

finally . . .

Lee and the Ducks find the range



Jan. 17—Ron Lee hits 33 per cent from the field, Oregon hits 39 per cent from the field and the Ducks lose to Washington State, 78-69.

Jan. 29 — Ron Lee hits 57 per cent, Oregon hits 57 per cent and the Ducks whip Oregon State for the second time in six days, 76-74.

If it's possible for a player of Lee's caliber to come into his own, then Ronnie has. And along with him have come the Ducks.

Lee has always made the hustle play, always made the steal, always got his points. But until recently, he hasn't gotten his points without some costly misses.

After the Washington State game, it was apparent what Oregon needed most: a shooter. The Ducks were hitting 45 per cent going up against Oregon State.

But like he has so many times before, Lee saved the day.

In the last three games, he's averaged 32 points a game. More importantly, he's hit at a 57 per cent clip.

Why? Why does a 45 per cent shooter suddenly jump to a 57 per cent shooter for three games? Lee shrugs his shoulders, Ralph Miller points to a higher arc on the ball and Dick says it's an offspring of a more moveable offense.

"Ronnie's getting the shots because the rest of the guys are getting down quicker, setting up the offense better," said Harter. "We're moving the ball better and, thus, Ronnie's getting the good shots."

If Lee was awesome Saturday at the Pit, he saved his best for the City of Roses. Tuesday he averaged more than a point a minute in breaking Stan Love's school scoring record with 41 points.

And Thursday, he once again drove the Beavers crazy. In the first half, Lee hit five straight field goals in less than four minutes to keep the Ducks within striking distance. In the second half, with Oregon down 60-58, he hit a banker, stole and fed to Danny Mack to put the Ducks ahead and stole again and scored himself...all within 69 seconds.

"A couple of years ago I don't think Oregon State respected Ronnie Lee," said Harter. "I think they do now."

If Lee is sizzling, the rest of the Ducks are too.

Oregon has shot 59 per cent from the field the last three games, 15 percentage points better than its usual average. To put that into perspective, consider this: Oregon takes an average of 68 shots from the field per game. With the Ducks' 45 percent average, they'd hit 31 of those. In the last three games, they'd hit 40 of those; thus good ol' accuracy has meant a difference of some 18 points per game.

Oregon now has six players — three of them regulars — shooting over 47 per cent. Greg Ballard, who blitzed Oregon State for 55 points in two games on 18 or 27 (67 per cent), is leading among starters with a 51 per cent average.

Other starters and their percentages include Stu Jackson, 49; Lee, 47; and Danny Mack, 44. Sub center Gary Nelson, who has come into his own lately, has hit 9 of 14 for a 64 per cent clip.

Until Oregon's recent hot streak, poor shooting was killing the Ducks. A team like Oregon, which tends to foul more than most, has to make up from the field what it loses at the line.

Even though the Ducks have outshot their opponents from the free throw line (73 per cent to 69), the opposition averages seven more points from the line each game.

Can the Ducks keep their hot hands? They'll have to in order to stay anywhere near the Pac-8 leaders.

Oregon can't afford a loss to Stanford (Thursday) or California (Saturday). Meanwhile, the Ducks need help from some other teams. Both Washington and Washington State are capable of beating UCLA on their home floors this weekend. If Cal's hot, Oregon State could be in trouble Thursday night. And don't forget, Stanford was the only other Pac-8 team besides UCLA to beat the Beavers at Gill Coliseum last year.

At any rate, it'll be fun getting back into Pac-8 play. Especially, with a team that's learned to shoot.

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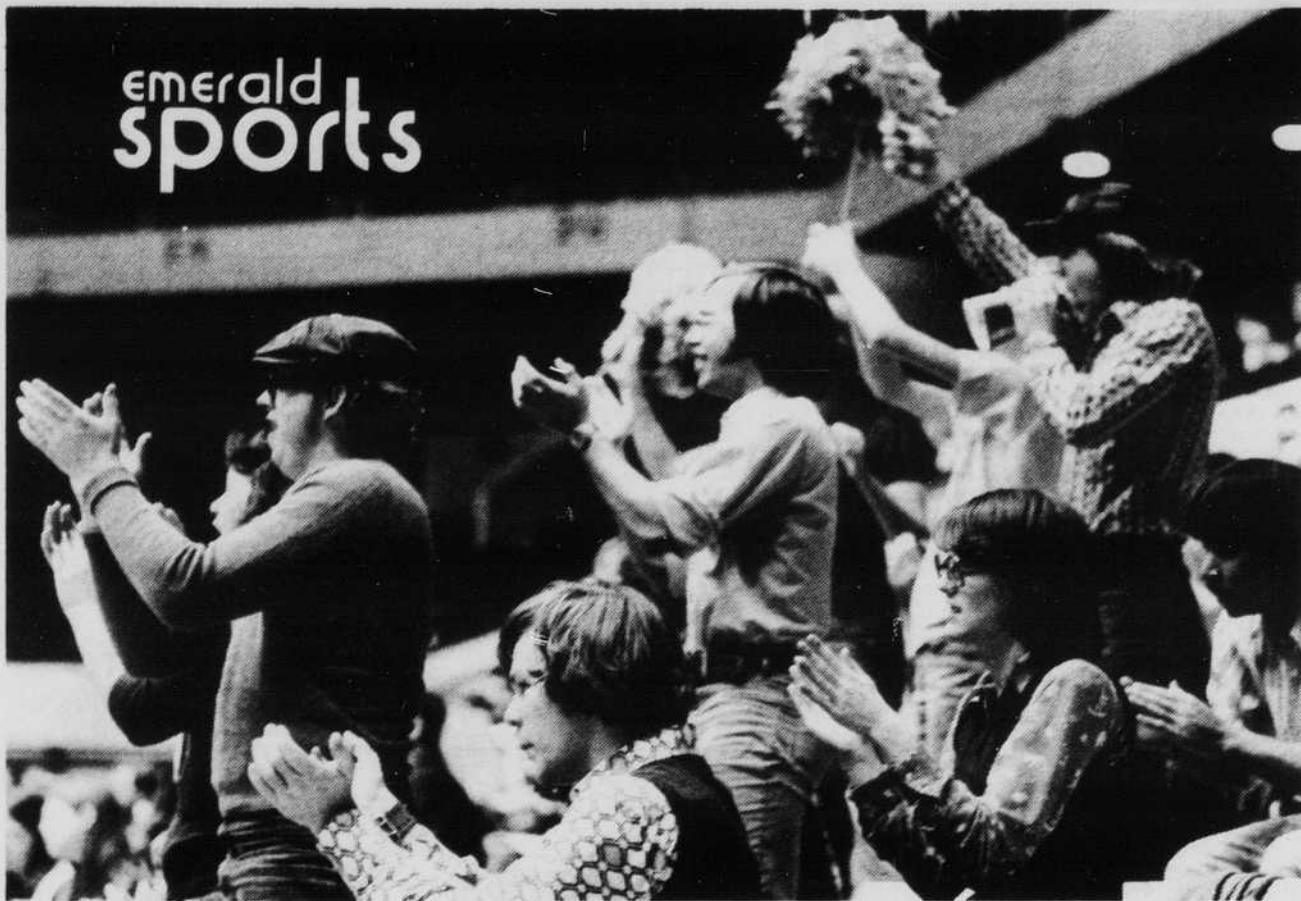


Photo by Kerrie Steinhauer

A scene from the Pit? Yep, but they're cheering for the Flying Ducks, not the Kamikaze Kids. The spirited group, which made its debut last Monday night

with pom poms and duck calls will be on hand tonight when Oregon hosts Washington State at 8 p.m.

Flying Ducks face WSU here tonight

Oregon's second-ranked gymnastics team isn't exactly losing sleep over tonight's 8 o'clock meet with Washington State at McArthur Court, but the Flying Ducks aren't downplaying the Cougars either.

Why? Mainly because the Cougs were one of two teams to

beat Oregon in dual meet competition last year.

Washington State, however, lost Dubi Lufi and probably won't be as strong as last year's team. Lufi, an all-around performer, graduated and is currently working out for the Olympics, where he will compete for Israel.

Scott McEldowney, whose 9.6 mark on the rings against Portland State is the best mark in the nation this year, will be out to keep his unbeaten streak on the rings intact.

Injured Bob Rikli, Oregon's top all-around performer will probably not begin competing in all five events until this weekend.

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