

SPORTS

THURSDAY
November 19, 1998Best Bet
College Football
Pittsburgh at Miami (Fla.)
5 p.m., ESPN 

OREGON PREVIEW

Defense is key to UO's success

Head coach Jody Runge said Oregon will have to improve its defense to make a run at the Pac-10 Conference title

By Allison Ross
Oregon Daily Emerald

A healthy line-up. A deep bench. Four returning starters and a powerful freshman class.

All this, and the return of the 1998 Women's Basketball News Service Coach of the year, and you've got an Oregon basketball team ready to conquer the Pacific-10 Conference and earn its first conference title since the Ducks tied for first in the 1985 season.

Oregon head coach Jody Runge returns for her sixth season and will be looking to guide a well-balanced squad to its sixth straight NCAA Tournament. But this year the goals are even more lofty — the Ducks are aiming for the Sweet 16.

"I think we have the depth and we have the talent," Runge said. "We just have to put it all together, and I think the biggest factor in making those things happen will be staying healthy."

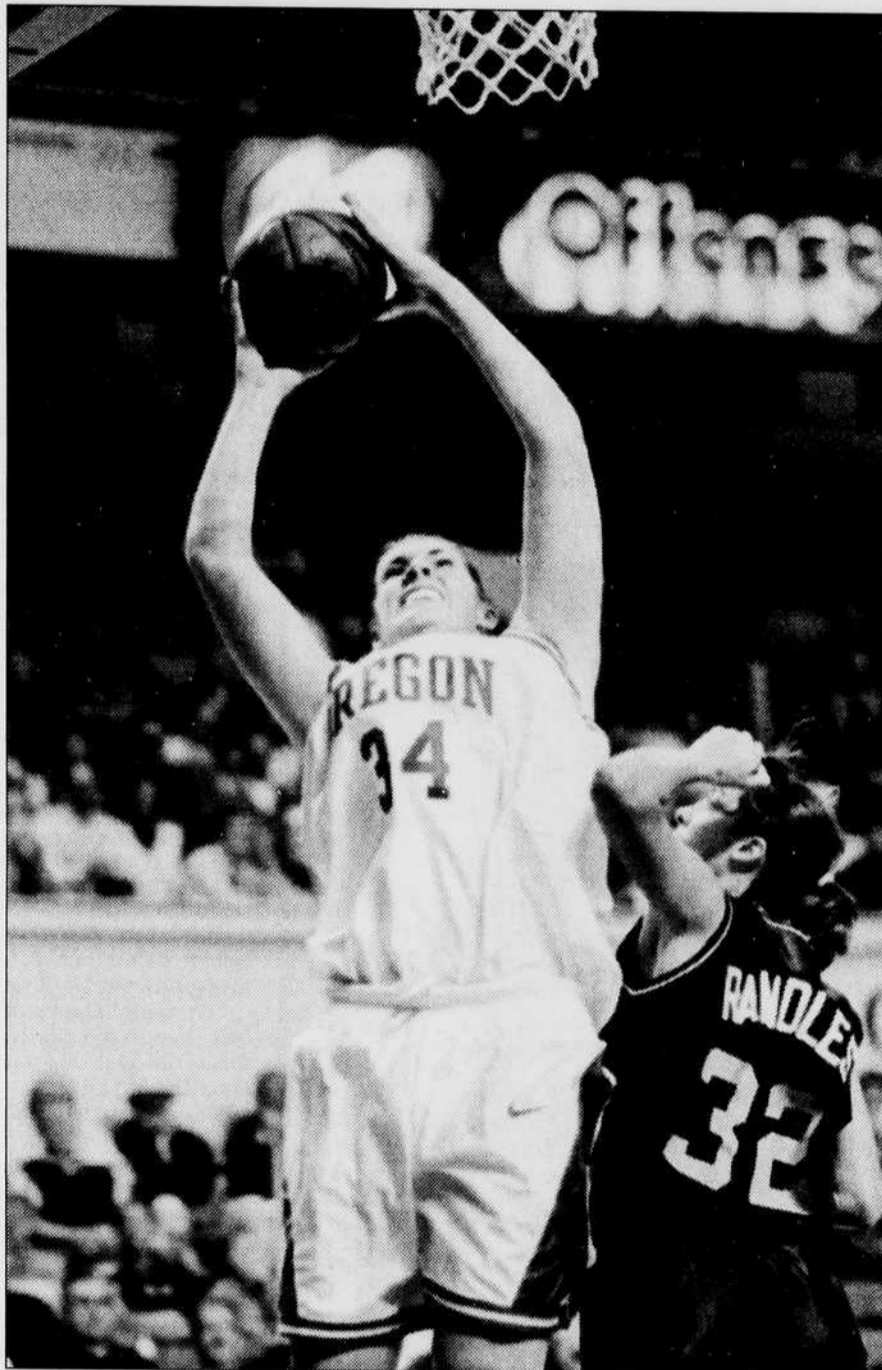
The possibility of a Pac-10 championship and an appearance in the Sweet 16 this season is viable for several reasons.

Oregon returns 6-foot-1 sophomore Brianne Meharry and 6-5 center Jenny Mowe, both of whom missed most of last season because of injury. Despite sitting out Oregon's final 11 games of the season, Meharry led the Ducks in scoring (13.1 points per game) and rebounding (6.0). Mowe played in just the first four games, but managed to post one of the team's five double-doubles of the season.

There is no question the return of Mowe and Meharry to Oregon's front court will add depth, but their presence will also add offensive power.

"Hopefully I can bring a fire to the team," Meharry said, "and just be there to get people going and get people excited to play every game."

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Center Jenny Mowe grabs one of her six rebounds against Coppin State last Monday in the Ducks' 72-70 loss to the Eagles at McArthur Court in the first round of the WNIT tournament.

Matt Hankins/Emerald

Club soccer
on 4th visit
to Nationals

The men's Club Sports soccer team starts tournament play in Georgia today

By Matt O'Neill
for the Emerald

Two years ago it was in Austin, Texas. Last year it was in Statesboro, Ga.

This year, the Oregon men's Club Sports soccer team makes a return trip to the state of Georgia for its fourth consecutive National Club Soccer Championships.

Oregon (12-3-3) will compete with the best club teams from across the nation starting today. Last year, the Ducks played themselves into the quarterfinals, losing to North Carolina in sudden-death overtime. Two years ago, the Ducks lost to the host team, Texas, in the semifinals.

Team manager Chad Wright feels this year's team is not as talented as past squads, but should still do very well.

"We aren't as strong as the past couple years, but we have a lot of guys that hustle," Wright said. "This year we're in the open division, so we should be expected to do a lot better."

The Ducks are a young team compared to the teams that have made good showings in past tournaments, but members of the team are excited for the potential of this season's championships. Midfielder Ross Minckler said inexperience at Nationals will not hurt the team.

"The team has come a long way this year," Minckler said. "We have a lot of young guys on the team. We're going to work really hard at Nationals and hopefully make it to the finals."

For freshman midfielder Justin Wilbur, the trip to the Nationals is an exciting experience.

"I've never been there, so I'm really excited," Wilbur said. "Our team is strong and we'll do well down there."

The team will have to play well together if the Ducks want to beat the other three teams in their bracket. Oregon will have to defeat Houston, Georgia Southern and

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Player draws penalty even though he wasn't in the game

In Saturday's football game against Arizona State, Kevin Parker, eager to congratulate his teammates, was cited for entering the field without his helmet

By Rob Moseley
Oregon Daily Emerald

It happened just more than 10 minutes into Oregon's 51-19 win over Arizona State last Saturday.

The Ducks had just scored on a 35-yard pass from Akili Smith to Damon Griffin to take a 21-7 lead following a fumbled kickoff return by the Sun Devils. In all the hoopla after the play, fans may have not noticed that kicker Nathan Villegas was kicking the extra point from 25 yards out, 15 yards farther than normal.

The Ducks were slapped with an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty after the touchdown, which usually means excessive celebration by the players on field.

But according to Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti, the penalty was called on a player who wasn't on the field for a single snap on Saturday.

Kevin Parker, who suited up for his senior introduction prior to the game but never played, was cited for entering the field

without his helmet on.

"Unfortunately, Kevin did get a penalty," Bellotti said. "In his excitement to go out and congratulate a teammate he took his towel and forgot his helmet."

Villegas' record-setting day

Akili Smith, who set a new Oregon mark for single-season touchdown passes against the Sun Devils, wasn't the only record-setting Duck on Saturday.

With his second successful extra-point try, Villegas became Oregon's single-season record holder for most PATs, as well as most consecutive successful PATs, breaking Josh Smith's two-year-old mark of 42. Villegas later extended the streak to 47.

Earlier this season, Villegas set a school record for consecutive successful field goal attempts with 14. With nine more points this season, Villegas will break the single-

season record of 109 set by Gregg McCallum in 1989. His accuracy this season has led to a nomination for the Lou Groza Award for the nation's top kicker. As one of three finalists, along with Kansas State's Martin Gramatica and Florida State's Sebastian Janikowski, Villegas will be in Florida for the award presentation on Dec. 8.

Smith, whose 26 touchdown passes this season are four more than the totals of Bill Musgrave (1989) and Danny O'Neil (1993, 1994), is in line to set a few more records before the conclusion of this season.

His passing yardage total of 3,224 yards is 337 short of O'Neil's record-setting total from 1993, and Smith is 18 yards short of O'Neil's record of 3,087 total yards from the same season.

Civil War hype

Besides the usual motivation of beating in-state rival Oregon State this weekend, Bellotti said the Ducks will have an addi-



PARKER



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