

Hoopster Coffey shoots for more improvement

By Ashley Conklin
Emerald Contributor

Improvement in all phases of the game has been the goal of Duck center Brett Coffey this season.

"I want to have better stats than last season," the 6-foot-8 senior said, "and I want the team to improve on our number of wins from last season and reduce our number of losses. We want to get into another (post-season) tournament."

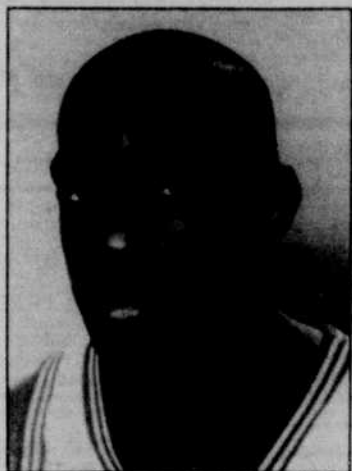
After averaging 6.1 points and 4.6 rebounds as well as leading the team with 29 blocked shots last season, Coffey has become more comfortable in his second season under coach Don Monson.

Coffey leads the team with 6.4 boards per game and 21 blocked shots. He is hitting at a .537 clip from the floor and averaging 7.3 points a contest, both good enough for second on the team.

"This year I've had a chance to help break in the new guys instead of the other way around, like last year," Coffey said.

Evidence of Coffey's improvement has come in several forms this season.

Coffey netted 21 points and hauled in 12 rebounds in a home win earlier this season against Whitworth and had 14 points and 14 boards against Boston University. Coffey was one of the few bright spots in the Ducks' 97-66 loss to UCLA last Thursday with 15 points



Brett Coffey

and nine rebounds.

Although spending time working on low-post moves with teammate Randy Grant this past summer, Coffey feels there are certain aspects of his game he must polish for the

Ducks, 6-6 overall, 1-1 in the Pacific-10 Conference, to improve on last year's 16-14 mark that landed Oregon in the National Invitational Tournament.

"I probably need to improve my shooting more than anything," he said.

"It was really important to win last Saturday's game against USC because we never lost two straight conference games last season," he added. "We think we have one of the top five teams in the league and we hope to finish the season there. Not having any conference wins would have really hurt us."

After last week's win over the Trojans, the Ducks head to the Valley of the Sun for games Thursday at Arizona State and Saturday at Arizona.

The Ducks must control the tempo against the Sun Devils and try to contain the Wildcats' Sean Elliot, a first team All-American last season, according to Coffey.

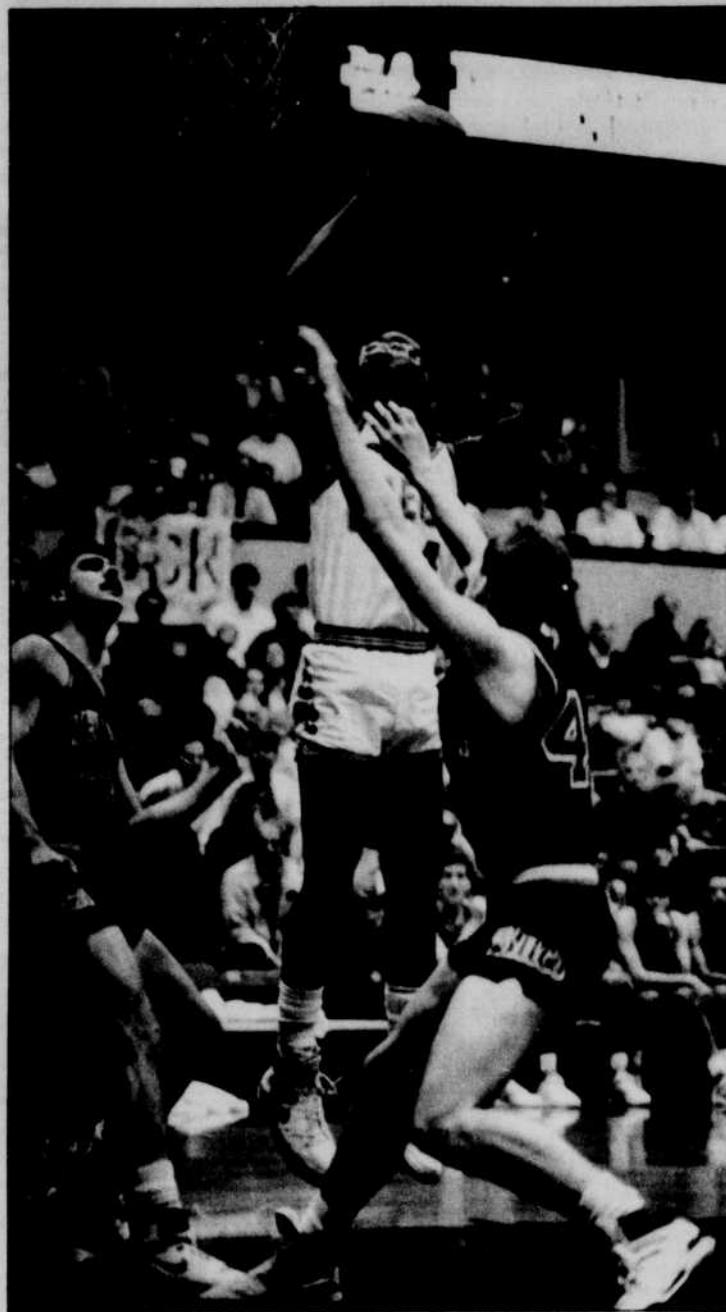
"Arizona State is a good transition team and we have to get them in a half-court game," he said. "The key to stopping Arizona is stopping Sean Elliot."

Arizona State averages 83.5 points per game, second in the conference. Meanwhile, Arizona has a good supporting cast to Elliot, led by 6-foot-9 Anthony Cook, who Coffey will likely match up against.

"Cook is a good rebounder, so I have to keep him off the boards," Coffey said. "He's got those long arms and an inch of height on me."

Coffey, a leisure studies major, began his collegiate career at Barton (Kansas) County Community College, and hopes to continue playing after leaving Oregon.

"I want to get my degree and then look at going overseas to play (professional) basketball."



File photo

Oregon center Brett Coffey, a proven shot blocker (Coffey has swatted away 29 shots this season), can put the ball in the hoop as well, averaging 7.3 points a game this season.

Women will face Wildcats, Sun Devils in home games

The Oregon women's basketball team returns to the friendly confines of McArthur Court this weekend for the first time in more than three weeks to play a two-game home-stand with Arizona and Arizona State.

The Ducks (9-3 overall, 1-0 in the Pacific-10 Conference) will be looking for their sixth straight win at The Pit (4-0 at home this

year), and with a sweep will equal their 3-0 conference start of 1986-87.

Arizona, the Ducks' opponent on Friday, will be looking for its first road win of the year in six tries while the Sun Devils bring a 2-2 road record to Eugene on Saturday.

Still, Oregon coach Elwin

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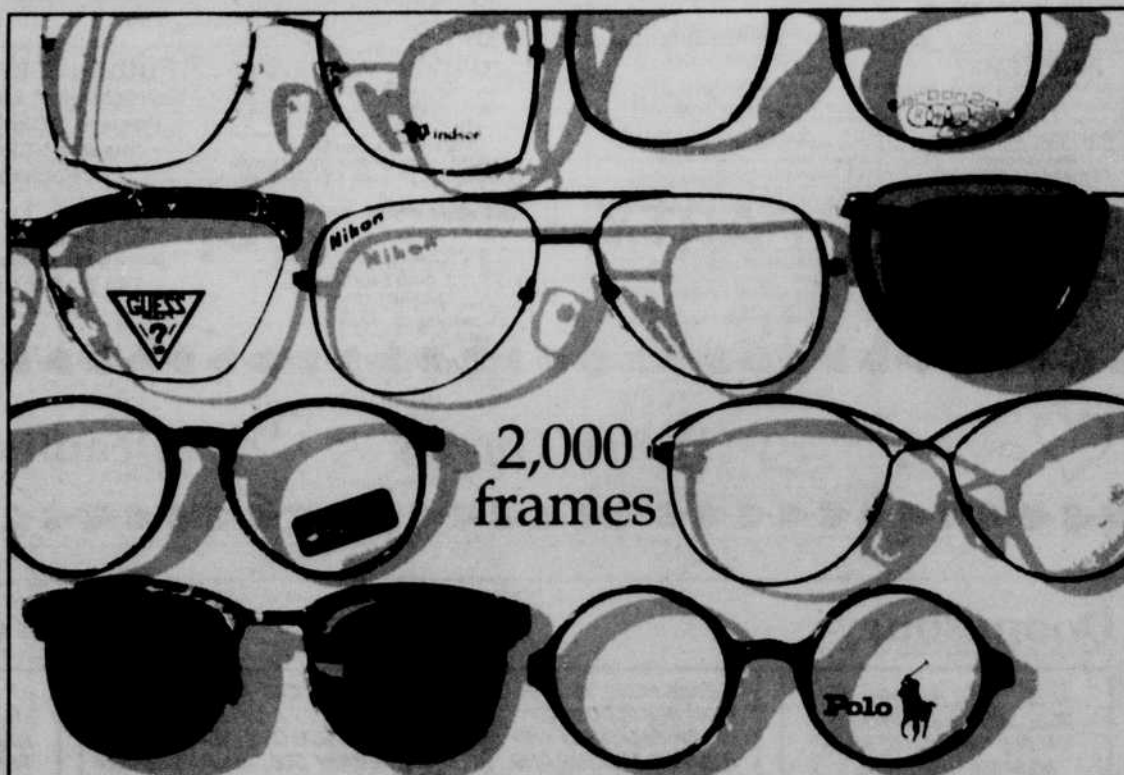
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