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Women: Team lacks confidence

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Successful in ball games it is because our guards haven't shot the ball well."

In Palo Alto, Calif., last Sunday, Hughes and fellow guard Lisa Bowyer combined for 17 points while hitting only 39 percent of their shots from the field. The result, not surprisingly to Runge, was a 25-point loss.

However, Hughes disagrees with the fact that the play of the guards determines the outcome of the team.

"I don't agree with blaming people," she said. "I don't like 'if we play well then we win, and if we play bad then we lose' because everyone has to play well, no matter if they're freshman, sophomore or junior, senior. If we do that, play as a team and play hard, that's all anyone can ask for."

While Runge talked about the guard play, Hughes said the Ducks' lack of confidence is a major reason for them "not playing as well as they can."

"I think how we do in the first half of the season, even these next two games, will determine what's going to happen the rest of the season," Hughes said. "If we win, it will give us confidence, which is something we are lacking right now."

Runge agrees that total team effort is needed.

"I think just playing together," she said. "I think you need to have good guard play every night. I think as our young players develop, the good thing about this team is that our margin for improvement is tremendous."

Whatever it is Oregon needs to get through the Pac-10 season suc-

cessfully, they must find it fast.

With three teams in the conference ranked in the top 25 (No. 7 Washington, No. 10 Arizona and No. 14 Stanford), the road back to the NCAA Tournament certainly is not an easy one.

Last season, five teams from the Pac-10 got into the tournament, but Runge said it may be difficult for her team to get back to where it was last season without at least a 13-5 mark in conference play.

"I don't know if 12-6 will get us in," she said. "I think it depends a lot on who those wins are against. I think if we can beat Stanford, Washington and Arizona each once at some point in the season, I think we might get in with 16. But I think there's got to be some big wins and we've got to make sure there aren't losses in there that shouldn't be losses."

Men: Kent says team can't look ahead

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ground somehow, and that will be gained by our mental preparation. If we do that, we will be a pretty good basketball team."

Despite the season-ending injury to center Mike Carson, Kent cites the play of his big men and the team's overall ability to shoot the ball as two of its strengths.

Forward Jonathon Nelson has been the biggest surprise — at least to outsiders — this season. The junior, who was left for dead on former head coach Jerry Green's bench last season, has really taken off, averaging 8.8 points and 5.1 rebounds. Sophomore forward A.D. Smith and freshman forward Flo Hartenstein will come off the bench to give the Ducks some muscle under the basket.

But it is forward Henry Madden, Oregon's leading scorer (14.3) and rebounder (5.3) who provides the spark for the Ducks' big men. Madden and guard Jamar Curry are the two remaining seniors on the team.

"We have been around the Pac-10," Madden said about himself and Curry, "so we have to be leaders and show the team that we know what it takes to win at this level. We also have to then go out and execute and do our jobs."

As it was proven against Stanford, that might not

always be enough. The same will hold true against defending Pac-10 champion UCLA and defending national champion Arizona.

Oregon should be able to handle Washington State and Southern California, and splitting the series against athletic Oregon State and Arizona State should also be possible. Washington will definitely give Oregon some matchup problems because of its size inside with 7-foot Todd MacCulloch and 7-1 Patrick Fenerling.

If Oregon wins more than six conference games, the season should be considered a success. Don't forget, last season's team won only eight conference games on its way to the National Invitation Tournament.

"It is important for us to take one game at a time," Kent said. "We cannot look ahead even one game because it is going to take so much focus on our part to put ourselves in a position to have an opportunity to win games. We're looking at the big picture and, in some cases, we may have to take a few steps backward to get forward."

"But, we are going to be very competitive this year and we are going to catch some people off guard."

With a team so young, inexperienced and still working to find its identity, that is about all you can expect.

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Kent: Program accepted by Duck players

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ty of Oregon." Still, some have slipped through the cracks. Talented guard Tyron Manlove quit the team and left school this past fall term after struggling with his academics. And no doubt Kent would like to have spent more time with forward Andre Larry, who was academically disqualified from the University at the end of spring term last year.

"Everything he does prepares you for life after basketball," says Oregon assistant manager Josh Unruh, who played four seasons for Kent at Saint Mary's. "I believe that he really cares for you and for what happens in your personal life and for what will hap-

pen to you after basketball. He wants to succeed at basketball, but he wants to succeed with good people."

The kicker of Kent's program is that eventually it will lead to the success of the basketball program in the win column as well, which, in the today's world of college basketball, will ultimately be how Kent is judged.

"My guys will graduate here from the University," Kent says. "And eventually, as a program, success will breed success. Incoming freshmen will walk in and they are going to see upperclassmen with their lives in order, their academics in order, their career opportunities in order, and it will all take care of it-

self and the continuity will be in place."

One current upperclassman on the Ducks is more than happy to help set the foundation.

"It seems like a blessing from God that Coach Kent is here," Madden, a senior, says. "He is a person that really cares for you both on and off the court, and he really believes in academics. When you have someone who really cares for you that much, you can't do anything but want him to succeed. So you try to elevate your game as much as you can for him to be successful."

With Kent, when it comes to the success of his players in basketball and in life, the feeling is mutual.

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