

# Heiny keeps Ducks going through trying times

By Ashley Conklin  
Emerald Sports Reporter

The events that have taken place during the 1989-90 season are ones that coach Elwin Heiny probably would have had a hard time imagining



## From The Sidelines

when practice began in October.

After leading the Oregon women's basketball team to a 22-10 record and winning the National Invitational Tournament championship last year, Heiny had high hopes for this season.

All five starters and everyone who contributed off the bench last season were back. Throw in all-star recruits Vanessa Selden and Kelly Blair and an NCAA bid seemed almost a sure thing.

But unbeknownst to Heiny, an injury here, and off-court problems there, have made the season anything but easy.

First junior Brooke Allen went down with a major knee injury. She has been lost for the season and likely will not play again.

Then problems begin to surface within the team. Players were unhappy with their playing time, or lack of. Sophomore Tori Baker, the third leading scorer on last season's team, transferred to San Diego State because of a lack of court time. Then, sophomore Cathy Gieck left school for the same reason.

The Ducks were getting solid play from seniors Stefanie Kasperski and Jacquie Semeniuk, and Selden gave Oregon its first true point guard in years. But just before a road trip to Washington two weeks ago, things started to sour for the Ducks again.

Sophomore back-up Marne Smith was becoming a solid force off the bench before suffering a severe ankle sprain. Vonda Anderson and Staci Wallenborn were later suspended for the Washington series.

Smith and Wallenborn have since returned, but Anderson — who sat out last year because of academic deficiencies — was suspended for the remainder of the season for continual violation of team rules.

Heiny has held the Ducks together and Oregon appears headed back to postseason

play.

After last Saturday's game with UCLA, the Ducks are 5-2 in the Pacific-10 Conference and 13-5 overall. Heiny figures a third place finish in the Pac-10, a conference dominated by second-ranked Stanford, and a good overall record is enough for a postseason berth.

Heiny doesn't get the recognition he deserves as a coach, largely because women's basketball isn't in the limelight the way men's hoops are. However, in Heiny's 13 previous years at Oregon, the Ducks have failed to reach post-

season play only three times. His winning percentage, including this year's record, is .718.

Give Heiny his due. With the turmoil Oregon has gone through this year, it would have been easy for the Ducks to fold the tent. The fact that they haven't is a tribute to Heiny's coaching.

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On the men's side of things, it's strange what a difference a year makes.

The Ducks fell on hard times and finished 8-21 last season. A lot of people were calling for the firing of coach Don Monson, a year after Oregon had made it to the second round of

the NIT.

Few people expected the Ducks to do much of anything this season, but with point guard Terrell Brandon bringing new life to the team, Oregon finished the first half of conference play in the upper-half. And at 10-8 overall, Oregon has a good chance to go back to the NIT.

Along with Arizona's Lute Olson, Monson is the dean of Pac-10 coaches, in his seventh year at Oregon. And let's face facts, it's not easy for Monson to recruit at Oregon.

McArthur Court is not exactly one of the most glamorous basketball arenas, and with powerful Oregon State up the road, the Beavers get most of the top in-state players every

year.

That has changed since Monson came to Oregon. In 1984, Beaverton's Anthony Taylor, the prep Player of the Year, came to Oregon. Brandon, and freshman Aaron Johnson, were the last two prep Players of the Year, and Monson has already signed Beaverton's Jordy Lydon, widely considered the top high school player in the state.

The future appears bright for the Ducks as only three players graduate and four starters return next season. Many people thought Oregon had little or no basketball future after last season.

For those who thought Monson should be gone after last season, he's proven them wrong.



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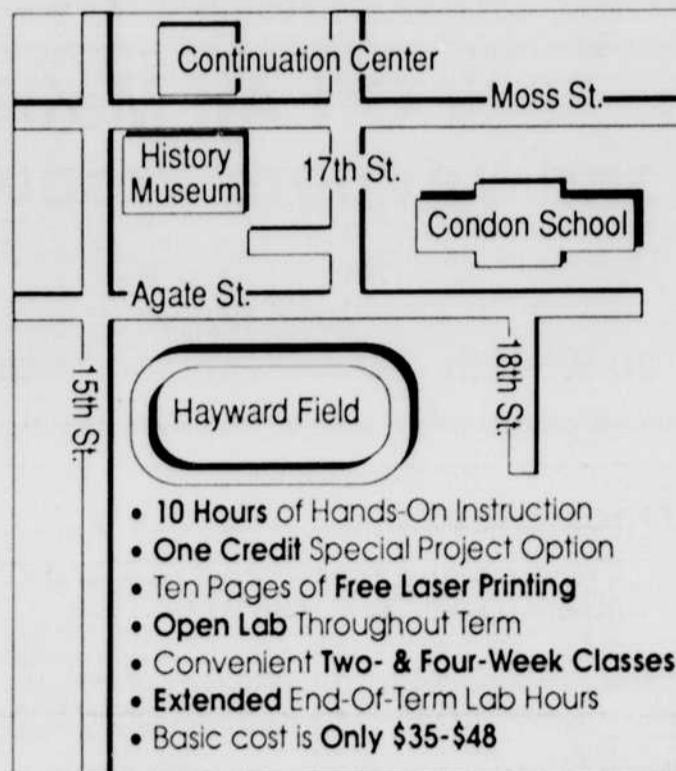
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