

Ducks look for balanced attack as they face Washington, WSU

By Robert Weber
Emerald Sports Reporter

The up-and-down Oregon men's basketball team heads north this weekend to face the Washington schools on their first extended conference road trip of the year.

The Ducks, who are tied with UCLA for third in the Pacific-10 conference at 2-1 and 7-6 overall, meet Washington in Seattle Thursday night, followed by a Saturday afternoon date with the Cougars of Washington State in Pullman.

The Ducks are coming off a 84-76 Civil War loss at Oregon State last Saturday that saw inconsistency rear its ugly head once again. Terrell Brandon, the Ducks' 6-foot commander, was forced to carry most, if not all, of the team's offensive load.

Brandon, the Pac-10's leading scorer at 26.8 a game, hit for a career-high 38 points against the Beavers on 14 of 25 shooting from the floor and 8 of 10 from the line.

The only help Brandon received against Oregon State came in the form of 21 points and seven rebounds from Richard Lucas, Oregon's 6-foot-7 senior center.

Shooting guard Kevin Mixon continued to struggle, taking only four shots and finishing with five points while Bob Fife, the Ducks' inconsistent big man, played 31 scoreless minutes.

Good teams have balance, consistency, and are able to win on the road in conference play. Through the early part of the season, the Ducks have shown signs of the first two and have a chance to achieve the third this weekend.

"We have been talking it out," Oregon Coach Don Monson said, "but you can't get into games against teams like Oregon State and get no points from Fife and only a few shots by Mixon."

Rebounding is another area that Oregon needs to improve upon if they are to be successful.

Against the Beavers, Oregon was outrebounded 35-27, but more importantly, they were pummeled on the offensive glass.

On Thursday, the Ducks will be trying to make it two straight in the Hec Edmundson Pavilion when they face the Huskies (1-3, 9-4). Last year's 58-53 win in Seattle was Oregon's first since the 1981-82 season and should give this year's club some added confidence.

"I think it helps the kids that are playing now, like Brandon, Lucas, Mixon and Fife, that they did go in there last year and win," Monson said, "but this is a different year and they are a different team."

Dion Brown, a 6-foot-5 senior forward, leads the Husky attack for second-year Washington Coach Lynn Nance with 19.5 points and 8.8 rebounds a contest. Previously known only for his dunking ability, Brown has improved his all-around game and is now considered one of the conference's best performers.

"You have to know where Dion is on the floor," Monson said. "He's a good jumper, a good team leader and he is scoring more this year."

The road trip concludes on Saturday when the Ducks face the Cougars (2-2, 9-4). Kelvin Sampson, in his fourth year as head coach, has led Washington State to more success this season than they experienced in all of last season's 7-22 campaign.

The 1990-91 Cougars are an up-tempo team that relies heavily on perimeter shooting to win. Led by Eddie Hill, Terrence Lewis and Bennie Seltzer, the team is hitting 38 percent of their three-point attempts. This trio of shooters have connected on 63 of 145 (43 percent) bombs.

"They are a perimeter team," Monson said, "but their players have great individual skills. If you play them too tight they'll go right around you."

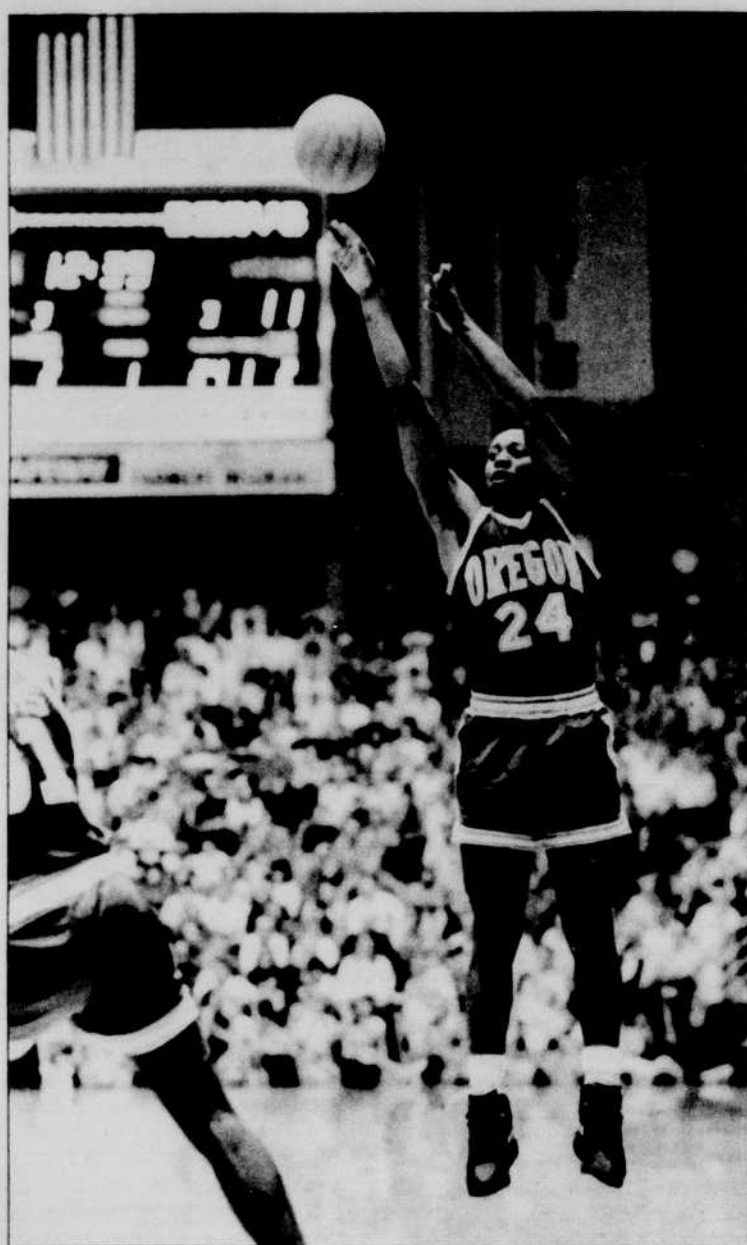


Photo by Sean Poston

Oregon needs off-guard Kevin Mixon to break out of a scoring slump if the Ducks are to win on the road against the Washington schools.

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