

W.S.U.

Can the Cougars find the groove They're on-and-off but can click

By MIKE MARINO
Of the Emerald

PULLMAN, Wash. — The Cougars of Washington State took to the European tour this summer, playing against teams with unpronounceable names and unheralded players.

"It boosted our confidence level up 50%," said Coach George Raveling. "We played well against teams that are as good as any in the Pac-8."

But then they came home and fell flat on their faces. A late September intra-squad game had Raveling wondering what might be in store in the conference. Four early-season losses didn't do much, either.

His team lost two all-conference stars to graduation and looked like it, but did Raveling panic? No, he just shuffled the lineup and started hoping.

"We don't have any real glaring problems," Raveling said, "but the things that concern me most are patience and playing under control."

What he won't worry about is speed. Raveling figures to have one of the fastest if not the fastest team in the conference. "It'll be one of the fastest I've ever had," he said. "And there aren't too many men that have Stuart House's quickness."

The 6-11 House has been billed as the Cougar's top returner this year, averaging 6.7 points on last year's squad that featured two guys named Steve Puidokas and Harold Rhodes. With that duo taking their 35 points a game with them, House will have to take up the slack.

Another guy to watch is 6-6 forward Don Collins, who is without a doubt the fastest of the fast. Although like House he is off to a slow start, Collins, who averaged six points with a .514 shooting percentage last year, will be much feared.

Then you have a guy named James Donaldson. Seven foot-two, 275 pounds. Looks like a freight train and moves like a quick one. But he, too has been inconsistent — sometimes looking awesome, other times awkward.

At this Raveling smiles. "If James is our only problem," he

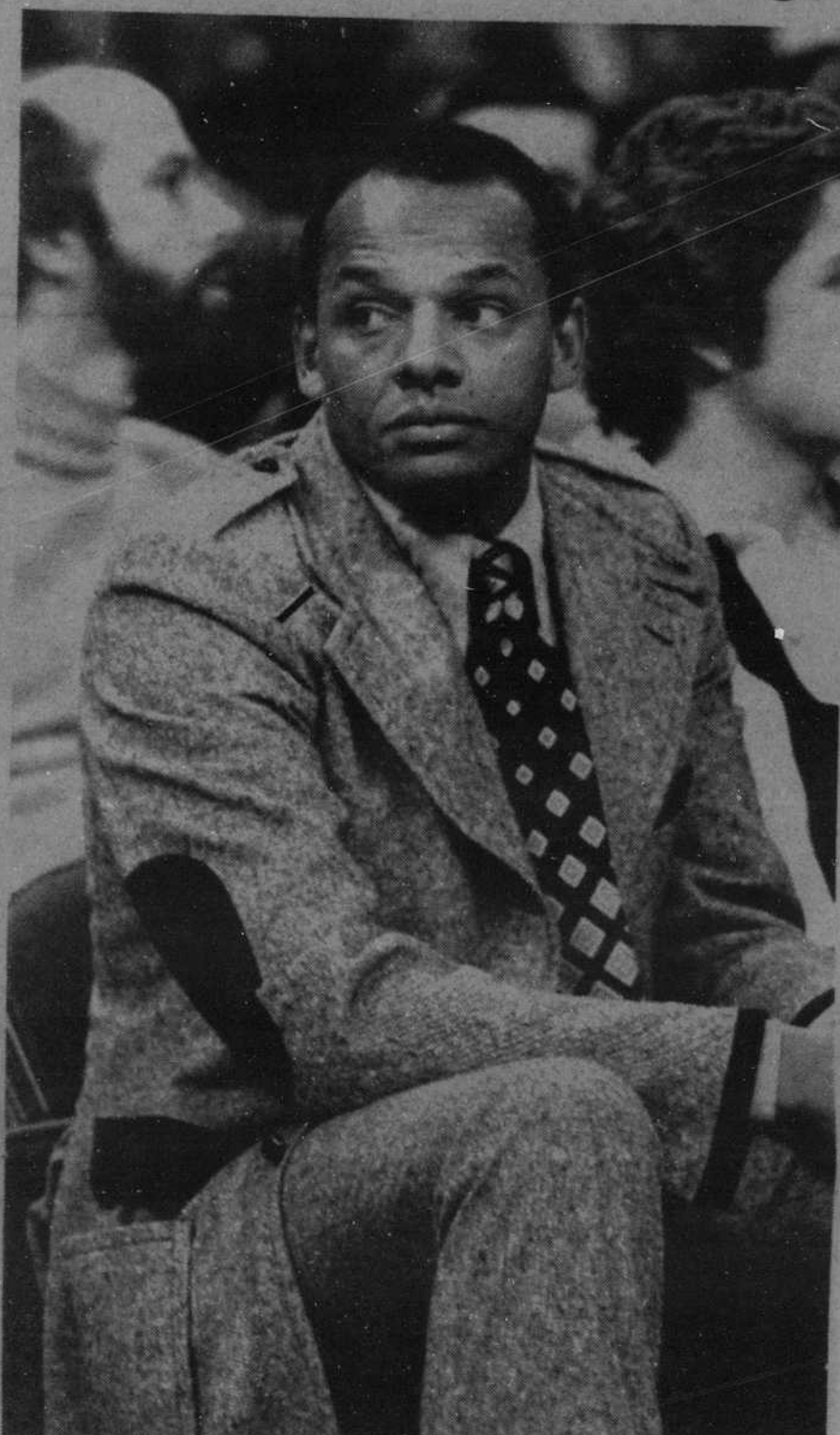


Photo by Neil Gruenfelder

George Raveling had some anxious moments in the opening weekend of the conference that saw his Cougars fall to 0-2. Chances are, though, that they'll still finish in the race for at least the best of the rest.

laughed, "then we'll have a heluva season."

Sports Illustrated evidently thinks they might. They picked the Cougars to finish 15th in the country, saying, "... Raveling has gathered enough talent from far and wide to seriously challenge UCLA for the Pac-8 title."

Coincidentally, it may be a guy from near and close that makes

that bold statement ring true. Terry Kelly, a 6-1 sophomore from Spokane, averaged only 1.4 points last year, but poured in a career high 22 against Gonzaga in mid-December and might be the man to replace the 18.1 ppg Rhodes in the backcourt.

Joining Kelly will be returnee Ken Jones, who at 6-0 drove for 17 points early in the season

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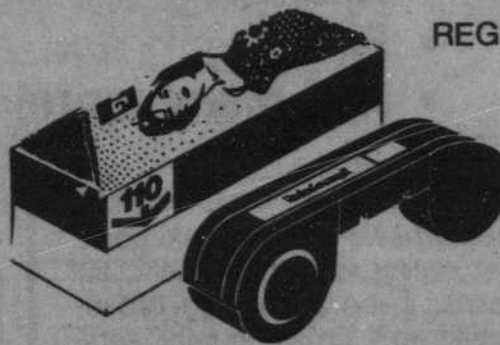


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