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POTTER

Continued from Page 7
gram out of the ashes," Potter said.

It isn't just about winning for this basketball player, however. Potter stressed that even though he's been a part of an Oregon program that had only won 26 games in three years prior to this season, he has nonetheless been thrilled with his experience at Oregon as not only an athlete, but a student as well.

"This year is just icing on the cake," Potter said. "The losses are hard, but I've just had so much fun just being able to say that I've been able to play at Pauley Pavilion, and play against players like Harold Miner. It's just a special experience."

On Tuesday, a smiling Potter told stories of his mother Jeannie and her sometimes overzealous habit of collecting all her son's newspaper clippings. Although in his early years in high school and at Oregon he didn't really understand why his mother so meticulously collected the material, he's not complaining now.

"My mom likes to keep every clip — she's almost annoying with it. Now I'm looking back and thinking it wasn't such a bad idea."

The collection isn't getting any smaller as Potter's final season is now officially in the homestretch, literally, as the Washington native prepares for one more go-around with two schools that he wouldn't have minded going to — Washington and Washington State.

"I looked at them very closely," Potter said of his choosing a school.

Potter said that he looked at Washington State closely because of its coaching staff, and he looked at Washington because of its close proximity to his home and family in Redmond. In the end, Potter chose to attend Oregon because he just couldn't find anything really wrong with the school whereas there were little things about the Washington schools that made them less appealing to the 1993-94 recipient of the Harry Ritchie Scholar-Athlete Award.

With every game now, Potter's career at Oregon is just that

// *It used to be a real pride thing. If somebody yelled at me, I was going to get really mad.*

— **JEFF POTTER**
Senior forward

much closer to the end. Inevitably it happens to everybody, but for Potter, the thought of winding up his basketball days with the Ducks has become maybe a little bit harder than he had originally expected.

"It's starting to hit me a little bit," Potter said, pointing out that the final Civil War of his career struck a chord last week. "It's kind of sad."

While basketball is a very important part of Potter's life, he doesn't necessarily want to be remembered as just a guy that gave it all he had on the basketball court. It seems unlikely that, as a player, the gutsy red-head would be remembered as anything other than a guy that wasn't afraid to mix it up and throw an elbow here or there in the middle.

It's no wonder Potter feels like he's a middle-ager, considering the multitude of round trips he's made from his feet to the floor and back again. Surely he feels the adverse effects of his rough-and-tumble style of play. Just ask him.

"If it's 8 o'clock, and I go home and sit down on the couch — I'm done for the evening. I'm out."

Potter's quick to point out that he doesn't expect any special treatment or that basketball is such an overwhelming endeavor.

Instead, Potter said that school is the big challenge, as far as time constraints go, and that being a student is the most rewarding part of college.

"I've always just wanted to be another student," he said.

Potter, an English major, said that being a student athlete was never that difficult before, but this, his senior year, has proved to be a bit tougher.

"I've never really felt it was that tough until this year. Maybe

it's because my classes are harder, but I'm having a rough time," he said.

"It's not that basketball takes so much time, but it takes so much energy."

More than his status as a basketball player, though, he prefers to think of himself as a down-to-earth regular guy. Potter, who admits to being rather shy when it comes to people he doesn't know, said he tries to stay away from the "stuck-up jock" mentality that most students seem to expect. Instead, he likes to have friends away from the basketball team in addition to his teammates.

For as much as Potter enjoys playing basketball, in his free time he simply likes to hang out with his friends and take his mind off basketball.

"Sometimes I'm not the most talkative guy," Potter said. "A lot of people come up to me and talk about basketball. A lot of times I don't really want to talk about basketball."

Potter does enjoy interacting with the fans, though. When it comes to Oregon fans, he said, it is gratifying to get congratulations on a job well done. And even as harsh as opposing fans can be, Potter also enjoys their input in a weird way.

"A lot of people like to give their opinions," he said. "Sometimes I'm not as receptive to that."

On the subject of unmerciful fans on the road, Potter even has a tiny space in his heart for them, even if his family doesn't.

"It doesn't bother me so much, but my family really gets upset," Potter said, who noted that the fans in Seattle seem to really get on his case.

"I kind of like it. Fans should go to games and have fun."

Coming from a guy that used to take strong offense to criticism and taunting, these comments really do indicate a player, and a person, who has come full circle.

"It used to be a real pride thing," he said about his blowing his top from time to time when he first came to Oregon. "If somebody yelled at me, I was going to get really mad."

Not so anymore for this fiery red-head. These days he does his talking on the court.

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