

MORGAN SMITH/EMERALD

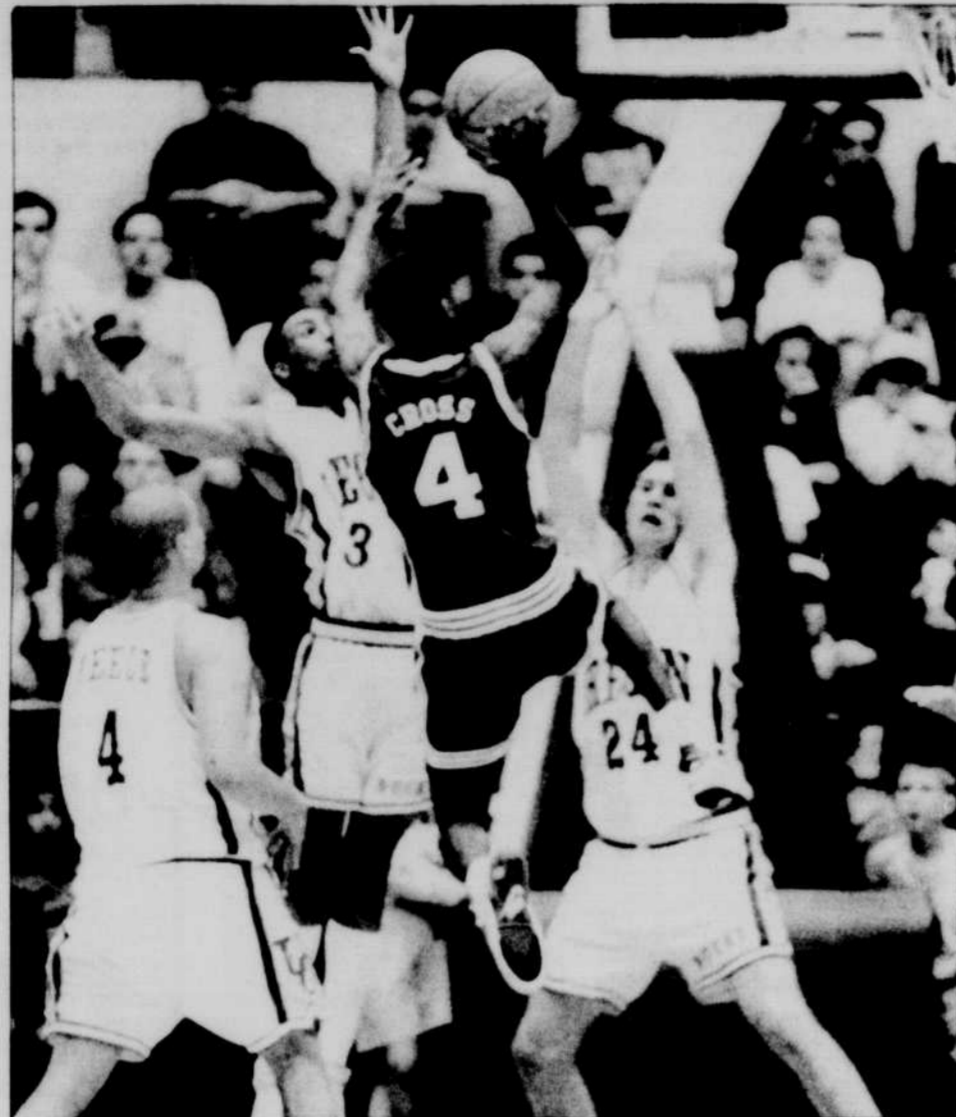


OREGON

6-10 overall; 2-5 Pac-10

- 23 Jamar Curry - G
- 45 Aaron Johnson - F
- 15 x Jamal Lawrence - G
- 13 Jordy Lyden - F
- 3 Henry Madden - F
- 50 Jon Mitchell - G
- 24 x Darryl Parker - F
- 33 Jeff Potter - F
- 44 Damon Runyon - F
- 35 Zach Sellers - C
- 10 Kenya Wilkins - G
- 21 Orlando Williams - G

x - injured



FILE PHOTOS
Oregon will have to face two of the top scorers in the Pac-10 this weekend in California's Lamond Murray (left) and Stanford's Dion Cross (right).

Ducks hope to upset Cal before big crowd Saturday

By Dave Charbonneau
Oregon Daily Emerald

A year ago, the phrase, "Close but no cigar," may have been in Jerry Green's book of press quotes. Not any longer.

Now that his Oregon men's basketball team has lost five Pacific-10 Conference games and had a reasonable shot at winning all of them, Green is looking for an opportunity to hand out some cigars.

For that, Green would need a big event to happen like, oh, maybe, beating a Top 25 team. After playing tough but losing to nationally ranked Arizona and UCLA on the road, the Ducks (2-5 in the conference, 6-10 overall) get their first chance to play a Top 25 team at McArthur Court Saturday when 19th-ranked California comes to town for a 3:05 p.m. game.

The Golden Bears (5-2, 12-4) are coming off a big upset of former No. 1 UCLA Sunday, and defeated No. 12 Arizona at the McKale Center a few weeks ago.

Green, usually not a coach to overlook an upcoming game, can't help but look past tonight's game with Stanford to Saturday's game. By Tuesday, 6,000 seats had already been sold for the game, and the crowd Saturday will likely be the biggest at McArthur Court in three years.

"Looking from an outsider's point of view, we are one of the worst three teams in the conference," Green said. "Cal will be a good opportunity for us. But we need to play a near-perfect game to have the chance to win."

Oregon forward Jeff Potter said the Ducks are looking forward to getting another shot at upsetting a national power.

"We've been coming close, and that's almost worse than getting blown out," he said. "We're at the point where if we make a play or two we might pull off an upset. That's the difference between us and the top teams in the conference. They make those plays and we don't."

As for the large crowd expected for the game, Green said it's proof of the progress his team is making in gaining respect.

"I think locally, people are starting to gain some respect for our team," Green said. "When I first got here, you could have a conversation with someone across the court, it was so quiet during games."

The respect continues to grow as Green's recruits one by one start to become solid contributors to the team.

First, it was Kenya Wilkins who made an instant impact and has played well all season at the point guard position. Next, it was Darryl Parker who took flight when the Pac-10 season started and has gone on to average 10 points and five rebounds in Pac-10 play. Recently, it's been Jamar Curry who's been turning up his play and is being rewarded with more minutes. Against Arizona, Curry scored eight points in six minutes and followed that up with 12 points and five rebounds against Arizona State.

"Jamar's been playing a lot better for us," Green said. "He's still doing good things on defense but he's becoming more under control on offense."

Green gives a lot of the credit for Curry's sudden burst

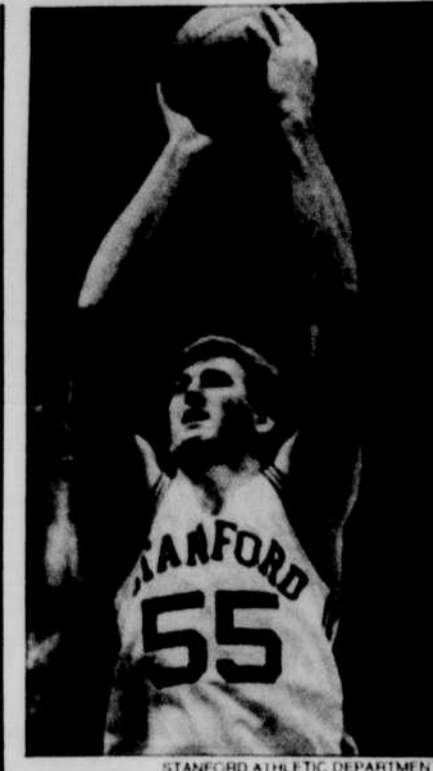
to superstition. Curry forgot his jersey Thursday against Arizona and had to wear No. 54 with no name on the back. Green believed he played so well that he made Curry wear the same jersey Saturday against the Sun Devils.

"He'll be wearing it again Thursday, and we'll see how he does," Green said.

The Golden Bears are the hottest team in the conference right now. Against the Bruins, star point guard Jason Kidd registered his fourth triple-double of his career and is averaging 15 points and 10 assists a game. The 6-foot-4 guard may be too much for 5-10 Wilkins to handle, so the job of guarding Kidd may go to the 6-6 Parker. Lamond Murray, a 6-7 forward, is the Bears' leading scorer, averaging 25 points and eight rebounds a game.

The Ducks are led by Orlando Williams, who is averaging nearly 17 points a game. Oregon forward Potter is averaging 11 points and five boards a game.

Thursday's game against the Cardinal (4-3, 11-5) starts at 7 p.m.



STANFORD ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT



STANFORD

11-5 overall; 1-6 Pac-10

- Brent Williams - F
- Andy Poppink - F
- Jim Morgan - C
- Brevin Knight - G
- Dion Cross - G

CALIFORNIA

11-4 overall; 4-2 Pac-10

- 5 Jason Kidd - G
- 3 Monty Buckley - G
- 52 Ryan Jamison - C
- 21 Lamond Murray - F
- 44 Michael Stewart - F

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