

# Ducks look to season with new, young team

By Robert Weber  
Emerald Sports Reporter

Coming off of a 17-12 season, the 1990 Oregon women's basketball team is supposed to spend much of the year trying to adjust to life without 6-foot-7, all-conference center Stefanie Kasperski.

But these Ducks seem too excited about their upcoming season and their new players to worry about trying to replace Kasperski or guard/forward Jacquie Semeniuk.

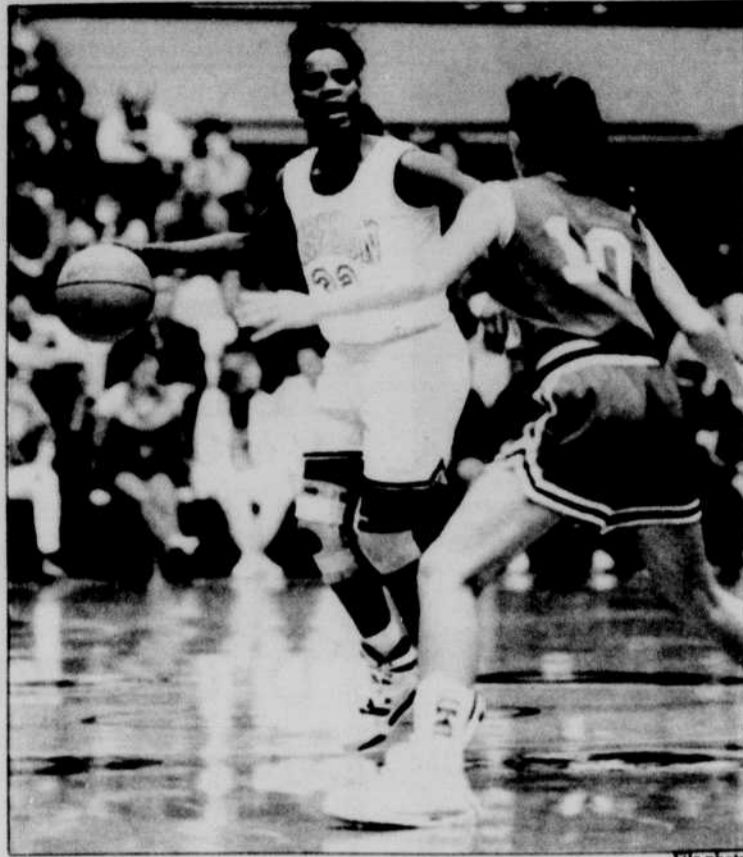
Duck Coach Elwin Heiny says that although Oregon lost over 50 percent of their scoring and rebounding from a year ago to graduation, he isn't expecting this to be a down season.

"You have to say rebuilding," Heiny said, "but at the same time, we're very excited. We're excited about our young players and the maturity of our older players. I think this team could be better than last year's, but I don't know if our record will reflect that."

Oregon returns three starters from last year's squad in senior Trina McCartney, junior Staci Wallenborn and sophomore Vanessa Selden, but will need a great deal of help from its freshmen to become a contender in the Pacific-10 Conference.

Freshmen Debbie Sporcich, Missy Stowell, Sara Wilson and Iesha Smith make up a recruiting class that is considered the best in Oregon's history, and one of the nation's best last year.

"Our young kids are very



Sophomore point guard Vanessa Selden will play an important role in the new-look women's basketball team this season.

athletic," Heiny said. "They run the court, rebound, play defense and are winning spots. They have looked outstanding in practice so far and will really be a great addition."

Heiny has been so impressed with Sporcich and Wilson that he has both of the 6-foot-3 posts inked in the starting lineup.

Placing Sporcich, who tossed

in 20 points and snared 12 rebounds in the Ducks' scrimmage on Sunday, and Wilson, who chipped in with 11 points and nine boards, in the starting lineup will mean a new look for some of Oregon's older players.

McCartney is expected to move from the post position she has played the past three

years to a wing while Wallenborn will be asked to play more guard than her usual forward spot this year.

The only starter not changing positions this year is Selden, the Ducks' point guard.

"I love to run," Selden said, "and I think that we will really speed up the game this year."

The Ducks will be tested throughout the season in the murderous Pac-10, a league that includes defending national champion Stanford and other powerhouses in Washington, USC and UCLA with Oregon picked seventh in the pre-season coaches poll.

Oregon opens its regular season with five of its first six games on the road against tough opponents, but Heiny isn't worried.

"The problem with those tough road games is how we cope with it," Heiny said. "We can have some setbacks along the way, the key is dealing with it and doing better."

The Ducks will take their first step of the exhibition season tonight as they host the Civic Advance Capitals from Canberra, Australia at 7:30 in McArthur Court.

"This is a team that with some early, unexpected success could just build," Heiny said, "and that could give the team a lot of confidence."

Add confidence to returning talent, solid newcomers and aggressive play and the Pac-10 will have a tough time keeping the Ducks in seventh place this year.

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fusion of Brandon (6-foot-0) and junior college transfer Kevin Mixon, (6-3) now a senior, as well as the inside play of Lucas, 6-7, and 6-11 freshman Bob Fife, now a seasoned sophomore.

"I told people after the 8-21 season that I was ready to give it to the sea lions but I still had good support from the administration," Monson said.

"The thing I enjoyed about last season wasn't so much that we won more than we lost or that we went to the NIT, but the way the kids responded to the coaching," he said. "They liked to play with one another and played with a little flair."

Brandon led Oregon in scoring with a 17.9 point per game average and Mixon added 12.6 points per game. Brandon also had the second-most assists in a season in Oregon history with 174, and Mixon set a school-record by canning 80 three-pointers.

Fife and Lucas had big years as well. Fife set a freshman school record with 38 blocked shots, and Lucas had 10.9 points per game and was fourth in the Pac-10 in rebounding at 8.5 per game.

The only concern for Monson then is to find a replacement for small forward Keith Reynolds who averaged 15.6 points a game and was a model of consistency last season.

The leading candidates for Reynolds' spot are 6-6 senior David Blair, a three-year letterman; and 6-6 freshman Jordy Lyden from Beaverton High School.

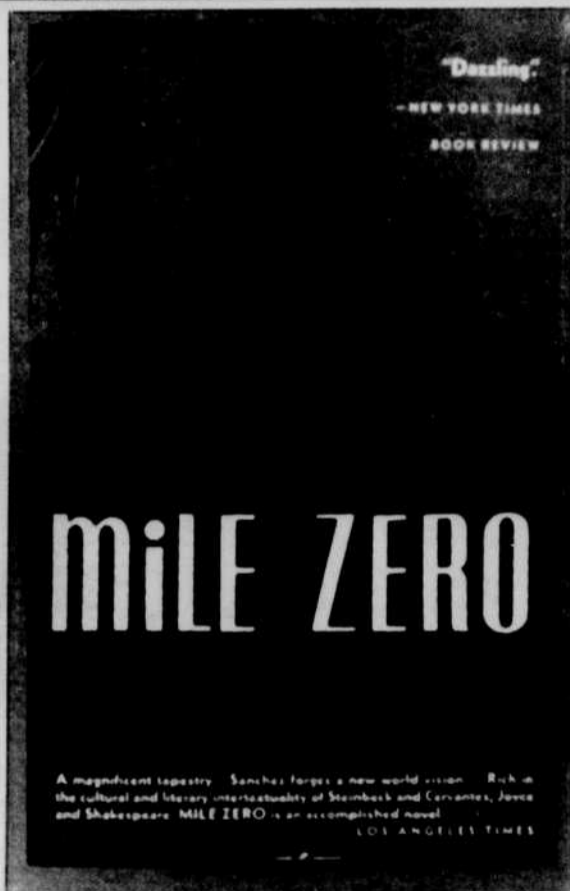
Both have looked good in scrimmages and practice, but Monson said he'll start Blair in Sunday's exhibition game with Brandt Hagen at Mac Court.

"I'll give David Blair the start on Sunday and see how he performs," Monson said. "He's always been deserving. He's a four-year letterman, a good team player and knows the system."

Monson also has some options with his bench this year with Blair or Lyden, seven-foot junior transfer Chuck Patterson and freshman guards Clyde Jordan and Orlando Williams.

The Ducks will be tested early with a tough non-conference schedule that includes one of last year's Final Four teams in Arkansas as well as Big Eight power Missouri, Alabama-Birmingham, Utah and Wisconsin.

After Oregon gets through November and December, it's the tough Pac-10 season, and then, the Ducks hope, an NCAA bid.



## MILE ZERO

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