

# Basketball

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Oregon's defensive play will have an affect on where the team finishes this season. It has become a trademark under Runge, who says defense wins games. Since Runge took over the program in 1993, Oregon has finished high in the Pac-10 in scoring defense, including finishing first in both 1995 and 1996. Last year the Ducks finished second, allowing only 66.7 points per game.

Still, it is an area in which Runge and her players see room for improvement.

"We have been much better in the past at defending on the ball," Runge said. "We have not had to give a lot of help, so we aren't very good at that. Either we have to get better on the ball and not help so much or we have to become much better at help defense."

Perhaps Oregon's most explosive defensive play comes from 5-8 senior Lisa Bowyer. The Australia native ranked first on the team in steals with 42 last season. She returns this year to anchor the Ducks' defensive game. But for Oregon to reach the level that Runge expects, all of the Ducks will need to step up.

"Right now we're lacking unity," Meharry said. "I think as individuals we all have the defensive skills, but we need to work on bringing it together as a team. It will come with experience."

Oregon's depth will be tested in a difficult conference this season. Last season, sophomore Angelina Wolvert and senior Sonja Curtis stepped up for the injured Mowe and Meharry, gaining valuable time and experience. Both Wolvert and Curtis responded to the challenge, as Wolvert led the team in rebounds and Curtis led the Pac-10 in free-throw shooting and was third on the team in steals.

Joining Bowyer in the backcourt is point guard Karen Piers, who shares time with freshman Shaquala Williams. Piers is currently the starter as she has had a year to adjust to the type of play required in the Pac-10, but Williams' speed and athleticism off the bench adds fire to Oregon's offense.

"I think the depth helps everyone," Wolvert said. "If something goes wrong, there's always someone to pull out. Also, it enables us to play up tempo throughout the game."

# Soccer

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James Madison to make it out of its bracket and into the quarterfinals.

Like the World Cup, each team will get three points for a victory, one point for each tie and no points for a loss. The team with the most points from the three games will move on to the next round. In the case of a tie, the total number of goals will be used to determine the winner of the bracket.

The Ducks will play two games today, the first against the University of Houston followed by an afternoon contest against the host, Georgia Southern. Friday morning, Oregon will face the last team in its bracket, James Madison.

Depending on the outcome of their first three games, the Ducks would then play their quarterfinals match later Friday afternoon.

While this year's team may be young and less experienced than in the past, the players feel they are more balanced this year. Both Minckler and Wilbur feel the de-

fense has improved.

Sweeper "Danny Platt will hold up the defense," Minckler said.

Wilbur said the Ducks' goalie play will also be a key to the defense.

"Goalie Dave Woodworth will do well once he gets back from his ankle injury," Wilbur said.

While Platt said he agrees with his teammates, he also said the offense is the best part of this year's squad.

"The strength of the team is actually the scoring ability," Platt said. "We have a lot of talented guys up front."

Among those talented forwards are Ben Ehlert and Wright.

"Ben is one of our leading goal scorers, he's a really fast player," Wright said.

Minckler said Wright holds down the forwards as a unit.

"I think that Chad is a really hard worker," Minckler said, "And we have a balanced offense."

Helping to balance the offense will be the midfield unit headed by center halfback Olaf Wolf.

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