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A Tall Order

Damon Stoudamire presents a big challenge

Chris Metz Oregon Daily Emerald

As Arizona's Damon Stoudamire makes one last trip through the Pacific-10 Conference, he does so as one of the most feared individual players in the conference.

Former teammate Khalid Reeves is gone to the NBA now. The Wildcats are Stoudamire's team now, a scary thought for any Pac-10 coach, but especially so to an Oregon head coach who could very well be coaching Stoudamire at this point.

"I'd much rather see him in the green and gold than the colors of Arizona," Green said. "I just wish that I had the opportunity to recruit him out of high school. I think that we really would have given Arizona a run for him."

No doubt Green and other coaches would like to have a guard with Stoudamire's abilities.

A Wooden Award and Naismith candidate in the pre-season, Stoudamire has lit it up during the first half of the 1994-95 season. His 21 point-per-game average and seven assists a game leads the Pac-10, as the senior out of Portland has solidified himself as the backbone of the Wildcat offense.

Stoudamire, a graduate of Wilson High School, pumped in 43 points against Stanford this season - the most in the Pac-10 since 1990 when Oregon State's Gary Payton scored 58 points vs. USC - and ranks nationally in several categories.

So what do you do to stop the wily Stoudamire?

Inevitably, it comes time to face the elusive guard. And for Green, the task is clear.

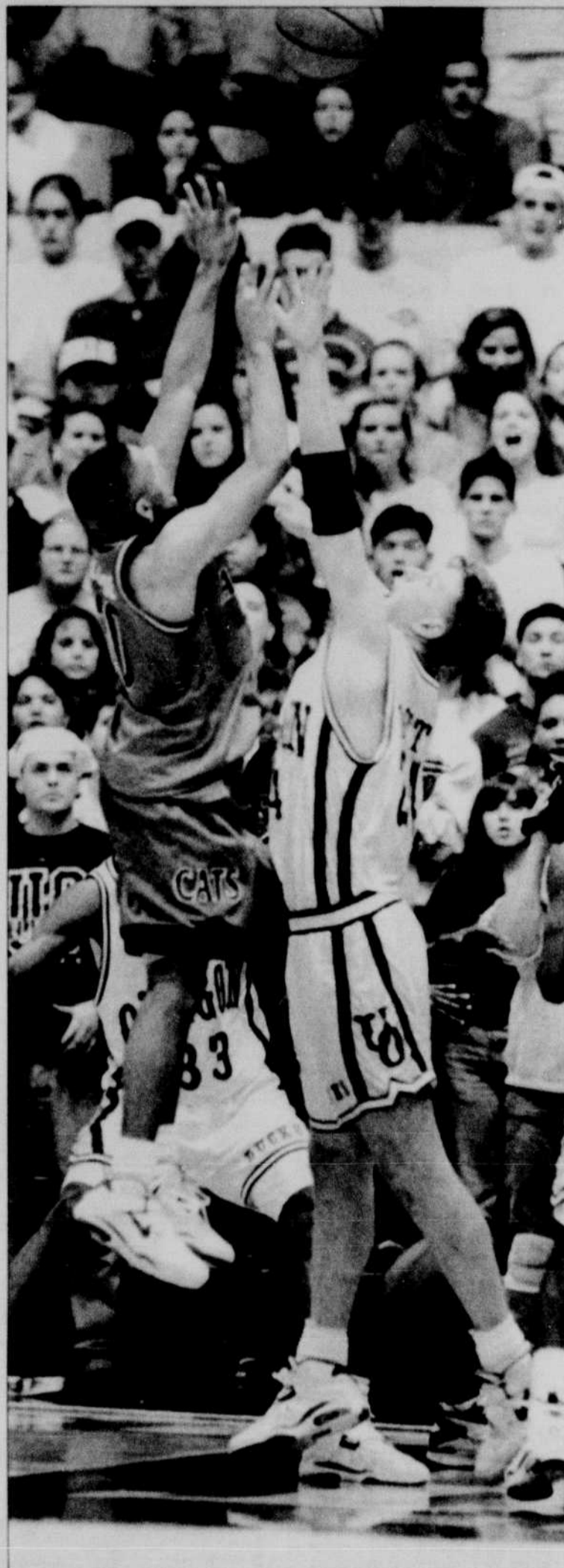
"I think what we can do is try to limit him," Green said. "He's going to be a lottery pick in the NBA in my opinion. He's going to be a multimillionaire one day."

Stoudamire ranks second in career assists at Arizona with 566 and seventh in points with 1,529. So it's no wonder that Green would have liked to have had a chance at the Oregon product.

"It would have made things a lot easier for me," Green said about the prospect of having Stoudamire in his first year at Oregon. "Players make coaching a lot easier. Without players, coaching doesn't mean that much. He's a complete player. He's going to make a lot of money in the future."

Of course Green didn't fare too badly in inheriting Orlando Williams, another product of Portland. Williams, while not having the all-around team success until this year, rivals Stoudamire in most categories, and the two remain as two of the biggest 3-point threats in the Pac-10 in their senior years. Williams has seen Stoudamire around for a better part of his life and knows all too well how good he is.

"I've seen him in grade school, I've seen him in high school, I've seen him in college," Williams said before taking a breath.



Damon Stoudamire may talk a good game, but it is his big-play ability that rises above the rest.

ing a breath.

"He is a tremendous ball-handler. The way he changes directions and his quick pull-up jumper gets defenses off guard better than I've seen in a long time. He even does it better than Terrell (Brandon)," he said, pointing out that Stoudamire has played against the former Duck in Portland summer leagues.

But as good as Damon Stoudamire is, he's facing a big challenge tonight in Eugene.

Not only is a large delegation of his family going to be in attendance, but, on the heels of a guaranteed victory promise, Stoudamire faces the McArthur Court mob with something to prove once again.

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