



CENTERS

Three Ducks to be center of attention

Mike Carson will lead a trio of centers who will fill the void left by the loss of Kyle Milling and Rob Ramaker

By Rob Moseley
Sports Reporter

With the loss of Kyle Milling and Rob Ramaker to graduation and the addition of a freshman center from Germany, the post position will feature a bit of the old and a bit of the new this year.

The loss of the Ducks' two leading rebounders from last season should be eased by Ernie Kent's new up-tempo offense, which will take the focus off the half-court game so dominated by overpowering big men.

This is not to say, however, that the Ducks will be lacking in talent in the middle this season. A trio of players will attempt to spell the departed Ramaker and Milling, who combined for over 13 rebounds per game in 1996-97.

The steadying force in the middle this season will be senior Mike Carson, a 7-foot, 256-pounder from Chino, Calif. Slowed by injury most of his Oregon career, Carson is at full strength and armed with the confidence to finally make an impact in the Pacific-10 Conference.

"Mike seems to have improved from where he was last year, particularly in the area of confidence," Kent said. "That was because of his play this summer. He did a real nice job."

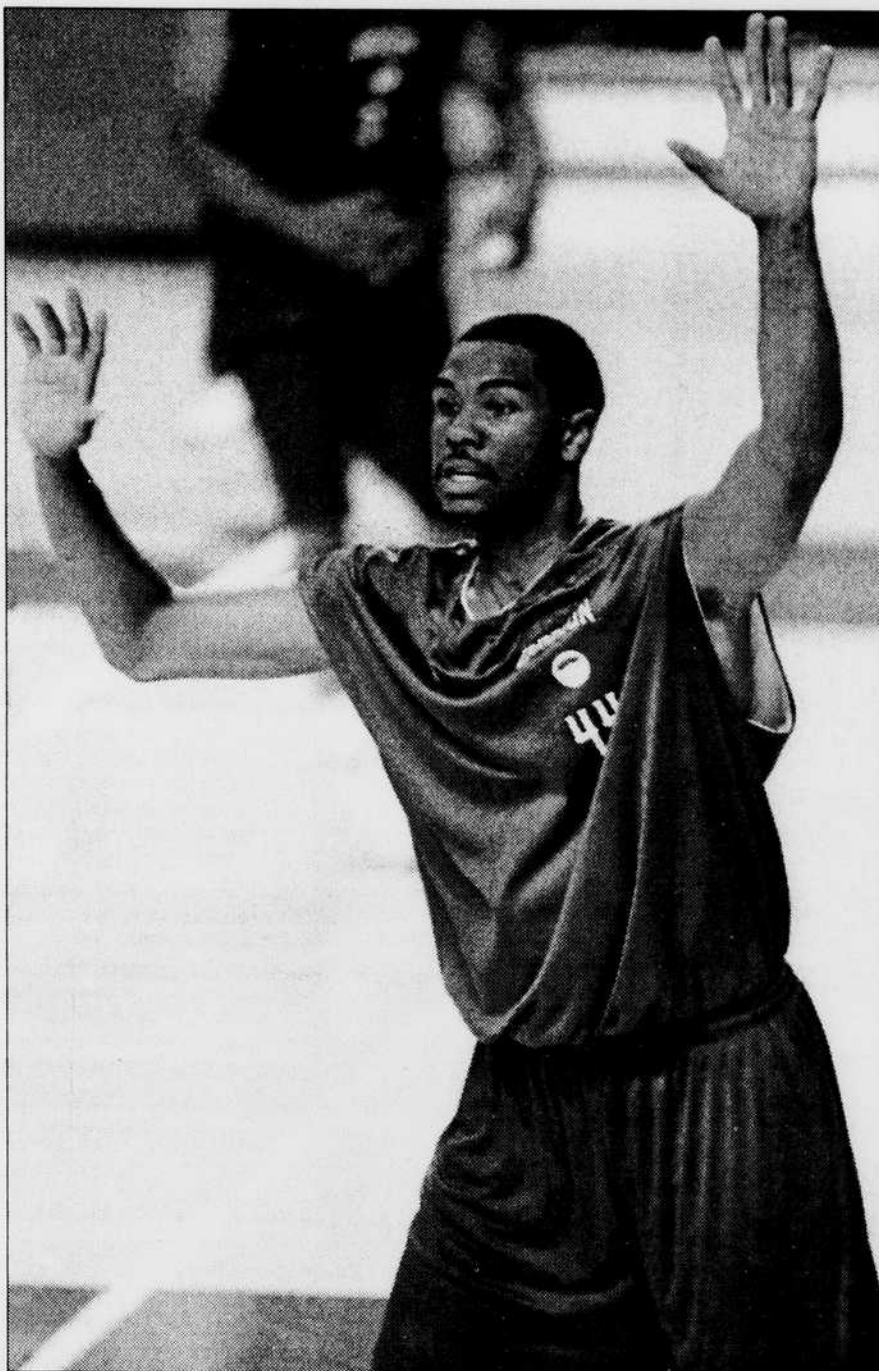
Kent also noted that Carson has improved his strength since last season, having added 18 pounds of muscle in the off-season.

The other veteran presence in the post for Oregon will be Jonathon Nelson, a 6-foot-9, 225-pound junior who has seen limited action the past two seasons, but has impressed his new coach in practice this fall.

"He's probably our best scoring big guy," Kent said. "He does a real nice job in the post of banging people around and is not afraid to get banged and still finish plays."

Playing just six minutes per game last

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CHAD PATTESON/Emerald

Jonathon Nelson, armed with more strength and an improved shot, will help Oregon replace the production of Kyle Milling and Rob Ramaker this year.

Female refs in the NBA? Get over it

A friend called last Friday night to tell me something most incredible he had seen on television. During the halftime show of the Utah Jazz-Los Angeles Lakers' season-opening game, TBS showed highlights of the Dallas Mavericks-Vancouver Grizzlies' contest. Despite the fact that it matched two bottom-feeding teams, it was a game of historical significance.

"There is a chick officiating the game," my friend said disgustedly.

Please excuse him, he has been listening too closely to Charles Barkley.

That "chick" was 33-year-old Violet Palmer, who along with 37-year-old Dee Kantner became the first women to referee, umpire or officiate a men's professional, non-minor-league, regular-season sport's contest (Bernice Gera and Pam Postema have both umpired minor-league baseball).

The two women come to the NBA with worthy credentials. Kantner was the supervisor of officials in the WNBA this summer and worked NBA summer-league games. She has also officiated four NCAA women's championship games, including the 1997 Tennessee-Old Dominion contest.

Palmer also refereed in the NBA summer league, WNBA games and women's college basketball for the Pacific-10 Conference. She was part of the three-women team officiating last season's game between Oregon and Slovakia, when the Slovakian team walked off the floor with a few minutes left in the game in protest of what it perceived as biased officiating.

Despite their background, these two pioneers are still facing ignorant reactions — like that of my friend, who struggles to understand how women can competently officiate a basketball game played by men.

Here's some reported reactions by various players around the league:

"I hope they don't bring 'em," Houston's Charles Barkley said. "That's my opinion. I don't have to give you a reason."

That's probably because he doesn't have

OPINION



Chris Hansen

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Mac Court renovation complete

Since last season, more than \$600,000 has been spent on renovating 71-year-old McArthur Court

By Ryan Frank
Sports Editor

Fans who visit McArthur Court for the first time this year when the men's and women's basketball teams open their respective seasons this weekend might be a little surprised when they first set foot into the arena.

Since last season, the Oregon Athletic Department has spent more than \$600,000 on improvements to the 71-

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Oregon returns with strength, confidence

Head coach Ron Finley thinks this year's team could be the best that Oregon has had

By Joel Hood
Sports Reporter

Unlike McArthur Court, which has undergone major reconstruction this off-season to give it a fresh, glossy new look, Oregon wrestling has changed very little from last season's nationally ranked team — one of the best in school history.

But you won't hear any complaints from head coach Ron Finley.

"There aren't really too many changes from last season," Finley said, "but that's okay. We had a real solid team last year, and the guys are all real close. I expect us to be even better this season."

You won't hear any complaints from Oregon's wrestlers either.

"The whole team is real focused this year," junior Sean Morgan said. "Obviously, our goal is to make it to the NCAA Championships, but I think this team has the opportunity to be the best ever at Oregon. We need

to look at the Pacific-10 Conference as a stepping stone to the NCAAs."

A former U.S. Olympic coach and world-class wrestler himself, Finley enters his 28th season as Oregon's head coach with a team, he said, that could be one of his best ever. With 302 wins under his belt, Finley knows a thing or two about evaluating talent and getting the most of his wrestlers.

"We have great depth," Finley said. "This is probably the most balanced team I've coached at Oregon. We have a good mixture of young guys and veteran wrestlers. I really can't see a weakness on this year's team."

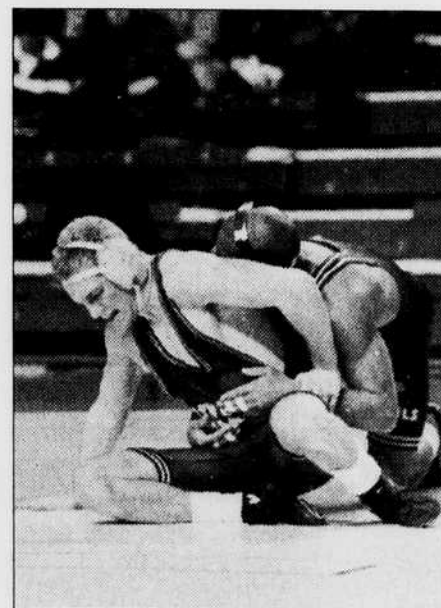
Oregon is led by Jeremy Ensrud in the 134-pound weight class. Ensrud, a three-year starter for the Ducks, had a breakthrough season on the mat that included a first-place finish at the Pac-10 Championships, a third-place finish at the NCAA Championships and All-American honors.

"We are all real confident," Ensrud said.

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WRESTLING



CHAD PATTESON/Emerald

David Perkins begins his second season with the Ducks this weekend.