

Green probably best Oregon could get

Oregon has long been known as a university that breaks with tradition, especially when it comes to coaching changes.

Whereas some schools change their coaches about as regularly as the athletes change their gym socks, Oregon prefers to give a coach the benefit of the doubt and remain patient for success. From 1923 to the end of this season, there have been but eight men's basketball coaches. The shortest tenure, by both Bill Borchert and Jim Haney, was five years.

To be sure, an NCAA coach does not have the best job security. Only the rare few, such as John Wooden, retire with grace. Most are forced out or fired. It is the nature of the beast.

With Don Monson, Oregon finally had to make a choice. Athletic director Bill Byrne called it a tough decision, but in the face of a nine-year program with no substantial improvement and a 6-21 record this year, patience turned into lingering. It was time to move in another direction.

Some of the problems with the team were outside Monson's domain (untimely injuries) and some within (recruiting). But what probably cost Monson his job was the usually rabid Duck fans turning into empty seats at Mac Court.

Now enter Jerry Green.

The words used to describe the 48-year-old Green run in the same vein. Excellence, well-organized and well-prepared are just a few of his general characteristics. From what has been seen so far, the former Kansas assistant is a down-to-earth type, brooking no nonsense from his players and truly believing the word "student" is the most important in student-athlete.

Green is probably the best Oregon could have fetched, which in no way should be seen as any sort of intended slight of the new coach. Simply put, Oregon cannot hope to compete financially with the Pac-10 powerhouses. The money, especially in a state undergoing Measure 5 pains, simply isn't there. Green's \$200,000 salary — \$80,000 base, \$60,000 from radio and television, and \$60,000 from Nike — is nice, but does not put him in the higher financial echelon of coaches. The salary is fair and reasonable given the Oregon market and situation.

The new coach is not promising quick success, nor should he. It will take time to build the men's basketball team up to the point where it can compete in the top level of the Pac-10. Green seems to have the patience needed for the job.

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'CAN HE DO THAT?'

COMMENTARY

Russian reforms rest on U.S. aid

By Matthew Rendall

Since my return from Russia last spring, I have been repeatedly asked whether I found anything to eat. Since I obviously didn't starve, the shortest answer would be "yes." But since I lost 30 pounds in nine months, a more precise answer would be "yes, but not very much."

Until now, food shortages in Russia and the other republics of the former Soviet Union have attracted a very limited amount of U.S. aid. These efforts ought to be expanded.

However, they should not be expanded because millions of Russians are in danger of starving. Aid is needed to support democracy and prevent the return of a military-backed dictatorship.

Conditions in Russia are hardly ideal. From December 1990, meat, sausage, eggs, staples and cooking oil were all rationed in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). Other basic foods, like cheese and rice, were simply not to be found. When I traveled south to the ancient central Asian city of Samarkand, the souvenirs I brought back were noodles, matches, tomato paste and toilet paper.

What is more, an American survey taken in 1990 suggested the food supply in Moscow and Leningrad was better than in most of the rest of the Soviet Union. Even bread was rationed in 16 Russian territories during late 1991, according to the RFE/RL research report, and "food riots were reported in Moscow, Perm, Erevan, and elsewhere."

Finally, even when food was available, prices have rapidly gone up. Those who rely on small fixed incomes, particularly old people, are likely to suffer the most. They may not starve, but they will spend their golden years on a diet of bread, potatoes and tea. And, if they get sick, there's no guarantee that the doctor will have the medical supplies to treat them.

Russia, to be sure, is not Ethiopia. But for the outside world, this crisis is much more dangerous. Russia, after all, remains one of the world's great military powers. And while truly starving people seldom have

the energy to support ultranationalist extremists, angry and frightened people often do.

Robert Levgold, a leading expert on Soviet politics at Columbia University, observed last year in the *New York Times* that the current crisis in Russia is frighteningly similar to the instability in Germany after World War I. And we all know what happened in Germany.

The Communists, to be sure, are probably history. In all the months I spent in Russia, I only once met anyone who truly supported them. Both election results and my personal experiences suggest the majority of people really do believe in democracy. But for many Russians, probably most, Western-style democracy is less important than a Western style of living. A right-wing, even neo-fascist, dictator who could make the trains run on time might stand a real chance.

This being the case, we'd be crazy not to do everything we can to help Russia's reforms succeed. Any dictatorship that comes to power in Moscow will rely heavily on the armed forces for support. This means we can forget about further big cuts in the Russian military. Goodbye Yeltsin, hello Cold War.

Goodbye peace dividend, too. The amount of money being proposed as aid for the former Soviet Union is spare change next to the sums we will spend if Russia rearms. Between 1985 and 1990 alone, the United States spent roughly \$2 trillion on its military, largely in the name of making the world safe for democracy. Yet people like Pat Buchanan want us to believe we can't afford \$15 billion to \$20 billion, largely in the forms of loans, to help prevent a dictatorship in Russian from returning. Go figure.

Even if the U.S. government offered \$10 billion in outright gifts, the cost would still be some \$275 billion less than Bush is proposing to spend on the military in fiscal 1993. Yes, more money is needed for Ethiopia, and for people here at home. But if democracy fails in Russia, without our having raised a finger to help it, we will be spending lots more money on guns and bombers — not on schools, hospitals or unemployment benefits.

After dithering for months, the White House has finally decided to back a significant aid package. Some money will be spent on humanitarian aid; another fund will help Russia enact monetary reforms. They'll have a tough fight, though, against legislators who want to spend the money on more important things, like the Seawolf submarine.

It's for these reasons I hope to start a new group, provisionally called Aid to Russia, to lobby Oregon's congressional delegation for aid to democracies in the former U.S.S.R. Such a group could also do direct fund-raising for relief. There are a number of Western organizations, such as the Red Cross, that are distributing aid directly in Russia, and can make sure it gets to the people who need it. Aid for Russia will meet Tuesday, April 7 at 7:30 p.m. in the Janet Smith Cooperative, 1790 Alder St.

Russia's democrats have ended the Cold War and begun the transformation of their country. No amount of aid can ensure their reforms will succeed, but we can help give them a fighting chance.

Matthew Rendall, a former senior editor with The International Forum at Yale, studied at Leningrad State University for three semesters between 1989 and 1991.

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Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

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