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&  
**Oregon State**  
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# WOMEN'S NCAA TOURNAMENT SPECIAL

## Runge and family return home

The UO head coach will have her own entourage for Saturday's game

**Alex Pond**  
Sports Reporter

AMES, Iowa — Talk about unlikely homecomings.

Oregon could have gone just about anywhere in the country for the NCAA Tournament, yet they were sent to Iowa.

The announcement that the Ducks would travel to Iowa didn't bring much excitement from the players, but it is a chance for head coach Jody Runge to return to her roots.

Runge grew up in the tiny town of Waukon, located about 200 miles northeast of Ames, where the 12th seeded Ducks are set to take on fifth-seeded Rutgers in a first-round Midwest Regional game Saturday at 1 p.m. PST.

Her basketball playing and coaching career has taken her all over the United States to such places as Kentucky, Florida, Alabama, Colorado, Missouri and Oregon.

Now, she is home if only ever so briefly.

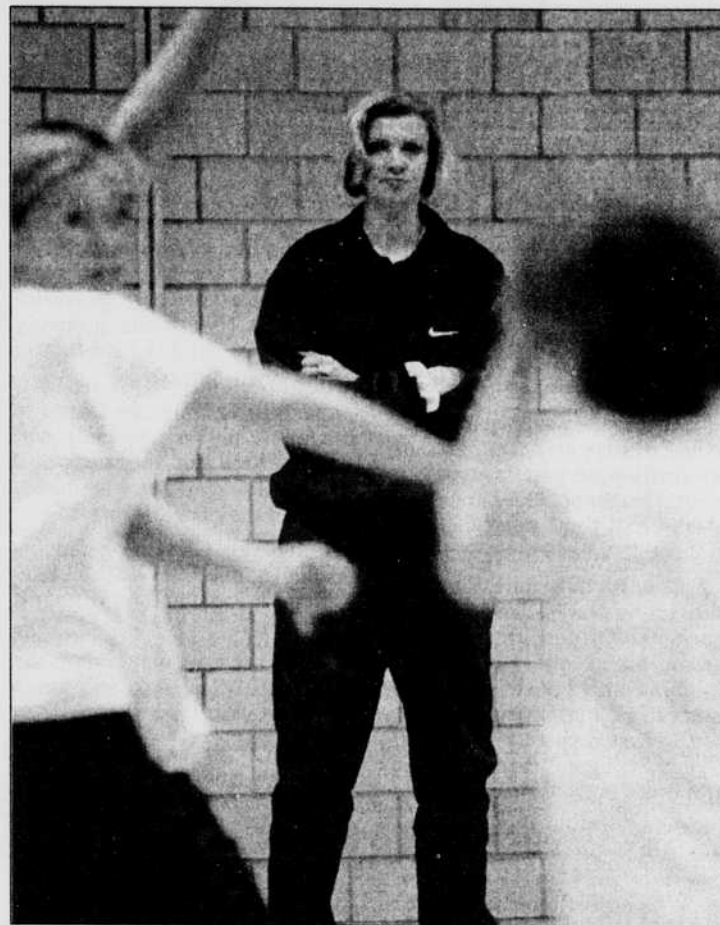
"It's nice," she said Thursday. "I know I definitely don't miss the weather. We've all laughed and commented about that today, that we really appreciate living in Oregon and all that."

Runge will have quite the entourage at Saturday's game.

"My family will be coming in [today] for the game, and it will be nice to see those people," she said.

The list is quite lengthy. "My brother and his wife and their daughter will be here. My Aunt Julie and her husband and their two children and their children will all be here."

Runge's Waukon High School basketball coach, Bob Sampson, will also be in attendance, "along



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Runge watches her team practice Thursday.

with whoever else decides to show up," she said with a smile.

For Runge, the chance for the Ducks to play in Iowa beats the sites they've been shipped off to in the past — places more unfamiliar, such as Athens, Ga., or Knoxville, Tenn. — sites of their past two tournament trips.

"I've been to all the places we've been shipped off to, but it's nice to come home where you grew up," she said. "There's always a sense of coming home when you go somewhere that you're familiar with, and it's comfortable."

The trip is also a homecoming opportunity for Runge's parents, Joan and Dennis, who moved to Eugene in 1996 to be near their daughter.

"It's nice to be back," Joan Runge said. "However, we are certainly appreciative of what we left in Oregon," she added in reference to the warm sunshine they left behind in Eugene on Wednesday.

"One of the reasons that we left Iowa was because of what we see outside right now," she said about the frigid temperatures that have hit the state.

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