

Tennis: Format will help recruiting

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Matt Anger and former Oregon senior women's administrator Barbara Walker were those directly involved with pushing for the realigned Pac-10.

Their hard work has paid off — big time.

"I think the key factor that finally got the move going the way we wanted was the [Northern] schools committing to the programs," Anger said. "The Southern schools before could argue that the Northern schools aren't as strong and don't commit to the sport. But now the programs in the north are getting stronger each year, and the universities are committed to the sport."

The change was not influenced solely by the Northern schools' pleas. The NCAA has adopted a 64-team, basketball-style tournament for tennis beginning this season. The Pac-10 champion will receive an automatic bid to the tournament.

"There was some influence into the decision," said Chris Hoyles, the assistant commissioner of championships and administration for the Pac-10. "The NCAA was at that point contemplating moving toward automatic qualification for a team champion, and we were uncertain with our previous format as to how we

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Chris Russell
UO men's tennis head coach

would get a team champion."

The Southern schools may have initially opposed the unification of the conference, but there seem to be no hard feelings now. In fact, the Southern programs appear to be embracing the change.

"It wasn't fair to the Northwest schools," said Dick Gould, the head coach of Stanford's No. 1-ranked men's team. "We selfishly did not want to give up our home-court advantage."

Even though he voted against the new format, both Gould and

Stanford women's head coach Frank Brennan said they knew the unification was inevitable.

"I think it was something we had to do," Brennan said. "The teams in the Northwest are getting stronger, so it's not the problem it used to be."

Now that the ordeal is solved and the conference is complete, the Ducks will play some of the elite teams in the country.

On the men's side, Stanford, UCLA and USC are all ranked in the top 10 in the nation. On the women's side, the Cardinal is the defending national champion.

The only difference is that the Ducks now have the opportunity to challenge the best in their own backyard. The women begin with home matches against Stanford and California this weekend, while the men start out on the road against the same two opponents.

As all sports fans and participants know, home truly is sweet.

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Los Angeles Lakers send 4 players to All-Star game

Philadelphia was the last team to send four players to the All-Star game 15 years ago

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — For the first time since 1983, a team will have four players in the NBA All-Star game, with Los Angeles Lakers guards Nick Van Exel and Eddie Jones chosen as reserves Tuesday, joining starters Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant.

"One of my main goals this season was to play like an All-Star, and maybe then get selected to the All-Star team," Van Exel said.

Van Exel will be making the trip to the game with his close friend Jones.

"If they hadn't voted me on and not voted Nick on, I might have been disappointed," Jones said. "It's a relief to see him honored. He's been one of the top guards in the Western Conference since I've been here."

The last team to have four players in the game was Philadelphia, with Julius Erving, Moses Malone, Maurice Cheeks and Andrew Toney on the Eastern Conference team 15 years ago.

The four Lakers will play for the Western Conference team against the East in the Feb. 8 game in Madison Square Garden.

Other reserves added to the West roster were San Antonio

forward Tim Duncan, the only rookie on either squad, and his teammate, center David Robinson; forward Vin Baker of Seattle; and guards Mitch Richmond of Sacramento and Jason Kidd of Phoenix.



Selected as East reserves were guard Reggie Miller and center Rik Smits of Indiana, center-forward Jayson Williams of New Jersey, forwards Glen Rice of Charlotte and Antoine Walker of Boston and guards Tim Hardaway of Miami and Steve Smith of Atlanta.

The 14 reserves were added to the teams by a vote of the coaches in each conference.

Van Exel clashed publicly last season with Lakers coach Del Harris, with the two arguing on the bench during a playoff game.

"I would have felt badly for either one who didn't make it," Harris said of Van Exel and Jones. "The odds were only one would be chosen."

Van Exel said he worked hard during the summer in an effort to change people's perceptions of him.

"I've always wanted to play, but I've been put in negative situations and been looked at in a negative way, like pushing a referee and arguing with the coach," he said. "I said to myself, this is my year. I worked all summer to make it."

Larry Bird of Indiana will coach the East and George Karl of Seattle will coach the West.

CORRECTION

Because of an editing error, Tuesday's story on the Ed Mosbofsky Sports Center should have said the \$13.8 million project also includes two outdoor football practice fields and a soccer field. The Emerald regrets the error.

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