

Women's season exceeded most expectations

Mark McTyre
Oregon Daily Emerald

A season that began as a rebuilding year for the Oregon women's basketball team, eventually turning into a run for the national championship in the NCAA tournament, came to an end with a 67-65 opening round loss to the Louisville Cardinals in Athens, Ga.

The Ducks (18-10 overall) had the type of season nobody could make any qualms about. They rose above all the expectations — except the ones they placed upon themselves — as they beat three nationally ranked teams during the regular season and held a 4-8 record against teams that received berths into the tourna-

ment. And coming down the stretch, the women gave the hometown crowd a taste of what's in store for next year's team as they destroyed the opposition in their final four home games. Simply said, the season was another major step in the right direction during the Jody Runge era.

"We have a lot of players who will be a year older, and I think that can't be anything but better," Oregon head coach Jody Runge said. "I hope we take it [the first round loss] as a positive and an experience that will make us all the better."

For many of the Ducks, the game against Louisville was their first taste of tournament action. The only players on this year's

team that saw considerable action in Oregon's two tournament games last year are seniors Jessica Schutt and Karen Healea.

"A lot of those kids are gone," said Runge, referring to last year's squad. "Red [Arianne Boyer] didn't start, Eddy [Cindie Edamura] wasn't starting, Karen was starting; Jess is the only person who is back off of last year's tournament team who really understood what it is like to be out on the floor and have to fend off everybody's best game. So we're a very young team as far as this tournament stuff is concerned."

Oregon did not let its tournament inexperience show through as the Ducks held their ground in the first half against Louisville, leading by as many

as 10 points on three different occasions before the Cardinals closed to within three at half-time, 34-31.

In the second half, the Cardinals reversed the leading role on the Ducks as they jumped out to a 54-44 lead in the opening 10 minutes behind the shooting of forward Leatrice Scott. But then the Oregon players regained their composure and used a 14-4 run to tie the game at 58 points apiece with 6:30 remaining.

As the game clock ran, the two teams traded baskets and remained in a 65-65 deadlock. With 3.2 seconds left in the game, Louisville's Scott was fouled by Boyer — stopping a for-sure basket underneath the hoop — placing her at the char-

ity stripe for two shots. A career 60 percent free-throw shooter, Scott drained the two most important shots in her career to give her team a two-point edge and the eventual victory.

After a timeout, Oregon's starting five (Rena Fegent, Sally Crowe, Schutt, Boyer and Edamura) took to the floor with their instructions from their coach. Having to go the length of the court, Fegent inbounded the ball to Edamura on the right side near half court, who then tried to lob a pass to Schutt who was ready to launch a three-point attempt for a game-winning basket. Edamura's pass attempt went over the outstretched arms of Schutt and rolled out of bounds as the buzzer sounded.

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much more without coach Green. So we put together this package for him, and we're awfully glad that he came to the decision he did."

The total package Oregon will enter the contract with Green includes a base salary of \$100,000 with an additional \$149,000 generated by a combination of his Nike and Oregon Sports Network contracts.

The perpetual contract is a roll-over clause, which means Green will always have a four-year contract, enforced for as long as his performance and the way he manages the Oregon program is to everyone's satisfaction. There are no other special provisions in the contract, and the length of the contract has no relation to further compensation.

"We were sufficiently encouraged by what we've seen happen over the last three years to know that this University can have one of the strongest men's basketball programs in the country," Williams said. "We're going to do all we can to make that happen."

Part of doing everything the athletic department can is by undergoing renovations to McArthur Court, currently the oldest on-campus facility in collegiate athletics.

"We have promised to do that because we think it is not only good for our men's program but will also play an important role in the success of our women's program and will give our new coach in volleyball an added advantage," Williams said. "So the entire department is going to benefit from this sort of adjustment."

A plan has been in the works for over a month, but a lot of what is done will be affected by what the department determines the first priorities to be.

However, the athletic department will try to get enough renovations done before the next basketball seasons so the public will know it is committed to making Mac Court a better place.

"I wouldn't expect what we want to do will be done in one year," Williams said. "There are no plans that we have now for replacing Mac Court, but as I said, I think if there is going to be a new basketball pavilion that we play in, it will be a community facility financed by the University and the county."

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— DAN WILLIAMS
Oregon Director of Athletics

"In the short term, it's much wiser for us to invest in making Mac Court a better place. We'll make an investment that will justify staying in McArthur Court for another 10 or 12 years."

The upcoming step in the renovation process is for the athletic department to establish a user group of the volleyball and both basketball programs and seek ideas of the changes and improvements required from their point of view.

Separate from Green's contractual package, Oregon has also given permission for a group of local supporters to purchase and put together an annuity. Details of the annuity have yet to be solidified, Williams said, but it would be structured along the lines of what is "standard in the industry."

It's very common in the coaching profession these days to include in their packages — either by the institution or separate from the institution — the purchase of an insurance policy at a fixed rate that in some future time when that coach nears retirement, the policy would work toward making a supplementary payment for the balance of their lives, Williams said.

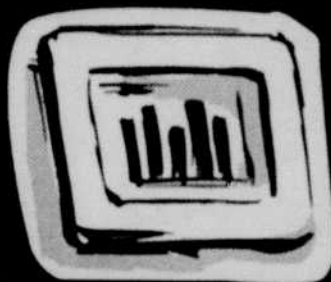
According to Williams, an annuity provides an incentive for a coach to remain at a program for a fixed period of time. To become eligible for part or all of the annuity, Green must remain at Oregon for an undetermined fixed period of time as of press time.

Hypothetically, Williams said it would not be uncommon for a coach to be vested for half of an annuity after three years and to become eligible for the full amount if the coach were to stay five or six years.

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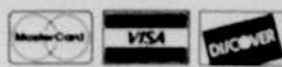
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