



Men's Basketball
Arizona vs. Stanford,
FOXSN (23), 7:30 p.m.

Women face first challenge without Meharry

Sonja Curtis will replace Brianne Meharry in the starting lineup tonight against the Beavers

By Alex Pond
Sports Reporter

Life without Brianne Meharry in uniform starts tonight for the Oregon women.

For the second time this season, the Ducks will be put to the task of replacing one of their star inside players when they travel up the road to take on Oregon State (6-11 overall, 1-7 Pacific-10 Conference) at 7 p.m. in Corvallis.

First, the Ducks (10-6, 6-2) lost sophomore center Jenny Mowe after four games to tendinitis in her right knee.

They survived that loss, largely because of the contribution of Meharry, who was the Ducks' leading scorer (14.6 points a game) and rebounder (6.9 a game) before tearing her ACL less than a minute into the

Ducks' 100-61 win over Arizona State last Saturday.

Now they are down to just two true post players on their roster, in 6-foot-3 freshman Angelina Wolvert and 6-2 junior Sonja Curtis.



The loss of Meharry for the season has put a damper on the fact that Oregon has recently been playing its best basketball of the season. Heading into tonight's contest, the Ducks have won four

straight games and five of their past six to move into a second-place tie in the conference with Arizona.

"It's kind of deflating to have two good

weekends like we've had," said Oregon head coach Jody Runge, "and having had an up-and-down preseason, to have gotten to a point where we're playing well in Jenny's absence and then have another setback by having your leading scorer and rebounder go out with a season-ending injury."

Runge said she is not sure how her players will deal with the latest dose of adversity.

"I think they're just kind of waiting to see how it goes," she said. "I think it's just an emotional blow that they're going to have to get over, and we need to play to get a feel for how that's going to look. It's hard to get that feeling just in practice."

Curtis, who has started four games and

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On tap

- **WHAT:** Women's basketball
- **WHO:** Oregon Ducks v. Oregon State Beavers
- **WHEN:** 7 p.m.
- **RADIO:** KUGN 590 AM

"He's the heart and soul of their team right now. He's one of the premier players in the league."

Ernie Kent
UO head coach

The long road to success

Compton, Calif. native Corey Benjamin is one of the Pac-10's top five NBA draft prospects

By Rob Moseley
Sports Reporter

The road from Compton, Calif., to Corvallis is not one traversed often. The stretch of just more than 700 miles includes more than hard asphalt, fast-food restaurants and gas stations. It is a road that connects differing lifestyles, politics and ideals. Traveling that road involves crossing not only physical borders, but cultural ones as well.

Oregon State's basketball star of the 1980s, A.C. Green, hailed from Portland and didn't have to travel that road. The man that brought the Beavers back into the national spotlight in the late '80s, Gary Payton, made half the journey, starting in Oakland, Calif.

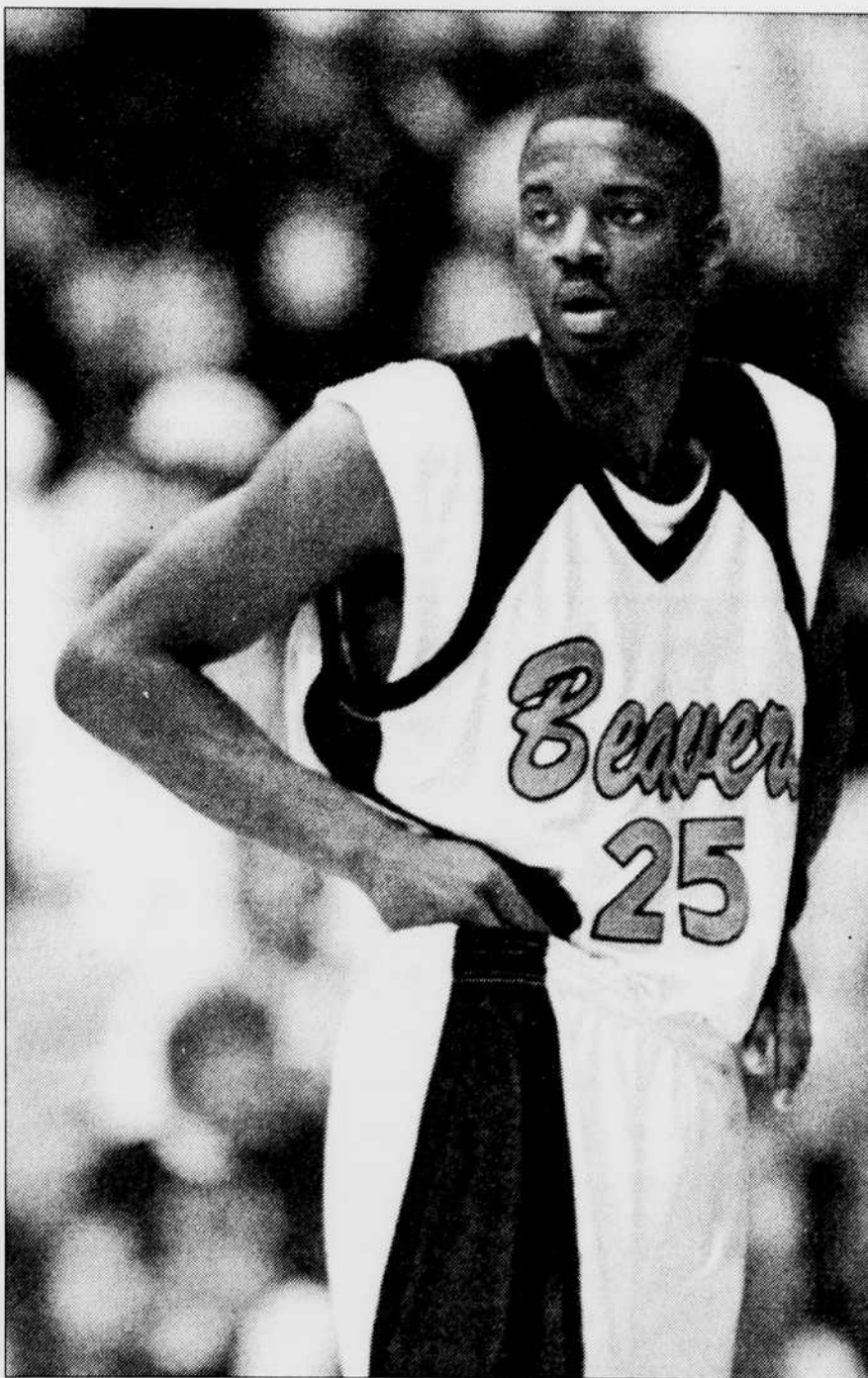
But the man who is close to bringing the Beavers to prominence in 1998 made the entire trek. Corey Benjamin, a 6-foot-6 shooting guard born in Compton just less than 20 years ago, is synonymous with Oregon State basketball these days.

"He is the heart and soul of their team right now," says Oregon head coach Ernie Kent. "He's one of the premier players in the league."

Although Benjamin took a longer route to Corvallis than his famed predecessors, it was not an untrodden path. Corey's older brother, Sonny, is a senior at Oregon State this season, and it was Sonny Benjamin who convinced his younger brother to make the trip north.

"He went to college before me, so he basically knew the ropes," Corey Benjamin says. "I would say it was better for me coming in as a college freshman with him knowing that."

The younger Benjamin's journey began at North High School in Riverside, Calif., where he first played alongside his brother. But after Sonny Benjamin left to begin his collegiate career, Corey Benjamin transferred to national pow-



EMERALD

Oregon State sophomore sensation Corey Benjamin leads the Beavers into McArthur Court for the first Civil War battle of the season on Saturday.

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Ducks looking for prep running back

Oregon coaches hope they can sign 6-foot-1, 205-pound DeShaun Foster by Feb. 4

With the loss of tailback Saladin McCullough to graduation, the Oregon coaches have turned their recruiting attention to prep running backs.

McCullough, the Ducks' single-season rushing record holder, left the Ducks as one of the top running backs in school history.

Running back Derien Latimer, who will be a junior next fall, has proven himself in limited roles over the past two seasons, but Oregon coaches are looking hard for a top prep running back who can contribute for years.

With signing day less than one week away on Feb. 4, the player Oregon coaches hope they

FOOTBALL

can sign is DeShaun Foster, a 6-foot-1, 205-pound running back who



Recruiting Report
by Ryan Frank

some call one of the top running backs in the nation.

He was Cal-Hi Magazine's California player of the year and rushed for 3,395 yards and 54 touchdowns in his senior season.

He is the Ducks' most sought-after recruit, but he is likely to sign with UCLA. Oregon was one of his final five choices before he narrowed his decision to UCLA or Texas.

Oregon has an oral commitment from the No. 1 junior-college tailback in the nation, Ruben Droughns, 6-1, 205, who signed with Oregon out of high school before becoming academically ineligible.

He is a highly touted running back who runs a 4.4-second 40, but his grades are suspect.

Some reports have said McCullough's brother, Sultan McCullough, the nation's fourth-best back according to ESPN's reports, added Oregon to his list of the final two after John Robinson was fired from Southern California.

Saladin McCullough was said to be pushing his brother toward Oregon, but Sultan McCullough has orally committed to the Trojans.

Oregon does have a good shot at signing Herman Ho-Ching, a 6-2, 200-pound back out of Long Beach Poly High School. Ho-Ching rushed for 1,480 yards and 26

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