

# Sports



Emerald Photo

Debbie Adams, the second leading scorer in Oregon history has returned to Eugene to serve as an assistant coach.

## Ex-Duck guard back as assistant coach

By Doug Levy  
Of the Emerald

It may not have seemed unusual when Debbie Adams walked across center court and handed her Taiwanese counterpart a gift during Oregon's game with the Republic of China on Nov. 8. It was something that the former Duck had often done in her star-studded career for the Ducks.

But this time, Adams was doing the exchanging as an assistant coach.

Adams is back at Oregon after four years as a forward for the Ducks and a year hiatus as a graduate assistant coach at the University of Washington.

"I am happy here," she says simply. "I know the system — I played under Elwin (Heiny) for four years, and I don't think he's doing anything differently than before." Adams says the words quietly, thoughtfully.

That's because for Adams, actions have always spoken louder than words. As a prep star in Seattle, she excelled for four years in basketball and track. At Oregon, she became a Kodak All-America nominee, piled up enough points to become second on the all-time scoring list, and, by pouring in 38 points in a game against Seattle University her junior year, established herself as the UO single game scoring record-holder.

Oh, she also ran a little track, too. Well, just enough to set a school record in the 100-meters and earn AIAW All-American honors in 1979.

It is worth noting Adams' track achievements, because when she came to Oregon in 1977, she came via a scholarship in track, not basketball. "I was recruited for track and got a track scholarship," she remembers, "but I wanted to play basketball, too." Indeed she did, and she did so well in basketball that she quit track after her sophomore year to concentrate solely on basketball.

For sheer athletic ability, few can compare to Adams, yet she remains humble about her accomplishments. Pressed to name some of her honors and some sprint times, she chuckles. "I don't know — I just don't remember any of that stuff," she

says.

Following the 'high' of competition, Adams has now settled for coaching, and she admits the transition has not been easy. "Oh yeah, sure I want to play sometimes," says the 24-year-old. "It's a big change, especially within one year's time."

Although she can't play for the 1982 Ducks, Adams is pleased with the team she sees. "It's probably one of the better teams they've had. We have a lot of new kids playing at a higher level than they're used to, so we've got to build around players like Alison (Lang)," she adds.

This year, unlike years past, Oregon is not predicted to be the premiere team in the Northwest. That label has been pinned on an up-and-coming Oregon State team. Still, Adams feels this team compares favorably to the Oregon teams she played on, and she's confident the Ducks can retain their Northwest supremacy.

"My senior year everyone had played in college a couple of years. This year, there are a lot of kids who are new to this kind of ball. That's the only difference," she says. Regarding the team's chances, she says, "We're not ranked because we lost Bev (Smith), but we have everyone else back. I think we'll be very good."

Eventually, Adams wants to switch from coaching to social work (she graduated from Oregon with a degree in community service and public affairs). "I'd like to go back and get my masters, and then go into social work — that's my goal." With a laugh, she adds, "Really, coaching is a lot like social work."

One reason Adams is back in Eugene is the unique feeling the town has for women's basketball. "The basketball program here is different," she says. "The community is really behind the team, and there are always a lot of people at the games. It's nice."

Adams stresses that coaching was an important ingredient in her return also. "I'll probably still be coaching in a few years," she says. "I'm not coaching just to coach, but because I enjoy doing it."

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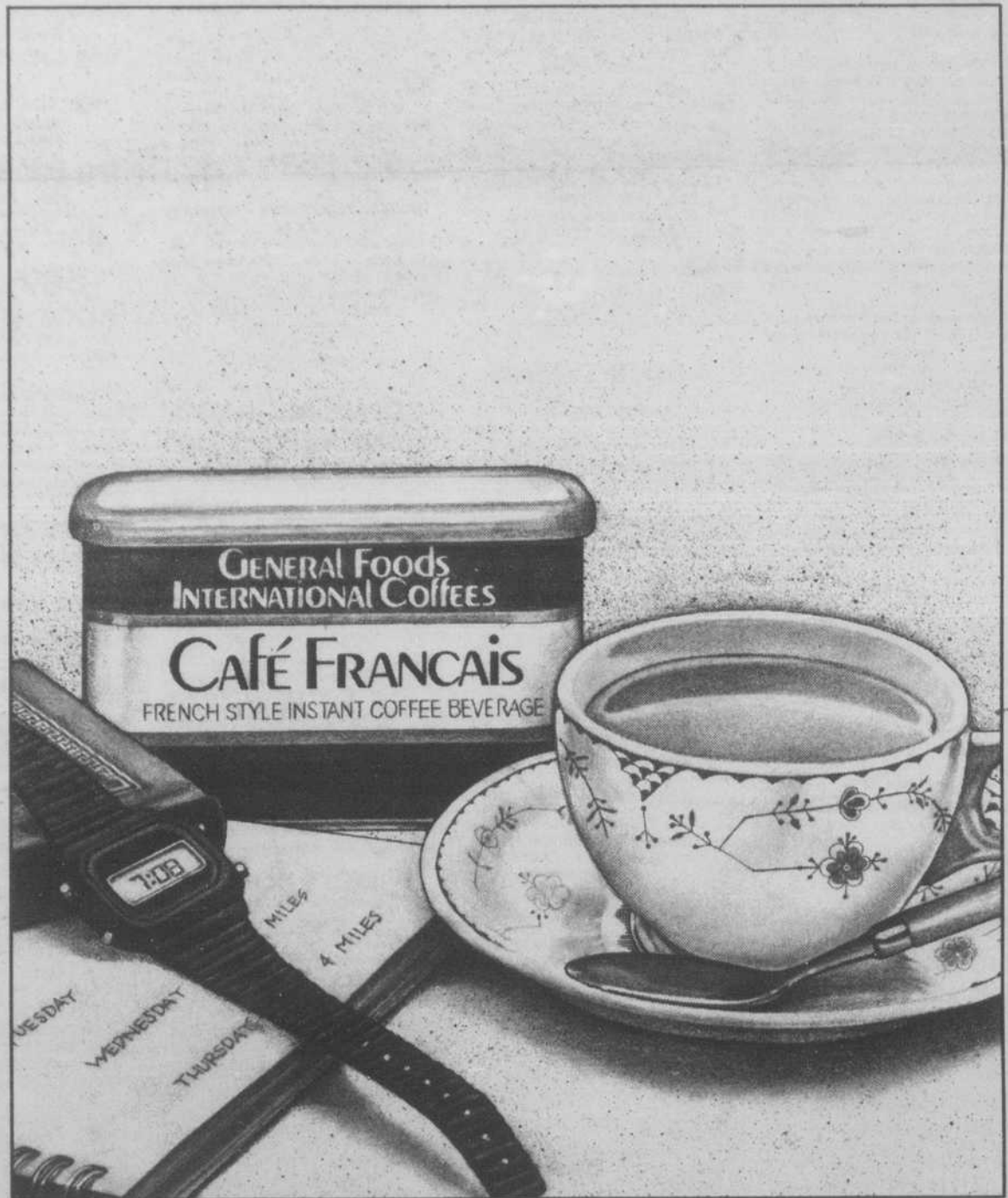
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