

Sports

Basketball finds new assistant

By Brett Bayne
Of the Emerald

There will be a new face in McArthur Court this year as the Oregon basketball team takes to the hard wood floor.

No, it is not a junior college transfer or a redshirt freshman.

The new face belongs to Jay John, who replaces DeHaven Hill as men's assistant basketball coach.

John comes to the Ducks without a lot of division 1 coaching experience, but what he lacks in experience he makes up for in enthusiasm and love of the game of basketball.

John graduated from the University of Arizona in 1981 with a degree in biology.

Before his stint at Arizona, John tasted college basketball as a player at Northern Arizona University.

"After that year I realized that other athletes were bigger and stronger than I was," John says. "But I still wanted to be involved with basketball."

At Arizona, John continued his love for the game by getting into coaching.

He started at the junior high school level. After graduation he was hired as the freshman coach at Tucson's Southpoint Catholic High School, and from there the road to Oregon has been a fast one.

"I don't consider coaching as work," John says. "I love basketball and I love to teach kids."

After three years at the high school level, John moved with his former high school coach to Jamestown College in New York.

After two years at Jamestown, John was hired in August by Oregon to assist head coach Don Monson.

John was more than happy for the opportunity to coach in division 1 basketball, and also looked forward to returning to the West Coast.

"It is much more of a relaxed atmosphere out here (on the West Coast)," John says. "Plus the Pac-10 conference is a great basketball conference."

The Ducks coaching staff will be tested this year as many preseason polls have picked Oregon to finish last in the Pac-10.

John is not one to believe everything he reads, however.

"Monson has been a winner everywhere he has coached," John says. "His reputation is respected around the nation."

John is happy to be under the tutelage of a coach like Monson.

"When I was in New York his name was often mentioned," John says. "His teams are so well respected because they are so well prepared for every game."

Look for the Ducks to fastbreak more this year and to throw full court pressure at an opponent more often.

John is excited to see the famed McArthur Court at its best.

"I'm excited to see if this place gets as loud as it is supposed to get," John says.

Ducks last in the Pac-10? Not if Jay John has anything to say about it.



Jay John



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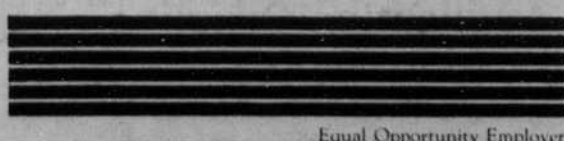
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