

bulldog

Drummond to play final games for home audience this weekend

By MIKE GRADY
Of the Emerald

At 4 p.m. on Saturday afternoon, Mike Drummond will be introduced for the final time in front of a McArthur Court crowd.

It'll be the first time in three years Oregon hasn't graduated an All-American basketball player who would later go on to become a professional in the NBA. But if Ronnie Lee and Greg Ballard were somehow able to attend this Saturday's game against UCLA, even they would eat their hearts out when hearing the applause and appreciation being given to the 5-8 Drummond as the starting line-ups are announced.

"It's a sad time for any player, knowing he's playing his last game in front of the people who have watched and cheered his every move for four years. And in Drummond's case, it'll be just as sad a time for those who have watched, as for the Bulldog himself.

With his days of competitive basketball numbered, Drummond reflected on what his career at Oregon, both on and off the court, has meant to him.

"Most of my education hasn't come from the classrooms or the books," he said. "It has come from the basketball court and the things that have to do with basketball. Basketball has made me work hard and I've learned what it takes to do that."

Drummond shows no qualms about admitting that he has changed and grown since his arrival in Eugene from Racine, Wis., four years ago. And he also leaves no doubt as to what kind of changes they've been for him.

"When I first came here, playing basketball was the biggest thing to me," he said. "Now it's different. Now I've realized that when this is over, basketball isn't gonna mean that much anymore. I've changed the way I've looked at things to more of a responsible goal instead of a personal goal."

As the lone senior on the Oregon squad this year, responsibility has rested heavily on Drummond's shoulders — and most of it has been self-proclaimed. So with the recent hard luck experienced by the Ducks has also come quite a bit of frustration for the Pac-8's smallest player.

"I think that this year has kinda been the lowest point for me at Oregon," Drummond explained. "It's really tough when you've worked hard for something and you haven't gotten the results."

After pointing to the inconsistencies of this season as his low point, Drummond stated that his feeling after the Duck's NIT victory against Oral Roberts last year was probably the highest point of his Oregon basketball days.

"But a lot of times I've felt really good and it has had nothing to do with games at all," said Drummond. "The last couple of weeks I've felt pretty good. Even though we're losing, we're not giving up. I'm not giving up."

This statement can best be seen in Drummond's interaction with referees this season. Once a calm and complacent participant, Drummond has of late been carry-

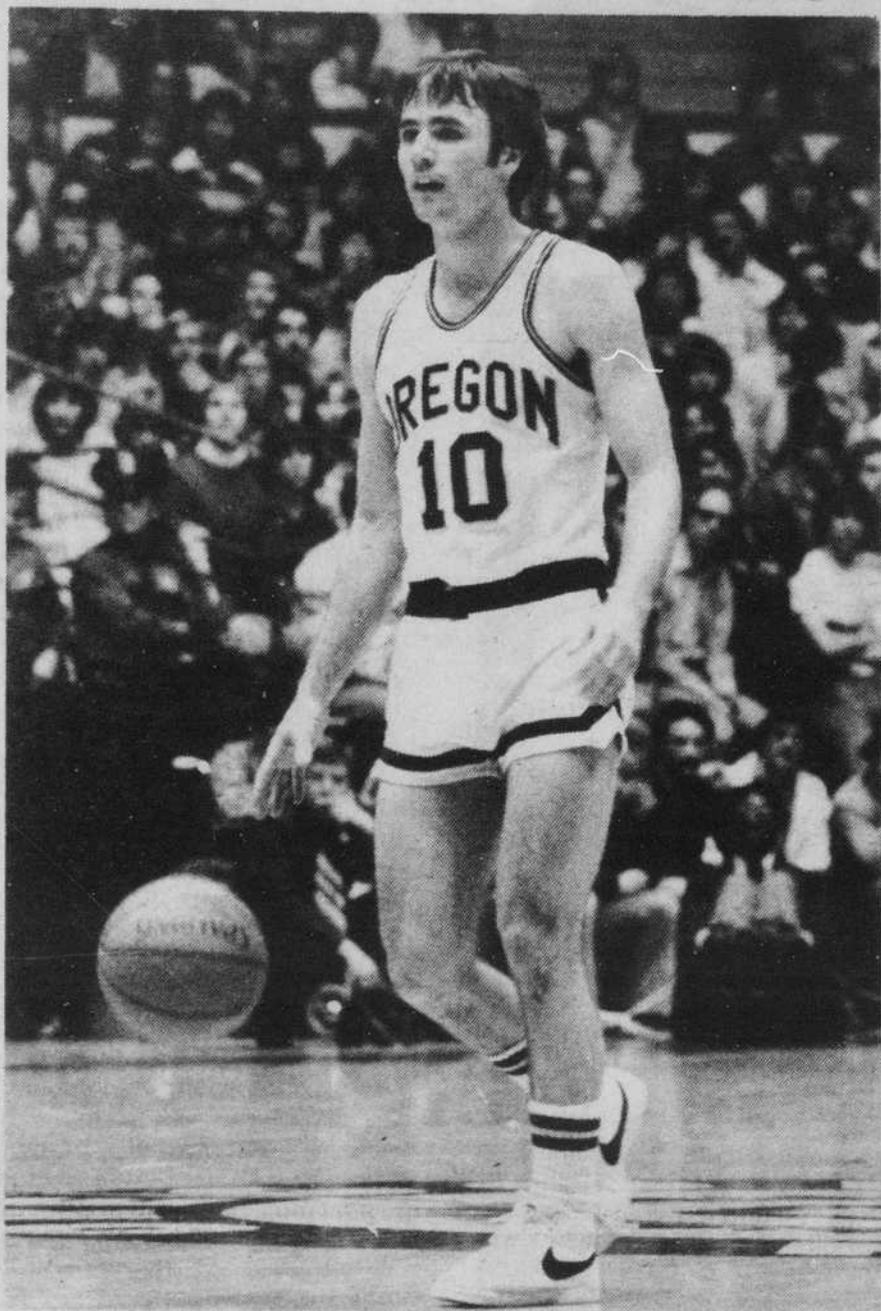


Photo by Steve Schneider

The sight of Mike Drummond bringing the ball up the Mac Court floor for Oregon has become very familiar over the last four years. Drummond will make his final home appearance this weekend.

ing on more and heavier conversations with the men who carry whistles.

"Yeah, I think the frustration has shown," admitted Drummond with a smile. "My emotions have kinda been spurring out at the refs lately. Maybe that's why I've felt good the past couple of weeks. If I hadn't of shown it, it would still be inside me, building up."

Perhaps the biggest shame when considering the finish of Drummond's career comes while wondering if people will remember what he meant to the Ducks during his playing days. You see, people have a tendency to remember and worship numbers and statistics. They'll always be able to look in the record books and see what Lee and Ballard meant to their teams, but that won't be so for Drummond.

Drummond doesn't get statistics; he gives them. They don't have a column for the number of times a man leaves his own man on defense to help out a beaten teammate. They also don't keep track of how long a player keeps control of the basketball, which in essence gives him control of the whole game.

Those are the things Drummond does; he does them well enough that his coach, Dick Harter, has been quoted on numerous occasions that he wouldn't trade him for any other guard in the Pac-8.

But then maybe it's fitting that Drummond won't have the numbers hanging around after he leaves. He'll have something which is better and which in his

mind he sees as much more concrete.

"I know I'm gonna miss everything about athletics," said Drummond. "But the thing I'll always remember is the relationship you have with the other guys on the team. It's fun to sit around the locker room and watch the different moods that the different people go through."

Drummond is undecided on what he'll be doing after his graduation in June of this year. He'd like to stay in Eugene and get a job in his major — business, but if nothing works out along those lines he's seriously considering Law School or a Master's degree.

Until that time though, the things weighing heaviest on Drummond's mind are his last three games — USC, UCLA, and Oregon State. For most college players who have reached the plateau of popularity which Drummond has, it's not the end of the road. But for Mike it is.

"I just want to play well, win and cry afterwards."

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