in the country and Ballard (Greg) and Jackson (Stu) have both been playing well.

"I know coach Harter and know he's doing an excellent job here. I have great respect for him. I never fear, but always respect."

Harter can't help but return the favor as he sees plenty of respect in the Bruins. Besides Johnson, All-American forward Rich Washington returns and leads the conference with a 21.5 average. The other returning starter is 7-2 Ralph Drollinger, and Andre McCarter and Jim Spillane fill the back court positions.

"They still play with basically the same people," said Harter. "They're probably the best finesse people in the country. They still rely on finesse and quickness but they're so big, they'll really pose rebounding problems.

"We have got to really battle the boards."

Wingert concerned about crowd situation

Acting Athletic Director Pete Wingert isn't boiling with rage, nor is he shaking with fear, but he is concerned about the crowd situation at home basketball games.

"The fans have been much, much improved over last year," he said. "But there are still some problems we're faced with. And with these two big games this weekend, it's important people realize what those problems are."

Wingert is referring specifically to three situations: (1) the danger of frisbee throwing; (2) the danger of leaning out over the balconies, and (3) the problem of

overcrowding in the lower student sections.

He said some fans in the past have been injured by flying frisbees and the saucers are also dangerous because they make people lean out over the balconies.

"We're not going to frisk people," Wingert said. "But we are concerned that someone might get hurt, either catching a frisbee in the eye or leaning out over a balcony to catch one and landing on the floor.

"We'd like to see it be a self-policing type of thing."

Wingert said he wasn't trying to

rob students of spirit. "Let's go out and have a good time, yell our lungs out. But let's have some concern for others and leave the frisbees home."

The lower student sections, he said, will be closed off once they're full, due to an order from the Fire Marshal. "It's impossible for us to police the lower sections

because people want to go to the bathroom or go get a coke," he said. "What we'd like to see is the students being honest and policing the section themselves.

"We're not trying to harass anybody," Wingert said. "We just want Mac Court to be the best crowd—and the safest crowd—around."

Bill Bowerman top track coach

Former Oregon track coach Bill Bowerman has been named "Coach of the Decade" by *Runner's World* magazine.

According to *Runner's World* Publisher Bob Anderson, Bowerman was chosen for the honor because he has "done more for coaching runners than anyone else."



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