

Williams, Harris break rookie stereotype

In their first season at the Division I-A level, Erik Williams and Peter Harris have made veteran contributions

By Tim Pyle
Freelance Sports Reporter

The term "freshman" generally conveys inexperience, immaturity and over exuberance. It is not uncommon to hear a sports announcer say with disappointment, "Oh, another freshman mistake."

Freshmen are not usually counted upon for big contributions in college athletics.

Similarly, a transfer is commonly expected to require an adjustment period upon joining a new team and is not relied upon for immediate payoff.

However, the Oregon Club Sports hockey team is discovering new definitions for those two terms — that of hard-working, high-scoring leaders — upon the arrival of two players, sophomore Erik Williams and freshman Peter Harris.

Williams, the center on the firstline, and Harris, the secondline's right wing, combined for six goals and three assists in leading the Ducks to victories over California in their first two games of the season.

Harris was unable to travel with the team to Los Angeles for Oregon's road trip Oct. 24 through 26 because of financial reasons. The Ducks could have used his scoring ability as they suffered three consecutive defeats — two to Southern California and one to UCLA.

However, Williams provided a bright spot, tallying three goals and three assists in Ore-

gon's three losses.

While most people would be surprised at the immediate success of two newcomers in the tough Pacific-8 Hockey Conference, head coach Geoff Norman begs to differ.

"They both have strong hockey backgrounds," says Norman, searching for evidence for his lack of astonishment.

Harris began playing hockey as an 8-year-old in Littleton, Colo. He competed in the Littleton Hockey Association throughout his young career, while concentrating solely on hockey.



Williams agrees with Robertson.

"He's a big kid and has a really good hockey sense," Williams says.

Harris is also blessed with speed on the ice, according to teammates and Norman.

"He wins most battles one on one because he has an extreme package of moves," Norman says.

Harris says he enjoys the competition and camaraderie of the team. However, he warns that he doesn't want to get so serious that all of the fun he finds in playing hockey would be left behind.

Williams, unlike Harris, took a more circuitous route to end up in Eugene. Williams grew up in Portland and graduated from Jesuit High School in Beaverton.

After graduating, he traveled to hockey power Shattock Saint Mary's Prep School in Min-

nesota for a year of postgraduate schooling. From there, Williams went to Canada for a brief stint of junior hockey before being released and enrolling at Saint Mary's University in Wynona, Minn.

However, Williams says he didn't like the hockey program or the school, and he returned to his home state to attend Oregon this year.

Even after two years in the hockey hotbeds of Canada and Minnesota, Williams says he is "pleasantly surprised" at the levels of competition here.

"It's better than I thought it was going to be," Williams says.

Robertson, Norman, Harris and even Williams all point to speed and stick-handling as the biggest strengths in Williams' game.

"He's fast, can change directions and his stick-handling is just awesome," Harris says.

Norman is still in awe of a short-handed goal Williams scored in the Ducks' second game of the season against the Bears.

"It was just amazing!" Norman exclaims. "He got the puck about center ice, burst down the left wing, cut hard to the far post with a defender right on him and just roofed it."

Williams says he wants to score as many points as he conceivably can this season in order to help the team out as much as possible. He points to the Pac-8 Hockey Tournament, which will be held in Eugene Feb. 20 through 22, as the pinnacle of the season for the team.

"Our goal is to win the Pac-8 in our own rink," Williams says.

With newcomers Williams and Harris leading the way, the Ducks may finally attain that goal and move on to nationals at Rutgers in New Jersey.

Mac Court: Oregon may improve windows, awnings

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year-old facility.

"What [fans] will see is a bright, new old building," said Ernie Kent, the Oregon men's basketball head coach.

The off-season's renovations are the final phase of improvements to the inside of the facility that have been taking place over the past five seasons, said Jamie Klund, Oregon media services assistant director.

"The fans love this place so much, and I think for them they will really appreciate things," said Jody Runge, the Oregon women's basketball head coach. "Their voice has been so strong about being in love with this place and not going somewhere else that I think they'll just appreciate the fact that we've given it a facelift."

In this latest phase of construction, the floor-level seating was redone to include theater-like seats for donors who own season tickets, and the bleacher seating for University students and the band is also new.

"On the floor level, it is going to be a much more comfortable building," Kent said.

Fans will no longer have to walk

in front of the coaches and players on their way to their seats as there will now be enough room to walk behind the bench.

All the entrances to the floor level were also redone.

Instead of two four-door entrances on the east and west sides of the court, there are now four two-door entrances on all sides. The two new entrances on the north and south sides, where the baskets are, are the main entrances.

Probably the most noticeable addition is the new scoreboards. A main scoreboard and seven auxiliary scoreboards have been added. Also, a triangle-like 30-second clock will sit above the backboards for easy fan viewing, Kent said.

The facing of the balconies was painted white, giving the arena a new color scheme. The cost of the paint is not included in the \$600,000 in improvements.

And for the fans' ears, Oregon put in a new public address system.

While this was the final phase of construction inside, Oregon may still make improvements to windows and awnings on the outside of the facility, Klund said.



CHAD PATTESON/Emerald

Mac Court was given a make-over that improved the floor-level seating and added new main and auxiliary scoreboards.

Centers: Carson added 18 pounds of muscle in off-season

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season, Nelson averaged more than two rebounds per contest and shot 65.2 percent on his way to winning the team's Jesse Nash Award as the most improved player.

Oregon fans should see even more improvement this year, as Nelson has improved his strength and conditioning in the off-season.

His improved cardiovascular conditioning should help in Kent's run-and-gun offense, which should award the first player down court with a scoring opportunity. Nelson described his role in the new system in just one word: "Run!"

The final full-time post player could be the most intriguing: Flo Hartenstein, a 6-foot-9, 255-pound freshman from Mainz, Germany. The graduate of Thurston High School in Springfield originally signed with Oregon in the spring of 1996, but sat out last season to improve his TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score.

Hartenstein was a member of three German Junior National Teams before coming to the United States and averaged 11 points, eights rebounds and three

blocks per game at Thurston.

Hartenstein, the strongest player on the Oregon roster, has been a pleasant surprise to Kent.

"He's made some great strides early on and has shown some flashes of brilliance," the coach said. "Once he understands how to use his strength to his advantage he's going to be a very effective post player."

Joining Carson, Nelson and Hartenstein for occasional action in the post this season will be Henry Madden and A.D. Smith, two players whom Kent values for their ability to play on the perimeter and down low.

"We're going to play [Madden] at the [small forward] spot, but you'll see him at the [power forward], too," Kent said. "And [Smith] can score inside, but can step outside and shoot the ball, which gives us an ability to cause some problems for some people, particularly when big guys guard him."

Should Kent's perimeter players fail to score on the break, with no less than five players able to play the post position, they will have a large presence to go to in the middle.

Centers

■ **CARSON:** played in 27 of 28 games last season ... had a career-high of 19 points twice in 1995

■ **NELSON:** Jesse Nash Award winner for most improved player last season ... has a 60.7 career field-goal percentage

■ **HARTENSTEIN:** Three-time German Junior National Team member ... sat out last season to study for TOEFL

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