

Men to face Lobos in NIT opener

By Tracy Sumner
Emerald Sports Editor

The Oregon men's basketball team, picked by most "experts" to finish last in the Pacific-10 Conference this season, added another page to its 1989-90 resume Sunday with an invitation to the 1990 National Invitational Tournament.

The Ducks open tournament play Friday at 7:35 p.m. MST with New Mexico in Albuquerque's 17,128-seat University Arena, the site of the Ducks' 78-59 second-round NIT loss to the Lobos two years ago.

"(Oregon coach) Don Monson and his basketball team has done a job that deserves post-season play," said Oregon Athletic Director Bill Byrne. "I'm delighted to be in the NIT, but we face a real challenge going back to The Pit."

Monson said he was disappointed that his team didn't get a first-round home game, but still pleased with the tournament invitation.

"I'm pleased for our players that they will be involved in post-season play," Monson said. "Obviously, we wish it could have been at home because of our crowd and the fact that it's finals week."

"That's a little disappointing, but we've been talking

about a post-season tournament for a long time and we're looking forward to it," he said.

Oregon endured one of its worst basketball seasons in school history last year when it finished 8-21 on the season and way out of post-season play.

But the Ducks, behind the play of sophomore guard Terrell Brandon as much as anything, finished 15-13 overall this year with a conference mark of 10-8.

It will be the third NIT appearance for Monson in his seven-year tenure at Oregon. In 1984, Monson guided the Ducks into the tournament, where they lost in the first round to Santa Clara, 66-53.

Monson's Ducks beat the Broncos 81-65 in the first round of the NIT in 1988 before losing to New Mexico in the second round.

Brandon shared Monson's disappointment in not getting a home game for the tournament, but still was happy about the team's selection.

"I'm a little disappointed we didn't get a home game," he said. "I think the fans here deserve it. The support we get here from the students and from the community is great."

"I feel really good about it, though," Brandon said. "Post-season play is a goal we set at the beginning of the

year and we've done it.

"We're very happy at this time," he continued. "No one expected us to win any games in the Pac-10, but we're going to the NIT."

New Mexico, which plays in the Western Athletic Conference, finished 17-12 this season and will be appearing in its seventh straight NIT. Last season, the Lobos lost in the NIT quarterfinals.

The Lobos are led by 7-foot-2 junior center Luc Longley, an all-WAC pick, averaged 19 points, 9.4 rebounds and 3.5 blocks this season. Included in those numbers are a pair of 31-point outings and two 15 rebound games.

New Mexico and Oregon were similar this season in that they both were almost unbeatable at home, but struggled on the road. The Lobos were 14-3 at University Arena and 3-9 on the road. Oregon was 10-2 at McArthur Court, 3-9 on the road.

The Ducks know it will be tough, but they welcome the challenge.

"I think it's going to be a tough place to play," said senior forward Eric Dunn. "We've had trouble on the road, but as the season has gone on we have improved our play on the road."

National Invitation Tournament First Round

Wednesday, March 14

Marquette (15-13) at Penn State (21-8)
Tennessee (15-13) at Memphis State (18-11)
New Orleans (19-10) at James Madison (20-10)

Thursday, March 15

Massachusetts (17-13) at Maryland (18-13)
Baylor (16-13) at Mississippi St. (15-13)
Louisiana Tech (20-7) at Vanderbilt (16-14)
Wis.-Green Bay (23-7) at S. Illinois (26-7)
Stanford (18-11) at Hawaii (23-9)
Tulsa (17-12) at Oklahoma St. (16-13)
Southern U. (25-5) at Fordham (19-12)

Friday, March 16

Holy Cross (24-5) at Rutgers (16-16)
Oregon (15-13) at New Mexico (17-12)
Bowling Green (18-10) at Cincinnati (19-13)
Kent State (21-7) at St. Louis (17-11)
Creighton (21-11) at DePaul (18-14)
Long Beach St. (22-8) at Arizona St. (15-15)

Wrestlers take third

Oregon wrestler Joe Rissone took second in his weight class to lead the Ducks to a third-place finish in this weekend's Pacific-10 Championship meet in Bakersfield, Calif.

Five Oregon wrestlers will compete in the National Championships March 22-24 in College Park Md.

Rissone took second in the 190-pound weight class, losing to Arizona State's Rex Holman

in a 7-1 decision. Rizzone defeated Mike Buckley of Fullerton in the quarterfinals and Aaron Cantrell of Cal-Poly SLO in the semifinals Saturday to make it to the championship match.

Dan Vidlak took third in the 118-pound division with a 9-3 decision over Fullerton's Michael Grubbs in the third place match Sunday. Vidlak beat Joey Densby of Cal-Poly 12-2 in the quarterfinals, but lost to Bakersfield's Brian Higa in the semifinals to set up the third-place match.

Oregon's 142-pounder, Scott Glenn, took third in his division with a 4-0 shutout of Boise State's Tony Piva. Glenn won in the quarterfinals over Fresno State's John Sardi and lost in the semis to Steve Morris of Bakersfield by a 3-1 decision.

Curt Strahm took third in the 177-pound division, losing in the semis to G.T. Taylor of Arizona State before taking Mitch Mansfield of Boise State by an 8-1 decision.

Curt Strahm was the fifth Nationals qualifier for Oregon after a third-place win Sunday. Strahm won in the quarterfinals over Stanford's Trent Smith before losing in the semis to Fullerton's David Jones.

Arizona State won the team title for the sixth straight time with a score of 109.25 for the two-day competition. Cal-State Bakersfield was second with 90.5 points followed by Oregon with 42.5.

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