

Ducks to look for first road win in California

By Dave Charbonneau
Emerald Sports Reporter

The Oregon men's basketball team has not won many games this year, and even worse, the Ducks have yet to win a game on the road.

Oregon, 2-14 in Pacific-10 Conference play and 6-19 overall, hope to erase the traveling goose egg on a road trip to Stanford tonight and California on Saturday.

As a matter of fact, the last time the Ducks won on an opponent's court was last season's win at Berkeley, where they wrap up the season Saturday.

Oregon is 0-8 on the road, though the Ducks did have one victory this season away from McArthur Court — over East Tennessee State — but it was played in Japan, a neutral site.

The saddest part of the Ducks' road exploits has been the fact that not only are they losing, but they're losing big. In their eight road losses this year, the average margin of defeat is more than 24 points a game.

Oregon is averaging 59 points a game on the road compared with 71 at home. The Ducks give up more than 83 points on the road and 73 at the Pit.

Coach Don Monson said a number of things contribute to ineptitude on the road.

"I don't think you can pinpoint any one reason why we've struggled on the road," Monson said. "Some games we haven't shot well; some games we've had poor ball control; some games we haven't played good defense."

It's also very hard to win on the road when more than half of your starting lineup are freshmen. For the majority of the Pac-10 season, the Ducks have started three freshmen, and playing at places such as Pauley Pavilion at UCLA for the first time can cause some jitters.

Tonight's game with the Cardinal will not likely provide the Ducks with an elusive road victory. In the previous meeting between the two teams, Stanford crushed Oregon at Mac Court 78-57.

Cardinal forward Adam Keefe is having a spectacular year, averaging 25 points and 12 rebounds a game.

Saturday's game with the Golden Bears should be a fitting end to the season. Cal (2-14, 8-18) has had just as bad of a season as the Ducks, and Saturday's game may determine who gets the dubious distinction as the last-place team in the Pac-10.

In the opening game of the Pac-10 season, Oregon polished off Cal, 67-57, thus having a winning league record for a few hours.

Team praises Monson despite stats

By Jayson Jacoby
Emerald Sports Reporter

As the Oregon men's basketball team plays its final two games of the season tonight and Saturday, the end of the Don Monson era may be less than a week away.

Athletic director Bill Byrne said last month he would wait until the end of the season before deciding the fate of Oregon's nine-year head coach, who must win at least one of the two games to avoid his worst season ever in Eugene.

The justifications mentioned so far for Monson's removal are mainly economic. McArthur Court attendance this year was the lowest in a decade, and the basketball program may lose money, a bitter pill for the athletic department to swallow given its multimillion-dollar deficit.

There has also been widespread dissatisfaction with Oregon's 6-19 record and last-place position in the Pacific-10 Conference.

However, little mention has been made of any other justifiable reasons for Monson's removal.

This brings up an interesting point, and one central to collegiate athletics in general: Is winning percentage the only — or even the most — important goal for a college coach?

In the non-athletic realm, college is supposed to be the place where young adults gain both an education and the maturity necessary for entering the "real world."

But athletics have increasingly occupied a completely different world.

In this era of multimillion-dollar salaries for professional athletes, who are paid to win, the same obligation seems to have filtered down into the amateur ranks as well.

But while the programs that break the rules get all the publicity, the ones following the rules and striving to produce not just athletes, but adult student-athletes, are often forgotten.

Forgotten only until, it seems, they suffer through a dismal season.

Certainly Monson has not been successful this season. But if the opinions of those who should count the most — his players — are considered, Monson's importance to the University may become more obvious.

"Monson is a very honest and straightforward person," said David Brantley, who played for



File photo
Oregon basketball coach Don Monson's 6-19 record this season has put his future as the team's coach in question.

Monson in 1983-84 and is now a stockbroker in the San Francisco area. "He helped instill values in you as to the type of person you want to be and how to carry yourself."

Even more important, Brantley said, was that Monson accomplished what colleges are supposed to: preparing him for the rest of his life.

"He stressed that when basketball was done with, it was important to have something else to do with your life," Brantley said. "Don is a realist, and he knows that the majority of players he has won't play basketball beyond college. He wants them to be thinking about their future."

"I don't play basketball anymore, I'm a stockbroker. I don't watch many games on television. But I know what Don Monson did for me, and that's carried on to what I do now."

Richard Lucas, who finished his three-year Ore-

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