

One bounce

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"The games were just for fun," Woodruff says. "The girls didn't know how to pivot. The foul shots were two-handed underhand shots."

"We could only bounce the ball once and then we had to throw it. There was no (continuous) dribble."

In addition, the game was halted after every basket and restarted with a center jump.

Women's basketball started a comeback in the 1960s, setting the stage for intercollegiate competition as it now exists.

In 1965, the "interest group," which was destined to become Oregon's women's basketball team, began playing other universities in the state.

The team was budgeted \$82 that year — a far cry from the \$95,000 budget of last year's squad.

One year later, Oregon entered the Northwest College Women's Sports Association, destined to become AIAW Region 9, and began competition across the "border."

The next major step came in 1971.

Formation of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women thrust women's athletics into the national spotlight.

The adoption of Title IX in 1972 and demands for equal treatment followed.

Since then, women's basketball has improved dramatically, says Oregon women's basketball coach Elwin Heiny, who took over in 1976. The women's team hasn't had a losing season yet, including three undefeated seasons in league play.

The women's game has become quicker, more physical, Heiny says. "The caliber of play is reflected upon the opportunities given to young girls to play in high school several years ago."

"We're reaping the profits now."

Along with the blocked shot, continuous dribble and behind

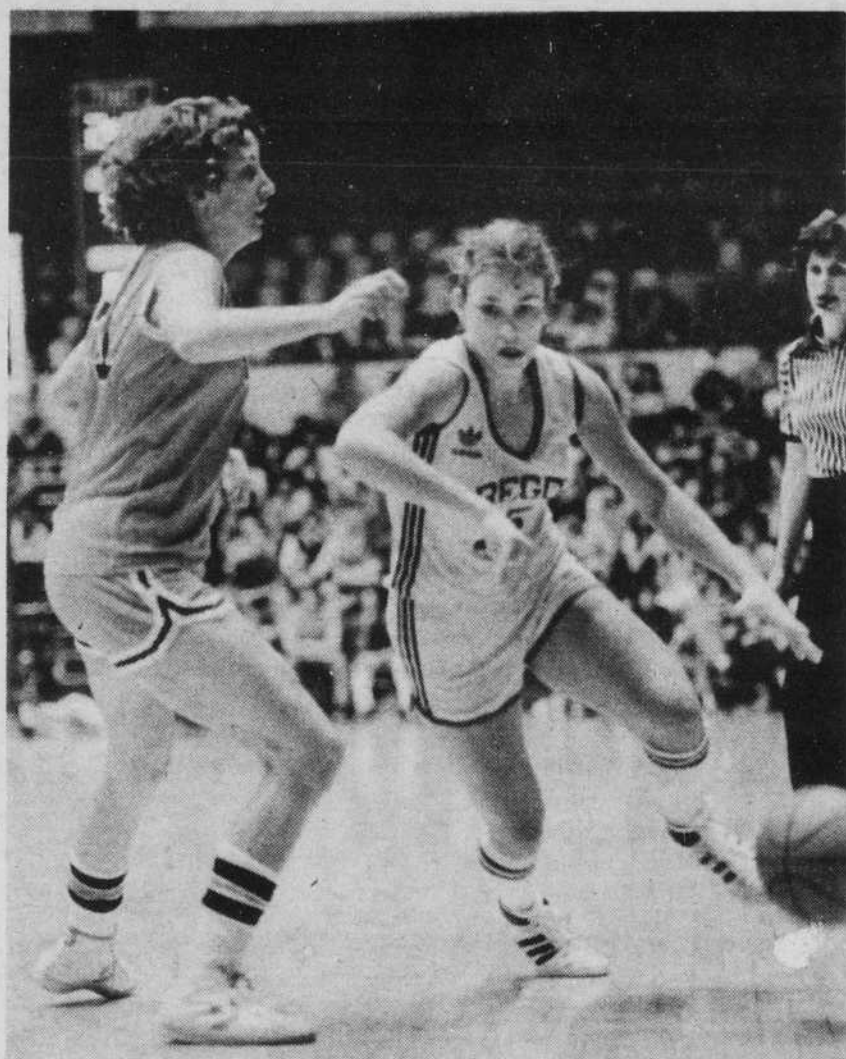


Photo by Steve Dykes

The women's game of today is faster-paced than its ancestors.

the back passes, the fast break and zone defense have found their way into women's basketball.

And thanks to Title IX, in 1978 Heiny gave one of his first full-ride scholarships to All-American candidate Bev Smith.

"It was a good investment," he says.

Oregon was soon in the national rankings and the seats at McArthur Court began to fill.

For Oregon's match against the Korean National team in 1979, 6,000 fans gathered to watch the Ducks squeeze by the Koreans, 68-67.

When Heiny saw the people, he realized women's basketball at Oregon had arrived.

One thing remains, he says, and that is to sell out Mac Court — possibly this year when the AIAW Championships are held at the University.

"If we get in the finals it'll be full."

By Bob Leung

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