

A Pit:

By JEFF NIELSON
Of the Emerald

Corvallis — "Mac Court? Isn't that called The Pit?"

"Oregon? They're insane down there. Last year one of our band members got hit in the head with a bottle."

"I've had nothing but bad experiences with people from Oregon, both inside Mac Court and other places."

Hurry, folks, step right up and see the show. From the way people talk in Corvallis, you'd think Mac Court was a bullfighting ring where referees are intimidated to the point of ineffectiveness and frisbees are made out of sharpened sheet metal. Others think Oregon's home court will someday vibrate itself into a crater, never to be seen again.

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For visiting players, a trip to The Pit is like a visit to the dentist—you don't really want to go but it feels so good to get it over with.

In past years, Oregon State has been lucky enough just to get it over with. The Beavers haven't won at Mac Court since 1972, when they beat the Ducks, 78-68. That was Dick Harter's first year here, and Oregon finished the season 0-14 in the conference and 6-20 overall.

Paul Miller, a starting forward for Oregon State, will be playing his last regular season game at Mac Court tomorrow. He won't leave with fond memories of The Pit.

"The fans definitely intimidate the players and officials," said Miller. "I don't like to play there. It's the most dangerous place in the Pac-8."

"The Ducks will be ready for us," he continued. "With that kind of a court, it's worth at least 10 points. This is my fourth year of playing in Mac Court, and I'd like at least one win."

Most orange and black fans think Miller and the Beavers will get that win.

"The Ducks are overrated,"

That's what Oregon State has found Mac Court to be



Photo by Greg Clark

Paul Miller echoed the views of most Oregon Staters when he said Mac Court "is the most dangerous place in the Pac-8"

said Ken Purdy, an Oregon State pharmacy major. "Ronnie Lee's one of the most overrated of all. Their style of play is detrimental to basketball, and it hurts them as much as it helps. Besides, Oregon State wins the games and the Ducks get all the credit."

Not everyone, however, has Beaver fever. Strat Poindexter works in the Hobbit Hole, a crafts shop near the Oregon State campus. Although he admits his views "aren't popular," he believes the Ducks have an advantage.

"The Beavers are a cinderella team," he said. "They won't make it to the playoffs, and Lonnie Shelton will be the downfall. He's not a good team player. I hope Oregon whips 'em—it'd be good for Oregon State's attitude. It'd show 'em just exactly who they are."

At least one person—coach Ralph Miller—feels Shelton will hardly be a liability. Miller has seen enough action in The Pit to think there are snakes hidden at

center court and trap doors in the keys. According to Miller, this year's battle will be no different—just a little more important.

"I still consider the Ducks to be one of the tougher teams," he said. "We have four positions with Oregon that are evenly matched, and only one—center—that could be considered a mismatch."

"It's no harder in Mac Court than anywhere else. Oregon and Cal have the only two old, old courts left in the conference. You just have to get used to the fans and the tight sidelines."

While the Duck boosters are shakin' Mac Court and the Beaver backers are listening to the radio (Oregon State will get no student tickets to Mac Court this year), some people simply don't care. As one OSU student said as he bit into his Beaver Burger at the MU commons:

"Sports? That's like spelling—who gives a damn?"

Wrestlers have hands full

Oregon hosts ninth-rated Minnesota Saturday at 2 p.m. at McArthur Court, but first the Ducks must travel to Portland State to face the 13th-ranked Vikings.

"Portland State could very easily be the very best team in Oregon," said Coach Ron Finley.

The competition intensifies Saturday, when the Gophers—boasting Evan Johnson, *National Mat News* mid-season all-American 190-pounder—come to town.

"We're really going to have come through in the middle weights... at 134 (Shuichi Shoji), 142 (Randy Robinson) and 150 (Danny Hollembaek)," said Finley. "From (Kevin) Kramer (158) on up, we should be pretty adequate."

"This is going to be one of the big meets... we're going to need a lot of fan support," said Finley. "It's really going to help us. Some of the finest wrestlers in the country will be at Mac Court."

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