

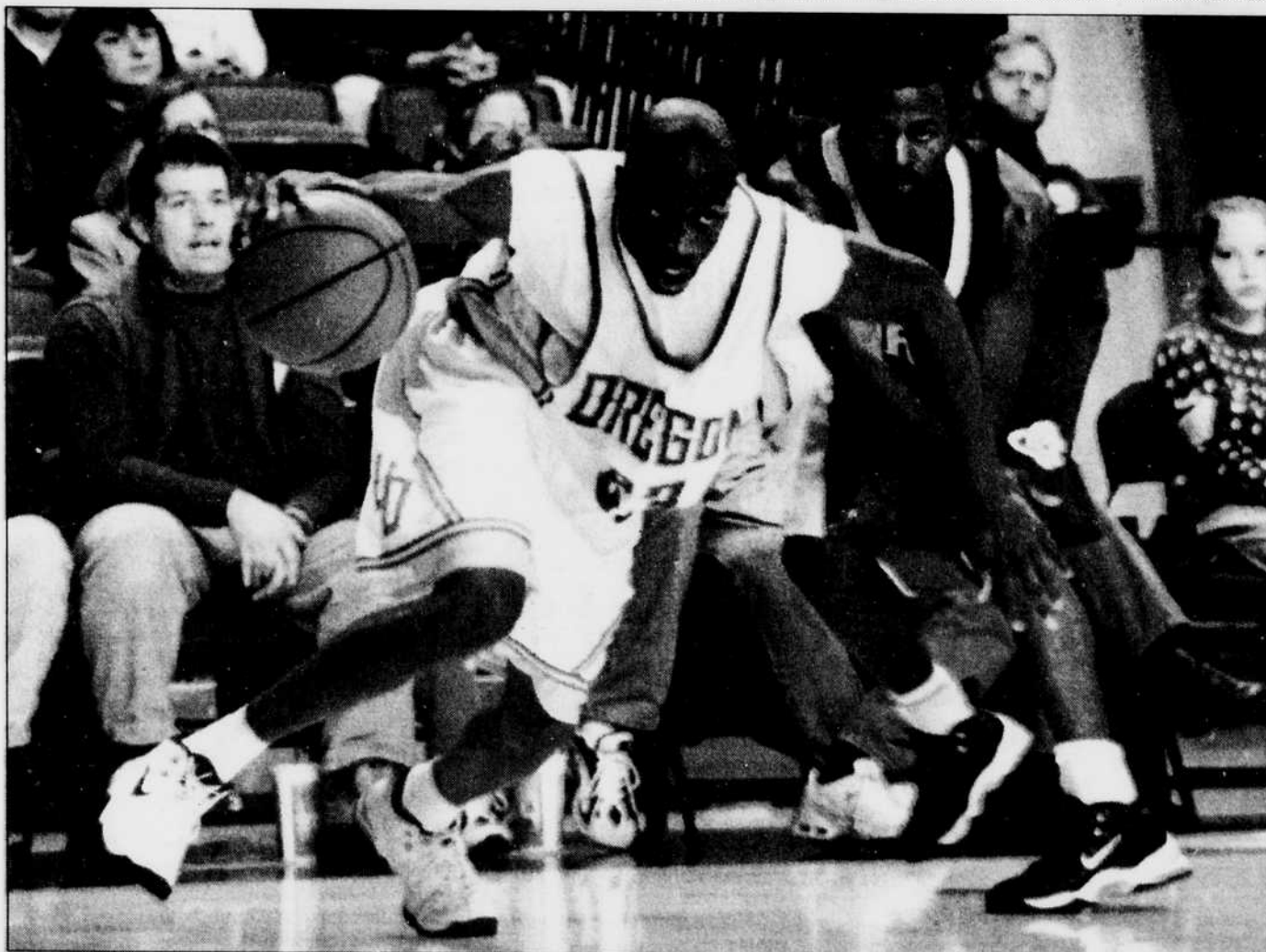


NCAA Men's Basketball  
Clemson vs. N. Carolina St.,  
ESPN (34), 4:30 p.m.

# SPORTS

Oregon Daily  
**Emerald**

*Jamar Curry has been a driving force for Oregon during his four seasons, particularly with his energetic approach to the game.*



*"Jamar is a prime example of what Oregon basketball is all about. He is our spark."*

**Terik Brown**  
UO Guard

EMERALD

**By Chris Hansen**  
Assistant Sports Editor

What is it about Jamar Curry that has had the McArthur Court crowd so enamored with him the last five years?

After all, the senior has never been a premier scorer on the team. His career average of 8.2 points is indicative of Curry often being the third or fourth scoring option in the Ducks' offense.

So maybe it's his enthusiasm? Curry certainly is one of the most spirited Ducks.

Or is it his athleticism? He may not be the tallest player on the team, but Curry definitely has the most hops. At only 6-foot-3 and a slight 175 pounds, the guard/small forward can catch more air than Johnny Moseley — and has more moves too — and Curry doesn't need a mogul to give him the lift either.

It could be his defense. As a defender, Curry can be summed up in one word: tenacious. Remember the job he did last season against Fresno State, single-handedly shutting down the guard combination of Chris Herron and Dominick Young in the Ducks' upset win of the No. 13 Bulldogs?

But Curry, 23, tends to believe it is something else. "It's my smile," he says of his toothy grin that extends from ear to ear. "I just love to smile. People with

## Success STORY

*Senior Jamar Curry has fought adversity and come out smiling*

a mean face are intimidating. They probably can relate to that. I just try to make it fun for everybody by getting them into it, getting them pumped up off my energy by yelling, screaming, jumping. I want to look like I'm having a good time every time I play, and I think the fans get energized off that."

That he is even able to wear a smile is a testament to the courage and character of someone who grew up on the tough streets of Jersey City, N.J., "a ghetto," as Curry describes it.

His father died from a heart attack when he was 14.

Not only did Curry have to deal with the grief of losing his dad, but he also was forced to become the man of the house and had the responsibility of helping care for his younger brother and sister.

"I had to mature real quick with my pop gone," he says. "I had to do my sister's hair in the morning when my mom went to work, buy my little brother clothes, take them to school, and then just keep them out of trouble. I had to teach them right from wrong."

That meant keeping himself out of trouble. With the guidance and support of his mother and other family members, Curry was steered clear of the dangers — drugs, gangs, etc. — that are commonplace in the environment where he grew up.

There are 3,000 miles between Eugene and Jersey City, but to Curry they are worlds apart. Once in Eugene, he was able to study in quiet and feel safe walking across campus at 4 in the morning. Not to mention the fact that the extra burdens he had to bear back home were no longer with him.

"All my pressures were gone," he said. "Coming here got my mind off a lot of things that I had to deal

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## Arizona State looks to be front-runner for Pac-10 title

The word around the Pacific-10 Conference is that this Saturday's conference championships should be a walk in the park for defending Pac-10 champion Arizona State.

Four of the Pac-10's most experienced head coaches feel that the No. 5 Sun Devils are head and shoulders above the rest of the field and could send as many as eight wrestlers to the NCAA Championships in Cleveland, Ohio, on March 19.

"The Sun Devils are the clear favorite, no question," Stanford head coach Chris Horpel said Tuesday. "There are a few schools that could finish as high as second, but no one right now can compete with Arizona State."

Maybe not. The No. 17 Oregon wrestling team leads the Pac-10 with nine wrestlers who are ranked in the top four in their respective conference weight classes. That's better than Arizona State's eight, Oregon State's five and Cal Poly

SLO and Boise State's four.

The problem for Oregon is that only one Duck wrestler, 134-pound Jeremy Ensrud, can truly be called the best Pac-10 wrestler at his weight. Despite a 15-6 major decision against Oregon State's Ben Richards two weeks ago, Oregon's John Taylor dropped to second in the 118-pound weight class. Taylor, who missed the Ducks' first six matches this season with a leg injury, has earned a 10-5 dual-meet record since rejoining the team on Dec. 29.

The middle weights will probably be the most critical for Oregon this weekend. If Daryl Christian, who ranks third in the conference at 150 pounds, and Kevin Keeney and Doug Lee, who rank second in the Pac-10 at 167 and 177 pounds, respectively, can advance to the semifinals or final matches, the Ducks will have a shot.

The key to the championships, Horpel said, is be-

ing able to win the close matches and stay healthy.

Barring some sort of freak illness or tragedy, Ensrud will record his 100th career victory for the Ducks on the first day of the tournament. The nation's No. 3 wrestler at 134 pounds and the defending Pac-10 champion, Ensrud ranks seventh on the Duck all-time wins list with 98.

If Ensrud defends his Pac-10 championship crown from a year ago, he will jump into fourth place all-time and still get to compete at the NCAA Championships three weeks later.

Oregon is one of four Pac-10 teams ranked in the nation's top 25, making this one of the country's most competitive championship trophies. Cal-State Bakersfield, which finished eighth at the NCAA Championships last season, currently holds down the nation's No. 23 spot. Oregon State ranks No. 25.

Joel Hood is a sports reporter for the Emerald.



### Wrestling Notes

by Joel Hood