Men want second win on the road

The Ducks need to beat Minnesota in order to bring their record to 3-0

By Rob Moseley
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Two days after defeating a team that was 14-16 last season, the Oregon men's basketball team continues its two-game road trip tonight against the 1998 National Invitation Tournament champion.

Oregon (2-0) faces defending NIT champion Minnesota in Minneapolis at 5 p.m. today, after beating Southern Illinois in Carbondale, Ill., on Saturday.

The Golden Gophers (3-0) defeated Winthrop 68-59 on Saturday despite the absence of leading scorers Quincy Lewis and Kevin Clark, who were suspended one game for their roles in a Nov. 16 brawl in an exhibition win over the Philippine National team.

Lewis averaged 27.5 points in Minnesota's season-opening wins over Appalachian State and Seton Hall and together with Clark provided more than half of the Gophers' points in those two games.

"They play much like us," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "Very fast, and their offen-sive sets are similar to the ones we run."

Lewis is the top returning scorer from last season's National Invitation Tournament champions. The 6-foot-7, 215-pound forward contributing 14.5 points and 5.6 points last season to help the Gophers to an eventual 79-72 win over Penn State in the finals of the NIT. Clark, a 6-2 guard, was named MVP of the tournament after scoring 29 points and pulling down seven rebounds against the Nittany Lions.

Sam Jacobsen was a first-round draft choice of the Los Angeles Lakers earlier this year after leading Minnesota with 18.2 points and grabbing 5.2 rebounds per game as a senior last season.

The Ducks and Gophers have met just five times, with Minnesota winning the most recent battle, 89-64, in the Far West Classic on Dec. 27, 1991. The Ducks' lone victory over Minnesota came almost 25 years before that, as Oregon won 67-60 in Eugene on Dec. 28, 1966.

Juniors A.D. Smith and Alex Scales each scored 14 points, and Scales added 10 rebounds and five blocked shots as the Ducks cruised to a 70-64 win over the Salukis (1-2) on Saturday.

"It was a great road win for us," Kent said. "With the parity in college basketball, any time you can go on the road and win, it's a good thing."

Center Mike Carson had 10 points and five rebounds in 18 minutes before fouling out. The senior made five of his seven shots and helped Oregon to a 49.1 shooting percentage.

The Ducks took a 36-27 lead into halftime, then survived a 12-3 Saluki run that pulled Southern Illinois to within three at 67-64 with 25 seconds left.

Terik Brown and Freddie Jones each scored 10 points and dished out a team-high four assists for Oregon. Darius Wright had eight points and five turnovers in his first regular-season start at point guard.

Guard Monte Jenkins had a game-high 20 points on 5-of-8 three-point shooting for Southern Illinois, which shot just 36.4 percent from the floor and 42.1 percent from the free-throw line.

The Ducks return home to face Brigham Young on Saturday followed by Portland State at McArthur Court on Dec. 12.