

## By Scott Simonson

If the Oregon women's basketball team wants any more cupcakes soon, it will have to go to the bakery

The preseason is over. Gone are chances to play Weber State or Idaho State. Here are the open-ings of the Pacific-10 Conference season and UCLA and USC, two of the league's toughest teams.

The Bruins, who play Oregon at McArthur Court on Thursday at 7 p.m., and the Trojans, who come to Eugene for a game at 7 p.m. Saturday, each feature one of the nation's premier players.

UCLA. 4-4, has All-America forward Natalie Williams, who is averaging more than 22 points and 12 rebounds per game after tagging Rutgers for 35 points and 15 boards on Monday. USC, 7-1 and ranked 10th nationally. brings two-time All-America Lisa Leslie, who averages 20.6 points and 11 rebounds.

The two schools also give this year's Oregon team, 6-3, its introduction to the bigger teams and a more physical game that characterizes the Pac-10.

These teams probably have some of the best post players that we have come up against," Ore-gon head coach Jody Runge said. "I think we certainly have some of the best post players in the Pac-10 as well, so its going to be a matter of taking that defensive challenge for all of us.

Oregon has won five of its last six games. Debbie Sporcich has been hot lately, leading the Ducks in scoring and rebounding in the last three games and averaging 25 points and 10 rebounds during that time.

However, Sporcich hardly has been the only Duck playing well. and Runge said Oregon's balance should cause problems for its opponents.

The good thing about our team is that we have strengths on the inside and on the outside." she said. "People will have to try to take one or the other away. If they try and collapse on our big kids, our outside shooting will allow us to be successful.

'If we just realize what they're giving us and take advantage of that, then we can be successful."

Oregon shot better than 48 percent from the field during the preseason, but it will have to work to shoot that well this weekend, especially against a USC team that is holding its opponents to a .334 field goal percentage.

The Southern California schools feature pressure defenses that can cause major headaches. Runge said games against San Diego State and Texas-El Paso have given the Ducks some preparation for what they will see this weekend, but "there's nothing like the Pac-10."

And, of course, there's the matter of what to do with Williams and Leslie. Runge said each player will probably score her share of points. Against Williams, Runge said, the key is keeping her off the offensive glass.

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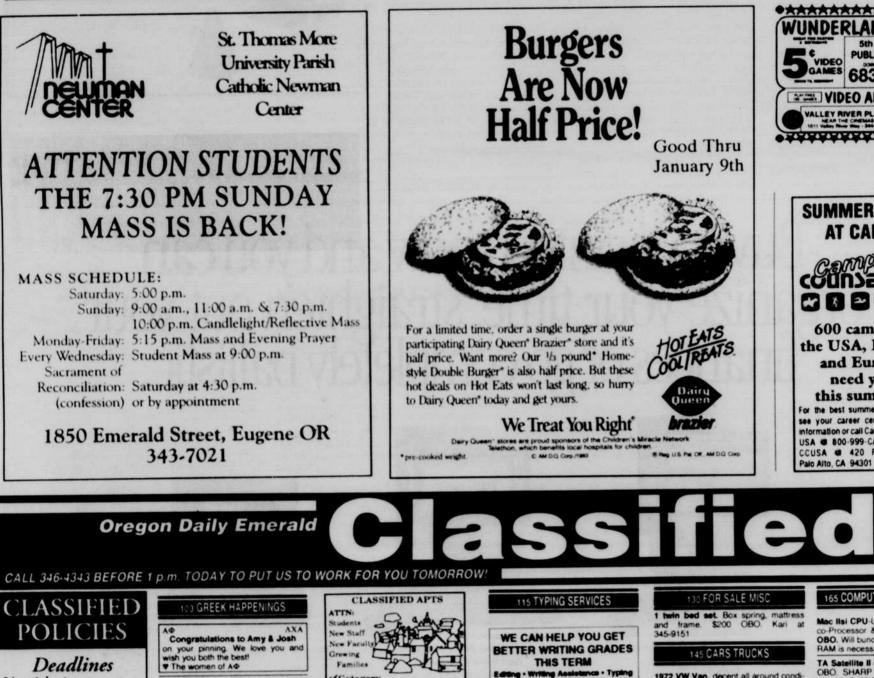
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## want the open shot. And shoot he has. Wilkins poured in a seasonhigh 23 points in a loss to Oregon State in the Far West Clas-

sic, and led the team with 17 Monday, hitting three of three shot from the three-point line and dishing off six assists in the first half alone.

He also had a career-high

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Wilkins said. "Now I'm look-

ing to take the open shot, but

a couple of weeks ago I didn't

Ducks 76-70 road win over St. Mary's that ended Oregon's 27game road losing streak against Division I teams. Tonight, Wilkins will face

the biggest challenge of his career when he squares off with UCLA point guard Tyus Edney

Tonight's game starts at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, the Ducks will face USC in Los Angeles at 11:00 a.m. Both games will be broadcast live on the Oregon Sports Network on KVAL-TV, Channel 13



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