

STOUDAMIRE

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the jump down in competition that many people think it is.

"I don't think there's a huge difference," he said. "To me basketball is basketball. It doesn't matter where you are in the nation. (USC's Harold) Miner, Koefe, (UCLA's) Don MacLean ... those guys are good players wherever you go. They just haven't gotten the notoriety they deserve."

If the competition hasn't changed for Stoudamire, his role as a player certainly has.

"At Georgetown I wasn't in that situation where I needed to do the things I need to do here," he said. "My job was not to create things myself, but here I have a lot more responsibility. We don't have the Dikembes

(leading NBA Rookie of the Year candidate) or the Alonzos (Georgetown's All-American center).

"Being here is helping to make me a more complete player."

There's no question that since Collier and Lyden went down with foot injuries, Stoudamire has been carrying by far the heaviest offensive load for Oregon.

Stoudamire is averaging just under 20 points and five rebounds a game at Oregon, but more importantly, he has assumed the on-court leadership of the most inexperienced team in the Pac-10.

"It's tough to come in and offer leadership when you haven't been eligible," Monson said. "But the nature of his position, often playing point guard, that lends itself to the leadership role."

Despite having to play both guard positions and small forward in his short time in a Duck uniform, Stoudamire is relishing his leadership role.

"That's something I enjoy," he said. "I just take everything in stride. I'm willing to step up and take that challenge and hit that big shot or make that clutch free throw."

And although Stoudamire is doing just that — and putting up all-conference numbers at the same time — he is also extremely humble and sees room for improvement in his game.

"I've played all right," Stoudamire said. "I'm never really satisfied with my performance. I can play better, and as the season goes on I think I will play better. I'm just now starting to get back into the competitive groove."

STRUGGLE

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Ducks, averaging nearly 20 points a game. Unfortunately, he's getting little help as far as scoring from the rest of the team.

Sophomore forward Clyde Jordan is second in scoring at 10.8 a game and leads the team in rebounding with more than seven a game.

SKI TEAM

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Oregon, which won the overall trophy as well. Central's Nicole Pelletier won the race by more than four seconds.

"It was a very long and difficult course, and we were skiing against some of the best women in the nation," Swanson said. "Because we got three girls to finish both runs we held our standings. It was a really exciting day."

The women's team also fared well in Saturday's giant slalom, placing fourth behind College of Idaho, Central Oregon and Seattle University, whose result did not count because they are not in Oregon's division. Following immediately behind Binder and Swanson were sophomore Klindt, who placed 13th, and senior McNees, who placed 14th. Schwartz placed 22nd in a field of 38 women.

Such luck was not in the cards for the Oregon men's team, which finished a dismal seventh in Sunday's slalom after placing sixth in Saturday's giant slalom. Freshman Alan Siler's 20th was the lone finish for the Ducks, who placed second to last in front of Portland State on Sunday.

Oregon's Shane Graves, Mark Fisher and Rich Ravin failed to finish the first run, and Dan Laiblin did not finish the second run.

"It was a tough day for us," Oregon coach Kevin Wuepper said. "The men's courses were very tough to negotiate and a lot of people fell."

Oregon's top finishers Saturday were sophomore Jeff Jewett (21st) and senior Pat Byrne (27th). Ravin, Oregon's top giant slalom racer, blew out on the first run, and Siler was disqualified. Fisher, who had a solid first run, did not finish his second run.

Central Oregon's Eric Carlson won the giant slalom by more than two seconds Saturday to lead his team to a win. College of Idaho's Dave Rothman won the slalom Sunday. The Central Oregon and College of Idaho men's teams are both ranked in the nation's top ten.

Although the Oregon women's team sits in the top three in a division that includes Central Oregon, College of Idaho, Eastern Oregon, Lewis and Clark, Oregon State, Portland State and Southern Oregon, the men's team now finds itself near the bottom of the heap.

"I know we have the talent to be competitive," Wuepper said. "OU has some great skiers. All we have to do is stand and not mess up and the (Oregon) men will do very well in this next race."

Oregon will be hosting a two-day ski race this weekend at Willamette Pass with the slalom on Saturday and giant slalom on Sunday. Start time is 10 a.m. both days.

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