



The packed house of 10,024 fans at McArthur Court Thursday Night erupted when Oregon's Henry Madden nailed the game-winning shot with two seconds remaining in overtime. MARK McTYRE/Emerald

Victory: Ball movement was key

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"Most of the games that we have lost we started out slow," Kenya Wilkins said. "Although we fought for those 25-30 minutes, we could never make up for that first ten minutes that got us behind. So us getting up at the beginning had to be one of the reasons we were successful tonight."

Another reason Oregon was so successful was the emergence of Wilkins in the second half. After going scoreless in the first, the Ducks' point guard scored 18 points in the second.

But although Wilkins' point total made him, along with Lawrence, the team's scoring leader, he will be remembered for his assists. Coming into the night, Wilkins needed only two assists to tie the all-time school record of 572 set by Ron Lee in 1976. His four assists Thursday night gives him 574 career assists, two more than the old record.

"I like it," Wilkins said of his new record. "But I think I will appreciate it more after the season when I can look back and reflect on what I've done. Right now, I'm concerned with the team record."

Oregon also was able to return to its offense that created so much success early on in the season:

constant ball movement to break down the defense instead of holding on to the ball or taking quick shots. This led to a 52 percent shooting night for the Ducks' offense.

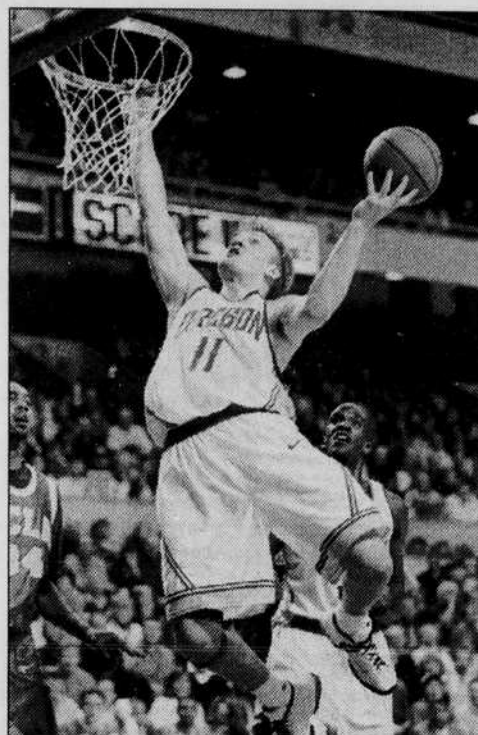
"We moved the ball a lot more as an offense tonight," Green said. "We picked at the defense and got a little bit better shot."

Which is starting to look a whole lot better. The Ducks have struggled in the Pac-10 this season and needed this win desperately to get back on track both in terms of conference standings and team confidence.

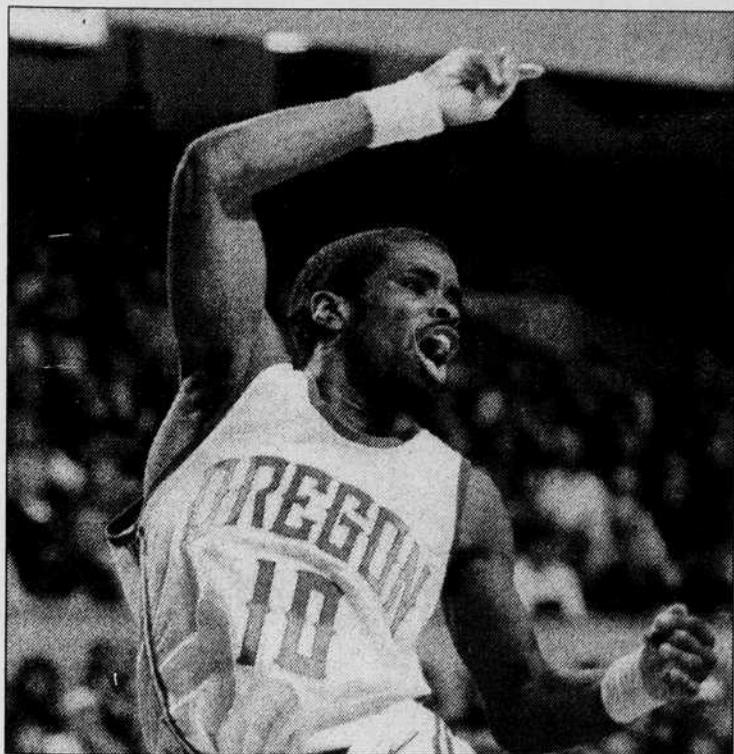
"A win like this can't do anything else but pull us together," Wilkins said.

"I hope we can build on things from this point on," Green said. "This was a good win for us and how much it helps we will find out when we play Saturday night. I would have to think that will give us some more confidence."

Oregon, now 3-5 in the conference and 12-5 overall, will play against the surprising Trojans Saturday night at Mac Court. Southern Cal squeaked by Oregon State Thursday night 71-68.



Oregon's Kyle Milling attempts to put back a missed dunk in the first half by hanging on the rim. Milling was charged with a technical foul by the referees for his monkey-like antics. MARK McTYRE/Emerald



Kenya Wilkins came on strong in the second half of the game, scoring 18 points and helping the Ducks beat the Bruins in overtime. MARK McTYRE/Emerald

Turnaround: Bruins' defense forgot Wilkins

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"Coach [Mark] Turgeon mentioned to me that I needed to be more of a scoring threat," Wilkins said, "because I was getting into the lane well both the first and second half. But I wasn't really looking for my shot in the first half. I was trying to get others involved. In the second half as soon as he said I needed to be more a scoring threat I think I got a lay-up and a jump shot."

UCLA guard Toby Bailey said the Bruins made a mistake by forgetting about Wilkins.

"Jamal [Lawrence] was so effective in the first half that we started concentrating on him," Bailey said, "and Kenya began to be more a part of the game because we weren't concentrating on him."

Although the special attention on Lawrence kept him to six points in the second half, the Bruins may have had too much to handle on the one-two punch of Oregon's guards.

"I thought their defense maybe got a little tired," Oregon head coach Jerry Green said. "That's not taking anything away from Kenya, but I think Kenya took a little more of an aggressive attack against their zone."

"He had some good looks in the first half, he just didn't make it. I thought the zone was a little bit wider [in the second half], we moved the man where the penetration came and he had a better look at it. He finished some shots he didn't finish in the first half."

Wilkins may have also adjusted to the fact that he was playing against the 6-foot-5 Bailey, who towers seven inches over him.

"That was a surprise to me," Wilkins said. "I didn't expect to be matched up against him. But he was my guy. I look forward to match ups like that. He had a good game, but I think I did a good job on him also."

UCLA head coach Steve Lavin said Wilkins is a special player.

"Kenya Wilkins is like a lot of tremendous point guards — he's going to pick his spots," Lavin said. "He's very difficult to guard. He has the ability to get into the seams or the gaps of your defense and to be able to finish, despite his size. He has an unbelievable sense of where he is on the floor."

"Players like that are known to step their game up and take over and lead."

Lavin also thought Wilkins' second-half spectacular may have had something to do with the fact that he is from Los Angeles.

"Playing against UCLA tends to bring out the best in him," he said.

Wilkins said performing well with his family in the crowd was an important part of the game.

"It's a win against UCLA," he said. "It's a win when we needed one, and it's a win in front of my mom and my sister."

Even if it did take more than 20 minutes for Wilkins to warm up, the Ducks were grateful he did.