

Grass: Field drainage is a concern

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Moshofsky centers, natural grass would be installed with an eye on recruiting, Moos said.

"A grass field is certainly a recruiting benefit," Moos said. "Players these days concerned about injuries, field conditions and so forth, are many times concerned about artificial turf. That is somewhat ironic, because when it was originally developed, it was to cut down on injuries."

Artificial turf has become increasingly unpopular in recent years for contributing to several injuries to athletes, especially knee injuries to football players.

"We're very fortunate we have the safest artificial surface on which to play in OmniTurf," Bellotti said, "but I think there's no question most people perceive grass to be safer and have less wear and tear on the body."

Both Bellotti and Moos said their main concern would be the drainage a grass field in Oregon would require.

"We've got to discuss it with some consultants and take a look at how our other fields hold up," Moos said. "I think there's a good chance we might proceed with that, but not until we get some data back."

"I think the necessity for a new arena at this point would revolve around the actual structure of Mac Court, for how many years others feel we can put 10,000 people into it."

Bill Moos
UO athletic director

Moos said it is likely that a JumboTron, a giant-screened television that would provide instant replay inside the stadium, could be installed by this fall as part of a new scoreboard that would replace the scoreboard in the west end of Autzen Stadium.

The JumboTron would cost between \$2 million and \$4 million, depending on how elaborate it is, Moos said. And he indicated it would be quite elaborate.

"We're gonna have a nice one," Moos said. "If we're gonna put one in, we want one that is gonna serve all our needs."

Moos also said talks have begun about the possibility of expanding Autzen Stadium, probably by 10,000 to 15,000 seats, in the distant future. It currently has a capacity of 41,698.

"We are in the very beginning stages of doing some surveys and consulting with people to see if that would be in our best interest," Moos said. "That has not proceeded much further than just discussing what we feel our potential needs might be as we continue to improve our football program and continue to create interest in our football team."

Preliminary talks are also ongoing as to the possibility of building a new basketball arena, Moos said, although there is not a pressing need for one at this point. The recent renovations to McArthur Court and the fact that Oregon men's basketball coach Ernie Kent is not as adamant about a new arena as was his predecessor, Jerry Green, have pushed the idea to the back burner.

"Certainly coach Kent has a deep passion for Mac Court, is quite comfortable with it and does not see it as a recruiting disadvantage in any way," Moos said. "I think the necessity for a new arena at this point would revolve around the actual structure of Mac Court, for how many years others feel we can put 10,000 people into it."

Moos said nothing other than talks would be done regarding a new arena for at least seven years.

Notes: Civil War moved from Saturday to Thursday

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for her, but she will be back next season, albeit with just three seasons of eligibility left.

But you can bet watching the team play without her will not be easy.

"She just loves to play, and it's going to be really hard for her to watch," Runge said.

So after the initial shock of Meharry's injury, Runge and the Ducks must start their work on replacing yet another loss to their inside game, which was young when the season started.

Junior Natasha O'Brien, who began to show her explosive offensive talents in the last two games, and senior Mendy Benson will be asked to help out in the post, Runge said Sunday.

O'Brien is a 5-foot-11 forward from West Beach, Australia, who sat out last season with an NCAA suspension for competing in a semi-professional league in Australia.

Benson is a 6-foot senior from Kenai, Alaska, who has started four games this season and averaged 16.7 minutes per game before Saturday's game.

Should O'Brien, Benson and the Ducks somehow overcome injuries to two of their most important players, Runge will have to be the conference's coach of the year. The Ducks' road to the tournament will be anything but smooth from here on out.

National attention

In this week's Associated Press top 25, Oregon received

11 votes, tying them for 33rd with Colorado State.

Stanford is the highest ranked conference team at No. 9. Arizona is right behind them at No. 10 and Washington, which Oregon beat 76-59 in Seattle Jan. 15, is the third and final Pac-10 team ranked in the top 25 at No. 18.

With wins over two top 13 teams in a matter of two weeks, wouldn't it make sense for the Ducks to earn more than 11 votes?

I suppose that's what six losses overall does.

Four in a row

The Ducks are now riding a four-game winning streak with wins over two teams that were ranked in the top 13 in the nation.

A big part of that streak has been the Ducks' improved free-throw shooting. Over the last four games, Oregon has hit 71.3 percent of its free-throw attempts compared to the 61.8 percent the Ducks were shooting from the line prior to the four-game streak.

Also during the run the Ducks are holding their opponents to 60.8 points per game, more than six points less than before the streak.

Game change

This week's Oregon-Oregon State game in Corvallis has been moved to Thursday at 7 p.m. The game was originally scheduled for Saturday.

Ryan Frank is the sports editor for the Emerald.



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