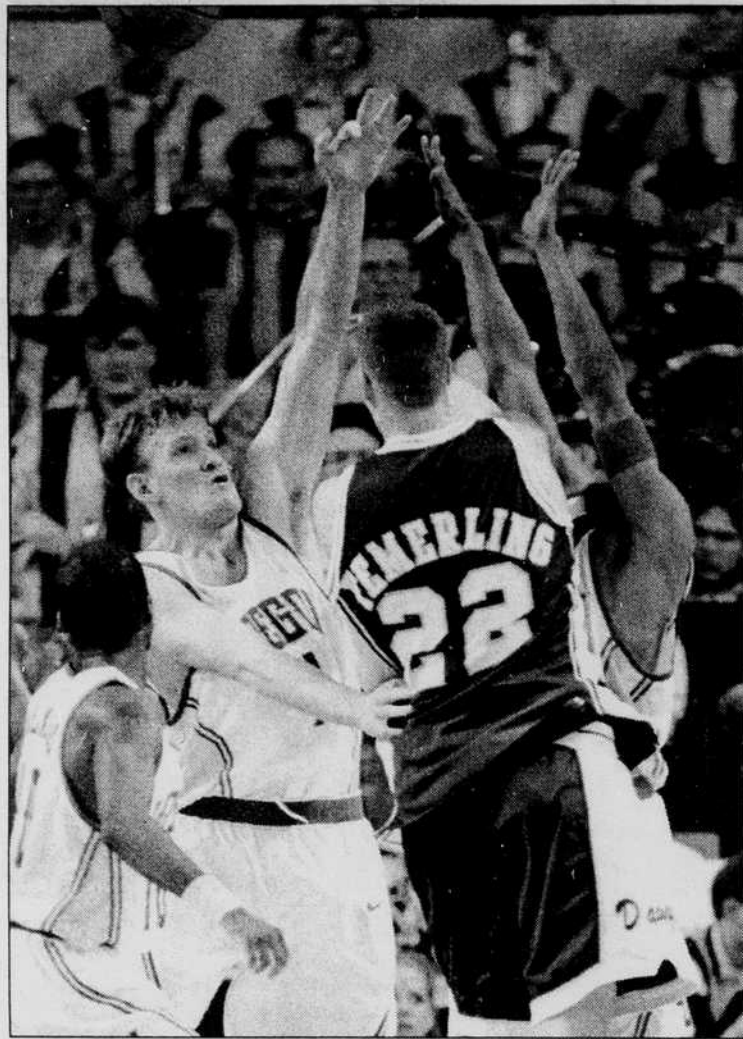


Defense: Ducks fulfill plan to get UW into foul trouble



Washington center Patrick Femerling gets swarmed by Kyle Milling and the Ducks' defense. Oregon won the inside game with solid play.

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That is a far cry from the 20 points and 9 rebounds the two centers have combined for this year.

"We just really worked on getting pressure on the high post passes so they couldn't get it low," Rob Ramaker said. "And having one of their best players foul out didn't hurt."

And it also didn't hurt that Ramaker and Kyle Milling stayed out of foul trouble this time around. Both players fouled out of the game in Seattle, leaving Oregon with Mike Carson to guard MacCulloch in the game's closing minutes. This time around, Milling scored 14 points and had five rebounds, while Ramaker scored four and also had five boards.

"Our plan was just to take it up strong and try to get them into foul trouble," Milling said. "I just tried to post up as strong as I could."

Oregon used a swarming defense in the post, sending three or four players to the ball when it

came in down low, usually forcing a kick-out or a Washington turnover, and inevitably, taking MacCulloch out of the game on the offensive end.

"It was a non-factor performance," Washington head coach Bob Bender said of MacCulloch's game. "We needed him to be productive tonight. We have got to at least match Kyle Milling's production. They were just a lot more physical and pushed us away from the basket."

This was just the way Oregon head coach Jerry Green drew it up before the game. Green had noticed that MacCulloch was getting too many easy shots underneath off high passes and also off of inbounds passes, and he worked out a defense specifically to stop those two opportunities.

"We were trying to keep it out of their hands," Green said of MacCulloch and Femerling. "We really helped down in the post. When the basketball went inside, we got a lot of help. It wasn't just a one-on-one, seven-footer against a 6-8 [player]. We wanted

to take that pass away and really pressure the passer so that wouldn't be as quite as good. I thought we did a great job."

What was equally as important as Oregon's defensive performance against the two big men was Oregon's commitment to going inside and ability to drive to the basket on offense.

"We've stressed getting back to a blue-collar type mentality," Ramaker said. "Getting the ball inside tonight really helped because it got them into foul trouble. We just worked really well together as a team."

And it was a team effort that enabled the Ducks to contain Washington's big men, and one that couldn't have come at a better time. One of Oregon's weaknesses in the first half of the conference season had been its inability to stop an big opposing center. But with the second half of the Pacific-10 Conference now underway, it appears as though Oregon has made the necessary adjustments to contain a dominating player in the post.

Men's: Oregon bench contributes to win

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The key for the Ducks all night long was concentrating on Washington's big men — 7-foot Todd MacCulloch and 7-1 Patrick Femerling. And the focus on these players paid off. MacCulloch fouled out with more than seven minutes to play with two points and one rebound. Femerling fouled out six and a half minutes later after scoring three points and picking up seven boards.

Milling had won the battle of the post. Not only was he still in the game when the final buzzer sounded, something that did not happen last time the two teams met, he also scored 14 points. The last time Milling had at least 14 points was against Arizona State, four games ago.

"We really challenged three people in this game to play well," Oregon head coach Jerry Green said. "We challenged Milling, Jamal Lawrence and Kenya Wilkins. If we are going to play good, those three kids have to play well. Last weekend Kyle turned it over eight or nine times and didn't have big numbers. I just told him 'You have got to play. If you don't play, we're not going to be very good.' I thought we got a really good game out of Kyle."

The other two key players for Green, Wilkins and Lawrence, had almost opposite games. Wilkins had a team-high 17 points and a game-high five steals. Jan Wooten, Washington's guard who had Kenya in his face all night long, went 0-of-5 from the field, scored no points, turned the ball over four times and picked up four personal fouls.

The Huskies' high-scorer, Jamie Booker, had 23 points and eight rebounds. Lawrence, who was defending Booker most of the night, was in rare form, hitting only 3-of-8 shots, including going 0-of-3 from downtown.

But the three-point shot was almost non-existent for the whole Oregon squad. The Ducks took only five three-point shots in the whole game, and missed all five. The previous low for the year on shots taken from behind the three-point line was 12 back in December against Boise State, and the low for shots made was three against Wisconsin-Green

Bay.

Offensively, it was a rather ugly game overall for both teams. Oregon was up 30-24 at halftime, shooting only 36 percent from the field, but also holding Washington to 31 percent shooting. Although the numbers improved for both teams in the second half, Green said it was the fact that the defense was so good, not that the offense was so bad, that kept the score so low.

"I think the game to me was two really good defensive efforts in the first half," Green said. "It sometimes makes for an ugly basketball game but they were at 25 turnovers for the game and a lot of that had to do with our defense. I thought we really got a lot of pressure outside and held them to 24 points in the first half."

Although nobody is used to seeing the Ducks score so few points in a win, Wilkins said the fact that it was a win is the most important thing.

"I don't care [that it was an ugly win], we won," he said. "An ugly win is just as good as a pretty win. I'll play ugly games all year long if we can win. That's what we play for — to win."

The only real shaky part of the Ducks' game was on the boards. Washington out-rebounded Oregon by 10, but Milling said that, once again, a win makes up for statistics.

"[Rebounding] is still a concern, but we won tonight and that takes those stats and throws them out the window a little bit," Milling said. "We do have to have to work on it. Teams are sending a lot of guys to the boards and we just have to be stronger and be the aggressors."

A bright point for the Ducks was the play of the bench. Andre Larry had 10 points and four rebounds in 16 minutes, and Mike McShane hit all six of his free throws.

As a whole, free-throw shooting also improved for Oregon. The Ducks hit 27-of-40 from the line, including 17-of-22 in the second half.

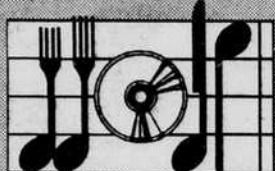
The Ducks take on Washington State (11-10, 3-7) on Saturday night at 7:05 p.m. The Cougars lost to Oregon State 61-49 on Thursday night.

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