

Oregon returns to Mac Court for tough homestand

■ **MEN'S BASKETBALL:** Tonight is a must-win game for any chance at post-season play

By **Andrea De Young**
Assistant Sports Editor

The season is winding down for the Oregon men's basketball team, as the Ducks play host to USC tonight in the second-to-last home game of the year.

Oregon (14-12 overall, 7-8 Pacific-10 Conference) is coming off a successful whipping of Arizona State and is looking to secure a spot in a post-season tournament. But before the Ducks can even think about post-season play, they must first get past the Trojans.

Although Oregon beat USC 99-78 down south Feb. 3, the Trojans have beaten the Ducks in seven of their last 10 match-ups. But USC is currently on a six-game losing streak; its last win was against the Beavers Feb. 1.

Head coach Jerry Green is not about to let his team take tonight's game lightly.

"We're not going to look past Southern Cal because I feel that to even give ourselves a chance in the NCAA post-season, we have to have all three of these games," he said. "It's not a matter of coming close. We need to win these three games."

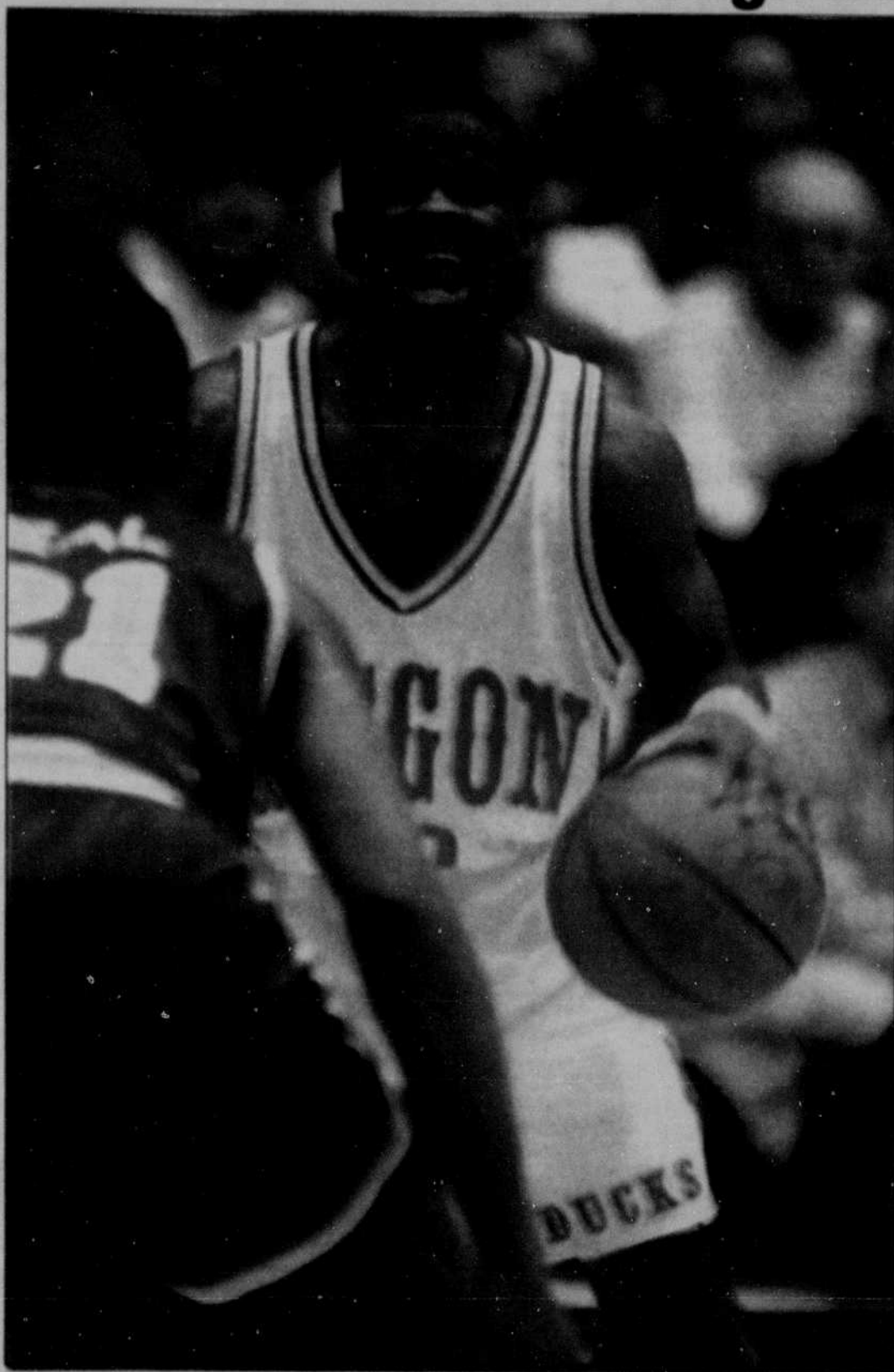
When the Ducks and Trojans met earlier this season, Jamar Curry led all scorers with 23 points. It was a strong offensive effort for the Oregon starters; all five scored in double figures.

The Trojans will look for offensive power from their three-guard line-up. Stais Boseman, who averages 15.6 points per game, and Brandon Martin, who averages 15.1 points per game, will lead a Trojan team that may arrive in Eugene at less than capacity. USC had several players go down with injuries last week and may bring only six scholarship players to McArthur Court.

But the Trojans will not be without the power of Jaha Wilson, who has 11 double-doubles this season and averages 11.3 points and 8.2 rebounds per game. Avondre Jones averages 3.1 blocked shots per game and already has 66 this season, a new USC record.

Oregon needs to have a consistent game from its perimeter shooters. Jamal Lawrence has been averaging more than 12 points in the last seven games, five of which the Ducks have won. In that time span, Curry has been averaging 13.6 points per game, including two career-

Turn to **MEN'S B-BALL**, Page 12



Oregon will look to junior guard Kenya Wilkins, who scored 30 points in the Ducks' last home game, to provide an offensive pop against USC tonight.

Ducks take advantage of home court

By **Trevor Kearney**
Sports Editor

Home court advantage.

A simple and logical concept that sways the odds in favor of the home team, based on the premise that familiar surroundings and the enthusiasm of the crowd give a team a natural lift.

"Every college team will play a little better at home than it will on the road simply because it is a confidence factor, and everything you are around, you are accustomed to being around," Oregon head coach Jerry Green said. "You practice there every day, and I think familiar surroundings make you want to play a little bit harder, make you want to play a little bit smarter."

"And I think you hate to disappoint your friends even more."

But for the Oregon Ducks, playing big-time games at home in McArthur Court is more than that. Playing at Mac Court is not just playing on a familiar court in front of a crowd that knows the players' names. Playing at Mac Court is playing in an atmosphere that, at times, can lift the Ducks up to another playing level.

"We have always had a tough time there," Stanford coach Mike Montgomery said. "It has always been a place where they have gotten tremendous emotional lift from their crowd."

In the past three years, the Ducks have proved that, pulling off a few memorable wins against teams they simply couldn't touch on the road.

The 80-79 win over UCLA that closed out the 1994 season comes to mind. So does last year's 82-72 win over the Bruins, who eventually won the NCAA title. Those two wins came in years that the Ducks got stomped on the road by UCLA

Turn to **MAC COURT**, Page 9



Sophomore guard Kirsten McKnight will help provide the Ducks with some much-needed outside shooting to break USC's zone defense. The Ducks have never beaten USC on the road.

Ducks need win against hungry USC

■ **WOMEN'S BASKETBALL:** A trip to the NCAA Tournament is on the line for the Oregon squad in tonight's game

By **Pete Schneider**
Sports Reporter

If the Oregon women's basketball team is to have any realistic shot at going to the NCAA Championship Tournament this season, one thing is clear: The Ducks must sweep the final three games of the season.

Oregon (16-9 overall, 8-7 Pacific-10 Conference) is currently in fifth place in the league standings, one game behind Arizona and Washington. As the Ducks head down to Southern California this weekend, they know that beating both USC and UCLA at home will not be easy.

"This is always a tough road trip," Oregon head coach Jody Runge said. "The Pac-10 race is going to come right down to the wire. I feel that we've got to go down to Los Angeles and win two to be in a position to come home and have confidence to

beat Oregon State at home next week."

History is not in the Ducks' favor as they make the trip southward. The Ducks are winless in the 11 games they have played at USC. The numbers are not much better in the all-time UCLA series, as Oregon posts a 3-12 at Pauley Pavilion.

"We know that our backs are against the wall," said junior forward Arianne Boyer, who became the 12th player in Oregon history to score 1,000 career points during the Ducks' 45-51 win over Arizona State last Saturday. "We know what we have to do this week, and that's to go down to L.A. and win them both. To make sure we go [to the NCAA tournament], we not only have to win, but win big."

The first stop on this crucial road trip is at USC tonight. Oregon will attempt to avenge its 75-66 overtime loss to the Trojans at home Feb. 3. USC has owned the Ducks over the last couple of seasons, winning 11 of the last 12 games.

In the Ducks' loss earlier this month, USC's Tina

Turn to **WOMEN'S B-BALL**, Page 10