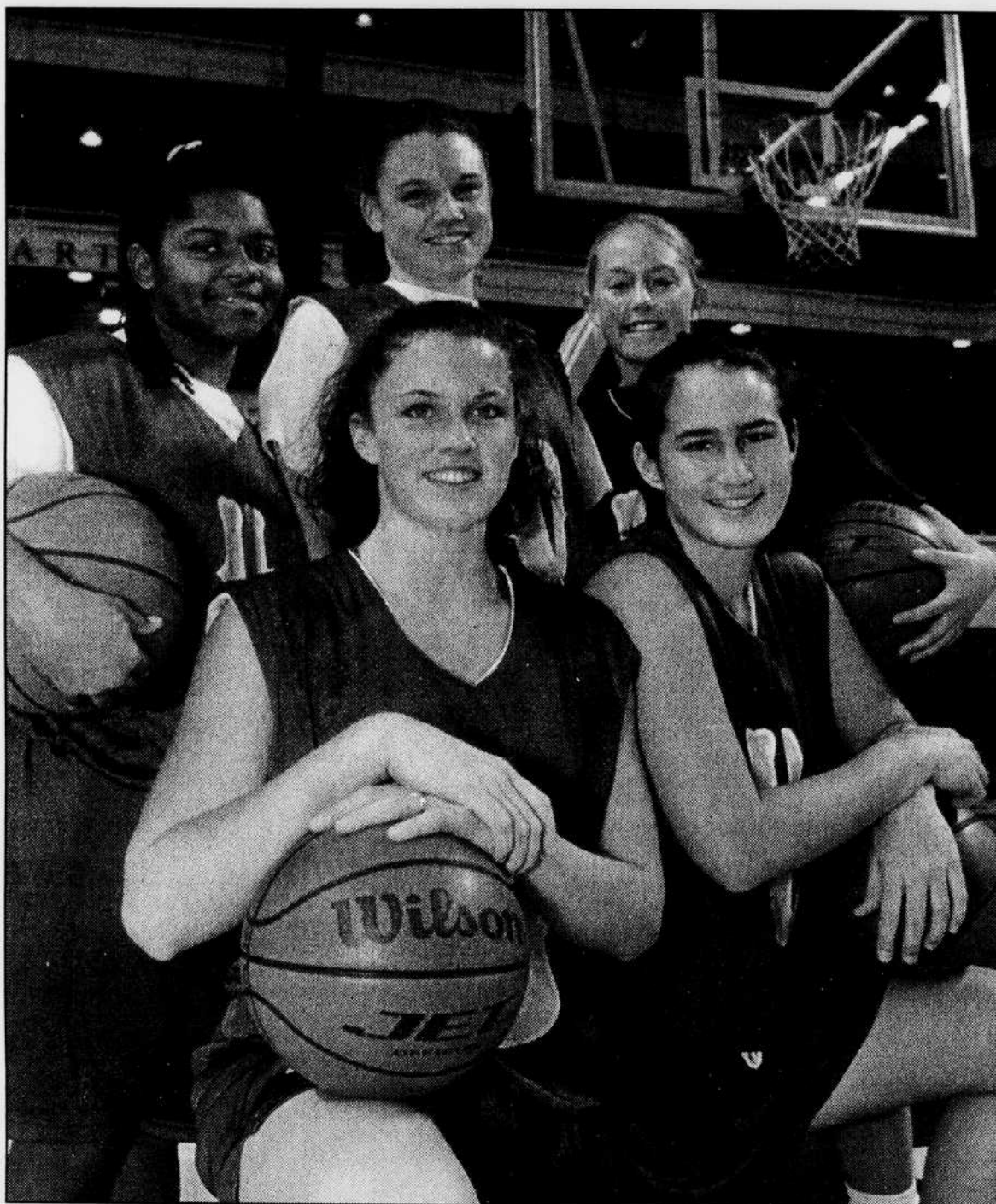




CHAD PATTESON/Emerald

Clockwise from top left: ReShawn Lewis, Lindsey Dion, Camber Ellingson, Angelina Wolvert and Brianne Meharry. Karen Piers is not pictured.

FRESH FACES

*Angelina Wolvert and Brianne Meharry head
a talented six-member freshman class*

BY ALEX POND
Sports Reporter

From unexpected misfortune often comes opportunity.

Misfortune struck the Oregon women's basketball team early in the season when a case of tendinitis took over in sophomore center Jenny Mowe's right knee. The injury caused her to miss the Ducks' past six games and will likely keep her out the rest of the 1997-98 campaign.

That leaves Oregon extremely thin in the post; the 6-foot-5 Mowe being the only true center on Oregon's roster and the player expected to carry the offensive and defensive load inside.

The opportunity was there for someone, anyone, to step up and try to follow in Mowe's gigantic footsteps.

Enter Brianne Meharry and Angelina Wolvert, two members of a talented six-player freshmen

class that gives fans a glimpse of the future of Oregon basketball.

"Obviously, Bri and Angelina have kind of been thrown into the fire with Jenny being hurt," Oregon head coach Jody Runge says. "I think they're doing amazingly well considering their youth."

Meharry, a 6-1 forward from Gladstone and a product of the famed Oregon City High School basketball program, is Oregon's leading scorer at 13.4 points per game and leader in total rebounds with 5.5 as the Ducks are off to an up and down 5-5 start to the 1997-98 season.

She has quickly developed from a player expected to simply fill a role while adjusting to the college game to one of Oregon's go-to players.

That much was evident in Oregon's 59-53 loss to Kansas on Dec. 29. The Ducks repeatedly looked to Meharry for big shots as they rallied from sizable deficits several times before ultimately coming up short. Meharry responded with her best game as a

Duck as she scored 18 points on 7-for-12 shooting from the floor and grabbed nine rebounds.

Being the go-to player might be uncommon for a freshman, but it is a role Meharry is familiar with.

"My junior and senior year in high school, that's the role I played," Meharry says. "So, yeah, I'm definitely comfortable being the go-to player, although it is a lot of pressure — a lot of pressure," she adds with a long sigh and a nervous grin. "It's the next level."

Meharry is coming off an 18-point, four-rebound effort in a 97-72 loss Sunday at perennial Pacific-10 Conference power Stanford, and her 21 points against Washington State in the Kona Classic on Dec. 20 were the most scored by an Oregon freshman since 1991. She also set a tournament single-game record by shooting 90 percent on 9-for-10 shooting from the field against the Cougars.

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