



Men's Basketball
Clemson vs. North Carolina,
ESPN (34), 6 p.m.

Autzen may have natural turf for 1999 season

Athletic director Bill Moos says a JumboTron may be installed in Autzen as early as next season

By Alex Pond
Sports Reporter

Now that construction of the Ed Moshofsky Sports Center is well underway, Oregon officials are focusing their attention on how to further improve the school's athletic facilities, Oregon athletic director Bill Moos said last week.

Moos said next up on the list could be the addition of a JumboTron in Autzen Stadium, likely for the 1998 season, and a natural grass surface could replace the current OmniTurf surface, possibly as early as 1999.

It would be the first natural grass surface in the stadium in about 30 years. It was built in 1967 with a natural grass surface,

but the stadium's first artificial turf surface was installed in 1969. The surface has been replaced every seven to eight years since then, with the current surface being installed in 1991.

Keeping with the trend, the stadium will be up for a surface replacement in the next year or so, Moos said.

"We feel we do have a good artificial turf that was probably the state of the art at the time," Moos said. "But as we approach the need to replace it, we want to look at the prospects of putting natural grass back in there."

Oregon head football coach Mike Bellotti said he is all for the installation of grass.

"I think it's very, very positive," he said. "I've been told that we have several people who would want to donate the money to get it done. The second thing is that the people who put in our brand-new grass practice fields feel very strongly that those fields will hold up under any conditions, and if that is proven correct, I think we can move ahead very, very quickly on putting grass in Autzen Stadium."

Moos said the cost of the project would probably be between \$1 million and \$2 million, with the money coming from fund raising.

Like the building of the Casanova and

"... I think there's no question most people perceive grass to be safer and have less wear and tear on the body."

Mike Bellotti
UO football head coach

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Realignment pleases UO coaches

The Pac-10 has changed its format from two divisions to one for both men and women

By Tim Pyle
Freelance Sports Reporter

Where once there were two, now there is one.

After years of abiding by a two-division format in tennis, the Pacific-10 Conference has unified this season.

A change the Oregon coaches embrace.

"We were not in a conference before," said Oregon men's tennis head coach Chris Russell. "We played a couple of events and we played those schools, but we were not treated as an equal partner."

In the past, the Pac-10 was divided into Northern and Southern divisions for tennis. The Northern Division consisted of Oregon, Washington and Washington State, which only has a women's tennis team.

The Southern Division contained the California and Arizona universities that are part of the Pac-10 in football (UCLA, Southern California, California, Stanford, Arizona and Arizona State).

When Oregon or Washington wanted to play southern teams, they would often have to agree to unequal terms. The conference powerhouses like Stanford and UCLA did not want to spend their time and money traveling north to play teams they considered inferior, Russell said.

Because of that, the Ducks would annually travel south without receiving a home match in return.

"It's one thing to go in and get beaten by a good team at their place," Russell said. "But it's another thing to go in and get beaten by a good team and know that you're never going to get to play them at your place."

From now on, both the Oregon men's and women's tennis teams will annually alternate home matches with their Pac-10 competitors.

This commitment will do wonders for both Oregon programs, according to Russell and women's head coach Jack Griffin.

"It's huge for us in terms of recruiting, fan support and everything," Griffin said. "It's going to make a big difference in the next couple of years."

Russell, Washington men's head coach

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MOVING ON

Oregon women deal with latest setback



Despite wins over nationally ranked conference opponents, the Ducks are still not ranked in the Associated Press top 25

Could things get any worse for Jody Runge and the Oregon women?

Their dominating inside force (Jenny Mowe) went down with tendinitis in her right knee in November and will miss the rest of the season.

At the time, it seemed like the worst case scenario for the Ducks.

The 6-foot-5 sophomore was the team's best player and a Pacific-10 Conference all-freshman selection from a season ago.

She was expected to carry the young Ducks all the way back to the postseason.

After Mowe's injury, common sense said they would have been lucky to get back to the NCAA Tournament for the fifth straight season.

But the situation didn't seem so bad a few weeks later as freshmen Brienne Meharry and Angelina Wolvert began to play like they'd been around for years.

All of a sudden it didn't look so unlikely that Oregon could work its way into the tournament.

They dropped a few games here and there, but a solid conference season and a few big wins, especially on the road, would've gotten them there.

That thinking was logical until the worst case scenario happened yet once again last Saturday when Meharry crashed to the floor and tore her ACL, putting her out of the lineup for the remainder of the season.

The injury is obviously tough for Meharry, who was leading the team with 14 points and 6.4 rebounds per contest. She was well on her way to all-freshman team honors in the conference and a possible freshman of the year honor, Runge said Sunday.

But if anyone on the team has the personality to handle a situation such as this, it's Meharry.

After the game, and before she knew the injury would put her out for the season, she was smiling and talking about how hard she was going to work to get back.

That kind of character is not often found in players that age. The road back to competition will be long and difficult

OPINION



Ryan Frank

EMERALD

Natasha O'Brien and Mendy Benson (not pictured) will be asked to help out inside in Meharry's absence. Meharry and Jenny Mowe are out for the season with injuries.

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