

At 22, Camp takes on challenge of new sport

By Jack Millikin
Emerald Sports Reporter

"Players don't break into the game at your age. They retire."
— Wilford Brimley to Robert Redford in "The Natural."

Learning an entirely new system is no simple task for a rookie athlete. As a case in point, the 1988-89 Oregon women's basketball team includes no fewer than three first year players, and all have had their share of difficulties.

Backup center Marnie Smith has been slowed by a stress fracture and forward Staci Wallenborn, although she has started all but six of the Webfoot's first 18 games, is no stranger to the trials and tribulations of inexperience and inconsistency.

During a practice last week, as the team engaged in a five-on-five drill, the rookie in particular was Monica Camp. With tired legs and a lack of defensive position, Camp was dismissed from the drill to run a "down and back," one of head coach Elwin Heiny's most common disciplinary measures, for the fifth time of the day.

"It's hard not knowing the system, and having to learn the plays — having to learn everything basically," Camp said.

Though Camp's ordeal is nothing out of the ordinary for a first-year player, her situation is. While Smith and 18-year-old Wallenborn are the youngest players on the team, the 22-year-old Camp is the team's eldest.

Those who have followed the Duck women's volleyball team in past years may be somewhat familiar with the 5-foot-6 Camp, who, after completing a four-year stint as a defensive specialist with the women's volleyball team, begins her first season as a senior guard on the women's basketball team.

"I never really planned on playing basketball my fifth year, but Elwin (Heiny) approached me at a track meet last year and asked me if I would consider playing basketball," said the third-team All-Stater pick from Gresham's Barlow High School. "He kept

talking to me about it, trying to get me to come out. It was like they were recruiting me in a way."

"We knew she was a very good player (20.4 points per game) in high school," Heiny said of his decision to include Camp, who was also an outstanding prep track and field athlete (2:14 in 800m), on the 1988-89 roster. "She was here on scholarship no matter what, and we had a spot on the roster open. I figured we could use a player like that."

With her athletic prowess in high school, Camp received offers from various universities in each of the three sports she played.

"It was pretty much a tossup between basketball and volleyball," she said. "I knew track was out, because I didn't want to run for four or five years, and I thought I was just a little too short for basketball. Chris Voelz (1978-85) did a really good job of recruiting me for volleyball."

Thus far in the season, Camp has seen relatively little playing time, averaging only eight minutes a game for the 11-5 Ducks. As a result, her statistics have been far short of impressive (1.9 points a game, 0.7 rebounds, and a game high of five points).

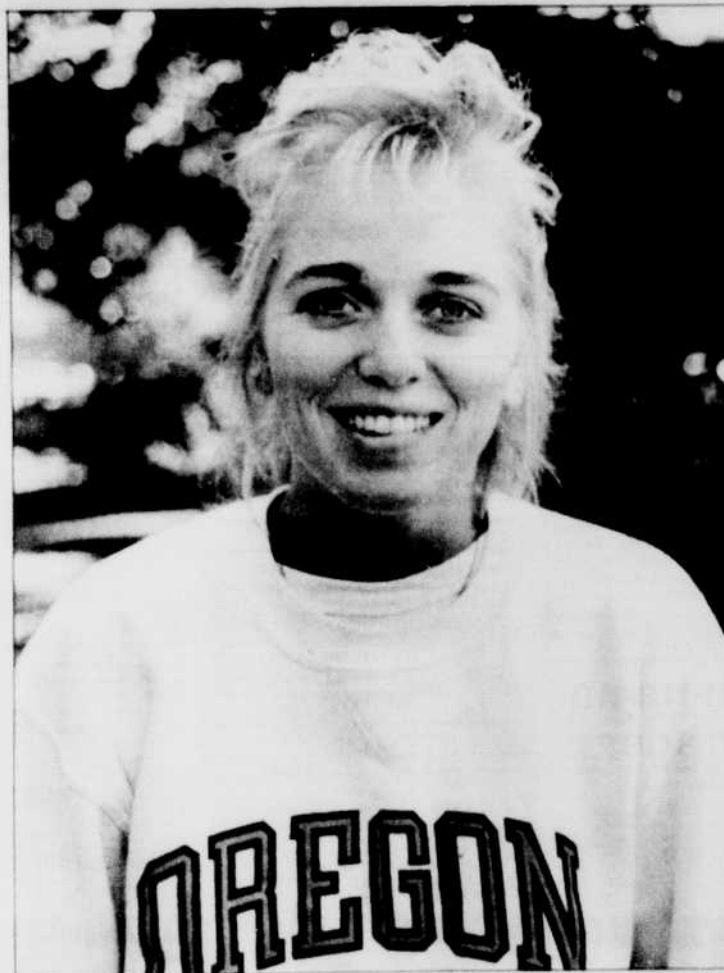
However, the former four-year starter in volleyball is quick to recognize her inexperience in her newest sport.

"I just have to keep telling myself that I'm in a whole new role," she said. "Most of the other girls have been playing for two or three years at the collegiate level, and here I am starting over again. I'm still learning. Maybe at the end of the year I will see more playing time."

"It's kind of frustrating in a way, because I have four years of Pac-10 competition in volleyball," she added. "Sometimes I wish the coaches would have more confidence in me."

"I can see she has been a little hesitant seeing how she hasn't played for such a while," Heiny said. "She has lacked a little in self-confidence and intensity, but we

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File photo

Senior Monica Camp is one of only a handful of two-sport athletes at Oregon, but finds herself struggling to learn an entirely new system for the Duck basketball team.

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Hot-shot gets award

This week's Oregon Daily Emerald Athlete of the Week award goes to a member of the Oregon women's basketball team.

Athlete of the Week

Freshman guard Tori Baker scored no points, committed three fouls and had a pair of turnovers in only three minutes of action in the first half of Saturday's game with California.

But it was Baker who came off the bench in the second half

to score 16 points and dish out three assists to help lead the Ducks to a 94-64 rout of the Bears.

The hot-shooting Baker siz-zled from the floor, hitting seven of 11 second half shots while committing no additional fouls or turnovers.

"I still say Tori Baker is probably the best shooter I have ever seen," coach Elwin Heiny said after the game. "I would put her up against any man in just shooting. In a shooting contest not beyond three point, but up to three point, she can shoot with anyone."

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