

Moseley: Newman's future uncertain

■ Continued from Page 7
with a solid core of 8 to 10 sure lottery picks followed by a large group of fringe players, in which Benjamin would fit.

Second, according to a source close to the team, Benjamin recently cleaned out what is normally an extremely messy locker.

Finally, Corey's brother Sonny just completed his final year of eligibility for the Beavers. Joining Sonny was the younger Benjamin's main reason for choosing Oregon State, and Sonny's departure could signal Corey's as well. A telling sign came just prior to Oregon State's Civil War matchup with Oregon on Feb. 28.

The Beavers honored their senior class before the tipoff of that contest, and when Sonny Benjamin came to midcourt to be applauded by the fans, Corey joined him.

Officially, Corey Benjamin still needs to consult his parents and coaches before making a final decision, which will only include the NBA if he feels he will be a first-round pick.

Payne said Benjamin will wait to make his decision until after the NBA draft lottery participants have been announced, when he will know which teams are in need of a player at his position.

As for Payne's status, the feeling on campus is that he will be granted at least one more year to prove himself in the Pac-10. Although his teams have struggled the past few seasons, he has

built a solid base of recruits, including Benjamin, sophomore John-Blair Bickerstaff and freshman point guard Deaundra Tanner. The Beavers also showed flashes of promise this season in wins over California and Arizona State, as well as a one-point loss to No. 2 Arizona.

"We're excited about Eddie Payne," said new Oregon State athletic director Mitch Barnhart. "He has a lot to offer this university and the conference. We just need to give him the atmosphere and environment to be successful."

Barnhart, who began his duties as the athletic director on Monday, said he and Payne are working on renegotiating the coach's current contract.

Payne said he has felt no pressure from the former or current athletic department staff.

Rumors flying in the desert

Arizona State finished its season 18-13 before playing Hawaii in the first round of the National Invitation Tournament Wednesday night, but rumors are already flying regarding the Sun Devils' head coach, Don Newman.

Newman was hired as an assistant last summer and was named interim head coach when Bill Frieder resigned as head coach before the season began. Newman retained the interim title throughout the year, and was thought to be in the running for the permanent job before the Sun Devils were soundly beaten by both Southern California and

UCLA to end the season.

Arizona State athletic director Kevin White has refused comment throughout the season, but speculation out of Tempe is that the Sun Devils have considered both Utah's Rick Majerus and Mississippi's Rob Evans for the job next season.

Newman has maintained he will not take an assistant's job should someone else be named head coach at Arizona State, and Newman's name has been mentioned regarding the Washington State job.

Eastman likely to stay at WSU

Unfortunately for Newman, it doesn't look like the Washington State position will be an option.

Current head coach Kevin Eastman has two years left on his contract and doesn't appear to be in danger of being fired, despite the Cougars' 3-15 record in the Pac-10 this season.

Both of Eastman's two best players entering 1997-98 will be gone by the time next season begins. Forward Rodrigo de la Fuente left Pullman in January to play professionally in his native Spain, while power forward Carlos Daniel just completed his senior campaign.

Eastman has a four-man recruiting class entering next season that can be labeled questionable at best, as it includes one player who is completing his fifth year of high school this year after failing to finish in four years.

Rob Moseley is a sports reporter for the Emerald.

Hood: Knight opts for fine rather than suspension

■ Continued from Page 7
won its first-round game. So why are these teams here? Shouldn't this be a tournament of the 64 best teams in college basketball? Wouldn't Wake Forest, Ball State, Louisville or Arizona State give the No. 1 seeds a better match-up?

The answer is no. What makes this tournament great is that there are teams like Radford, Prairie View and South Carolina State that can go the entire regular season without basketball fans outside of their own campus knowing they exist. And what makes this tournament great is that these schools, no matter how small, no matter how obscure, start even with the Dukes and the Kansases of this world when they qualify for the "Big Dance." No doubt their tournament experience will be short lived, but for one day they can stand proud and say they matched up with one of college basketball's elite teams. And maybe, just maybe, one of these teams can score the biggest upset in their school's history.

That being said, the four No. 16 seeds in this year's tournament have no shot at dethroning a No. 1 — none. Other than that, the tournament could be wide open. Here are some things we know, and things we don't know, about the brackets.

We know that head coach Bob Knight will be on the bench for Indiana in their first-round match-up against Oklahoma. Earlier this week, Knight was told that he may face a \$10,000 fine for his behavior in a game on Feb. 24 or a one-game suspension effective immediately. Like a good coach, Knight will be with his team Thursday night. I see an

inspired Indiana team rolling over Oklahoma because of it.

We know that Arizona head coach Lute Olson must be at least a little concerned about a possible second-round matchup with Tennessee and head coach Jerry Green. Green beat the same Arizona team last season with a much weaker one that he would bring to the court on Saturday.

We don't yet know which No. 12 seed will be a No. 5. It happens every year, but this year there seems to be a couple of overrated No. 5s. I'm glad to see Princeton in the tourney, but I hope the coaching staff didn't have them pack a lot of luggage. UNLV should make the Tigers the first upset of the day.

We don't know why no one is talking about Stanford. All this team did was hang around the top 10 all season and finish second in one of the nation's toughest conferences.

We don't know why "experts" can make No. 4 seeds or higher their sleeper picks. Fourth-ranked Maryland, No. 2 Cincinnati and No. 2 Kentucky are not sleepers. On any given day these teams can beat the No. 1s ranked in their bracket.

We know that the Pacific-10 Conference is again underrated. We know that the Big Ten Conference team's should all be out by the second round and that North Carolina showed Duke once and for all who the best team in the country is.

March 30, 1998. San Antonio, Texas. North Carolina 86, Kansas 79. Happy betting.

Joel Hood is a sports reporter for the Emerald. Comments? hood@gladstone.uoregon.edu

Underdogs look to upset NCAA Tournament

Some teams in the East Region hope to avoid first-round losses

By Joseph White
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Welcome to the home of the unfamiliar faces and first-round flops, a site where seven of the eight teams have won exactly one NCAA Tournament game since 1994.

At the very least, sheer math promises that some of those streaks will end when the East Regional begins Thursday at the MCI Center.

Among those yearning for March

success is South Carolina, winless in the NAAs since 1973 and the victim of the first-round upset special last year when it lost as a No. 2 seed to Coppin State. The Gamecocks (23-7), third-seeded this time, are trying to avoid back-to-back embarrassments in a matchup with No. 14 seed Richmond.

"I haven't dwelt much on last year, quite honestly," South Carolina coach Eddie Fogler said. "I haven't changed anything. If we get beat again, that'll be a bright statement, won't it?"

Southern Conference champion Richmond (22-7) has a history of

pulling upsets, and alumni have spent this week reminding the players of the Spiders' shocker over second-seeded Syracuse at nearby College Park, Md., in 1991. Forward Jarod Stevenson said such talk does build confidence.

"But we weren't a part of that," he said. "And coach [John] Beilein wasn't a part of that."

Indiana and Oklahoma have also played the futility game lately. The seventh-seeded Hoosiers (19-11) have lost in the first round each of the last three years, and not even the fury of coach Bob Knight could save them.

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