

Ducks overcome 42-point performance for 71-69 win

□ Hartford star forward Vin Baker goes wild in a losing effort

By Steve Mims
Emerald Sports Reporter

The Oregon men's basketball team overcame an incredible performance by Hartford forward Vin Baker and defeated the Hawks 71-69 Monday night at McArthur Court in the Ducks' final non-conference game this season.

Baker scored 42 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, but he missed a three-pointer at the final buzzer that would have given the Hawks the victory.

Oregon had its chances to put the game out of reach late in the second half, but the Ducks missed four of their final six free throws and gave Hartford life until the end.

The Ducks looked like they would close the Hawks out with 11:24 remaining in the game when forward Clyde Jordan's lay-up gave Oregon a 59-46 lead, but Hartford refused to give up.

Baker scored seven consecutive points and assisted on a Shawn Ellison dunk that cut Oregon's lead to 59-55 with 9:03 left to play. The Ducks came back with four straight points, but Baker responded with eight consecutive points followed by a rebound basket by Ricardo Roderick that tied the game at 65-65 with 4:16 remaining in the game.

After Jeff Potter hit two free throws to give Oregon the lead again, guard Andre Collier hit a 12-foot jump shot to give Oregon a 69-65 lead with two minutes left to play.

Baker responded with a short bank shot, and after each team hit two free throws, the Ducks

led only 71-69 with 31 seconds left and Hartford had the ball. The Hawks chose to let Ayer take the shot with 10 seconds left, but his shot went off the iron and Hartford fouled Stoudamire with nine seconds remaining.

"Ayer went by their guard on the play before, so we let him try to do it again," Hartford head coach Paul Brazeau said. "His shot was a little off-balance, but he got a good look at the hoop."

Stoudamire could have put the game away, but he missed both free throws to give Baker a chance to win but his three-pointer went off the rim.

"I got a good shot, but I thought I may have been fouled," Baker said. "I can't expect to get a foul called 2,500 miles from home."

Forward Jeff Potter was the Ducks' main offensive force, scoring 16 points, hitting five of 10 shots from the field and all six free throws.

"I felt like my teammates were looking for me inside," Potter said. "Luckily, I was able to put some shots in."

Williams and Collier added 14 and 12 points, respectively, for the Ducks. Stoudamire had a tough night from the field, hitting only two of 13 shots and scoring six points, but contributed eight rebounds and seven assists for the Ducks.

Oregon struggled from the field all night, shooting only 42 percent for the game. The game was close throughout the first half because Hartford shot 54 percent from the field to trail only 38-33 at halftime.

"We hit a groove a couple of times, but there were periods when we seemed to go on vacation," Green said. "After half-

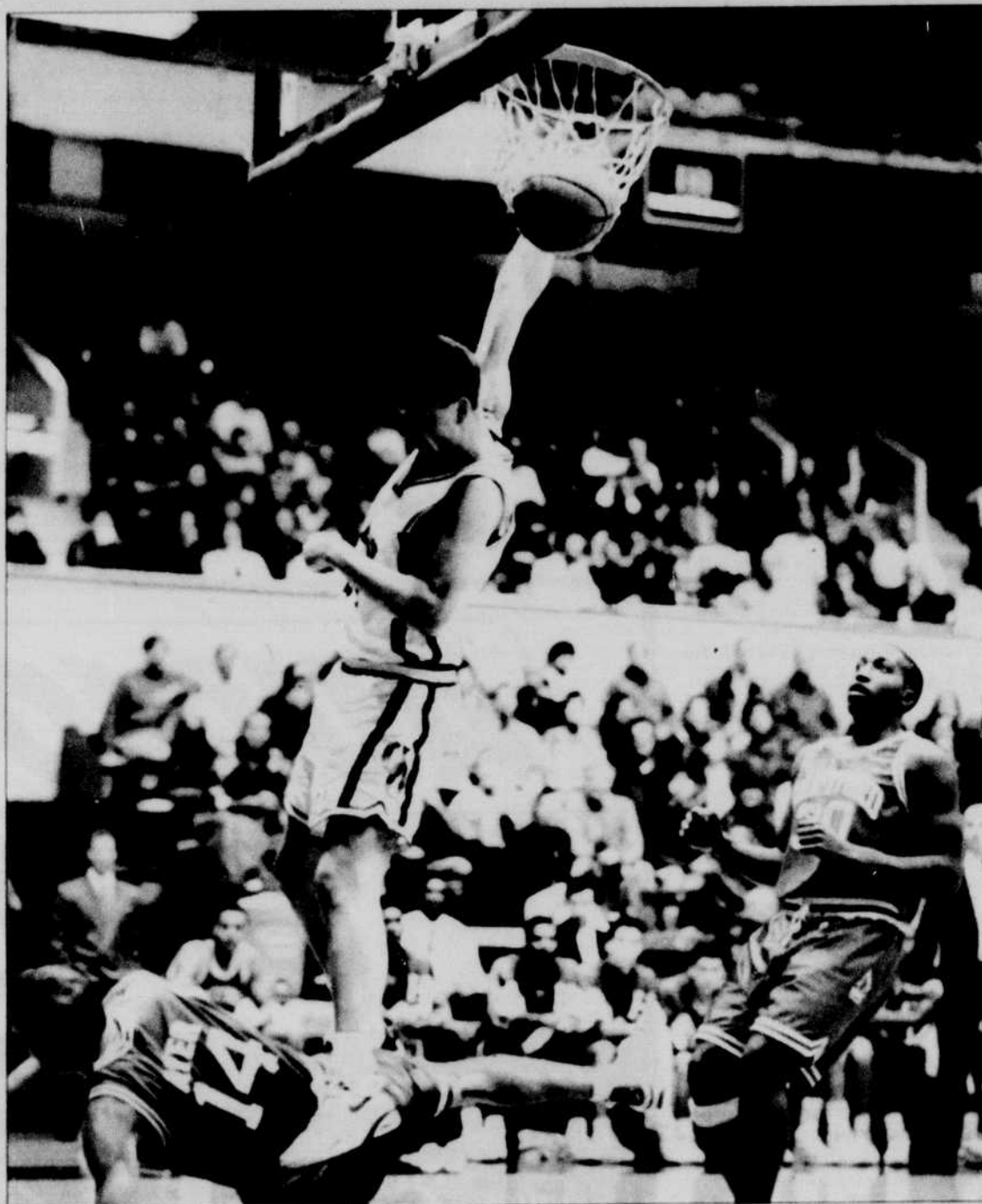


Photo by Michael Shindler

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Oregon forward Jeff Potter rams home two of his team-high 16 points in the Ducks' victory Monday.

College football 1992: Not the most memorable year

Some final random thoughts on the recently completed 1992 college football season:

Just Win Baby: I was as happy as the next person to see the national title stripped from Miami by Alabama on New Year's Day, but unfortunately, the result will probably only continue the unfortunate trend of college coaches and administrators ignoring the off-field actions of their players.

Most people consider Miami to be the dirtiest program in the nation, but if this is the case, Alabama isn't far behind. In fact, Alabama never would have won the national championship if head coach Gene Stallings would have put discipline ahead of winning.

Before this season started, Alabama's all-purpose superstar David Palmer was arrested twice for drunk driving. Stallings should have booted the 19-year-old Palmer off of the team immediately, but instead slapped him on the wrist and gave him a one-game suspension. Palmer went on to be a valuable contributor for the Crimson Tide and played a big part in its undefeated season.

Stallings, a coach known for his tough discipline, blew the call in this situation. There is no excuse for letting a youngster who has twice put his own life and the lives of innocent drivers in jeopardy because he didn't know when to say when.

Just Win Baby, Part Two: The recent firing of USC head coach Larry Smith and the subsequent hiring of John Robinson is another example of programs putting winning ahead of fair play.

All Smith did during his six years in Los Angeles was lead the team to a record of 44-25-3 against one of the toughest schedules in the country every year, graduate

his players and run a relatively clean program. His reward: a one-way ticket to the unemployment office.

John Robinson went 67-14-2 at USC, but his teams were ineligible for postseason play three times during his tenure because of NCAA rules violations. Obviously the Trojans are not worried about graduation rates and violations, just wins and losses.

Robinson will find the Pacific-10 Conference a lot different than it was when he left in 1982. Gone are the days when every top high school player in California dreams about suiting up for the Trojans. Instead, they look around the rest of the conference and the entire country for a school.

Robinson will surely find a quality running back for his system, but his student body left-student body right running game will not be the power that it once was. For proof, just look at the rushing defenses in the Pac-10 this year. Defenses are more prepared and more talented than they were in the past, and if Robinson thinks he can just give the ball to his running back and the victories will start coming, he is sorely mistaken. It will take a balanced offense to win the Pac-10 in the 1990s.

Top Conference: During the past season Pac-10 coaches were telling anyone who would listen that their conference was the best in the nation, but they failed to show the rest of the nation during the past week.

The Pac-10 went 2-4 during the postseason, with losses against teams from the Atlantic Coast Conference, Southwest Conference and Western Athletic Conference. Stanford was the most impressive Pac-10 school during the postseason, beating Penn State to finish with a No. 9 ranking in the final Associated Press poll, and Washington State struggled to beat Utah of the WAC.

While Pac-10 teams were falling, the Southeastern Conference made a major statement for being the best conference in the country. The SEC went 5-1 in bowl games, including three wins on New Year's Day. SEC teams pulled off victories over teams from the Big 10, ACC and Big East.

Wait Til Next Year: For those of you still drowning your sorrows after Oregon's collapse in the Independence Bowl, there is good news: Spring drills are just a couple of months away. This is when the 1993 Duck squad begins play, and there is reason to be optimistic.

The Ducks return 15 players who started most of the games in 1992, and a number of other players who played significant roles during the season.

On defense, the Ducks will lose Jeff Cummins, Joe Farwell and Eric Castle, three players who will be missed for their leadership as much as their talent. David Massey and Jeremy Asher should fill in well at line-backer for Farwell, and Chad Cota's ability to play both safety positions should make Rich Brooks' job of replacing Castle easier.

The biggest question mark is at defensive end, where Oregon has a lot of players ready to replace Cummins, but none have shown the ability to start in the Pac-10 yet.

On offense, the Ducks entire backfield and right side of the offensive line will return. The Ducks should have enough depth to fill out the offensive line, but the biggest question mark will be at wide receiver. Ronnie Harris and Anthony Jones are gone, but while Derrick Deadwiler returns at one receiver spot, nobody has stepped forward at the other spot.

The biggest returnee for the Ducks is kicker/punter Tommy Thompson, who will give the Ducks a potent weapon if he can forget the final three games of the 1992 season.

If Oregon can have another relatively injury-free season and a few players step up at key positions, the Ducks should be looking at another postseason bid in 1993.

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From the
Sidelines

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