

Basketball

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extremely important to the Ducks.

"He's our catalyst offensively and defensively with his quickness and his jumping ability," Monson said. "He's going to be a leader-type kid out on the floor — He's the kid that's going to get us going and keep us going."

"He's very cognizant of his role and his value and the things expected of him," Monson said. "Sometimes that's not always fair, but that happens with being the best player."

Taylor will be joined in the backcourt by Osborn, who finished the season with a 10.8 scoring average last year.

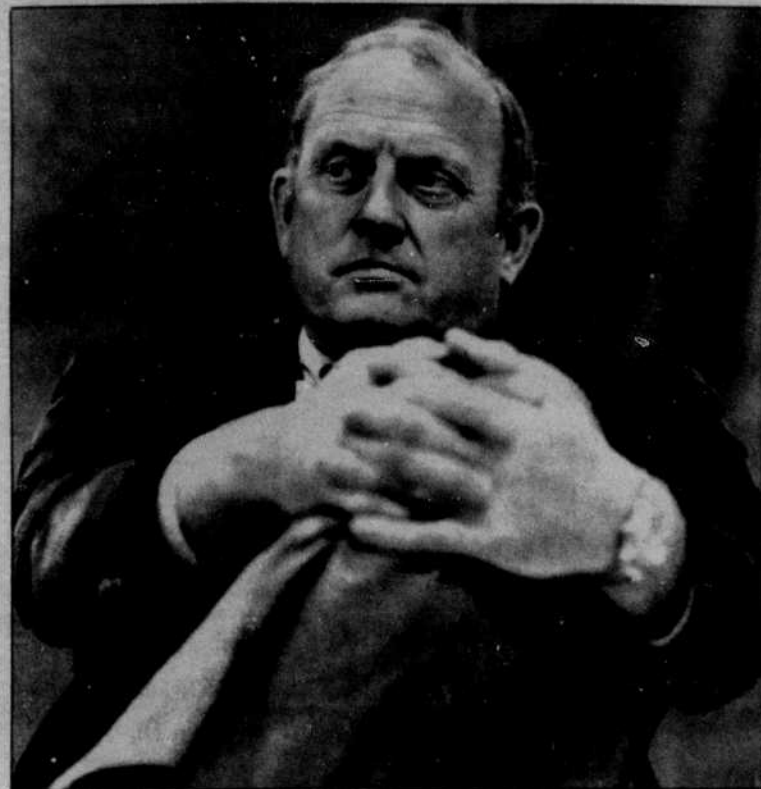


Photo by Mike Wilhelm

Head coach Don Monson sits back in anticipation to see how the Ducks handle their season-opener tonight at McArthur Court against the Norwegian National Team.

Oregon will have to come up with stellar performances from everyone in order to stay on the positive side of the ledger in the powerful Pac-10.

"Seven of the ten players who were named all-league last year are back," Monson said of the individual talent.

Last spring the University of Arizona was picked to repeat as Pac-10 champion, but with its loss of Steve Kerr because of a knee injury, most people are now picking the University of California at Berkeley to command the conference, according to Monson.

"I would say California, Washington, UCLA and Arizona are probably right now the people to pick, and the rest of us kind of are in a hat to draw out," Monson said.

If Monson were to single out season team goals, one would be to establish a winning tradition at home.

"One of the things that has bothered me since I've been here is that we haven't established enough winning at home...but we're getting closer to this."

Another goal, perhaps more important, is to make steady improvement as the season develops. This goal definitely has merit considering the addition of a Pac-10 post-season tournament this year.

"Year in and year out one of the reasons a (post-season) tournament is always good for the

Oregon's and other schools is because no one can dominate this league...It gives you (as a coach) that chance to bring them (the team) along and play your best at the end of the year going into the tournament."

The Ducks' definitely have a winning potential going into the season, and if certain situations develop the way Monson hopes they will Oregon may surprise some people before the year's end.

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