



The 7-foot center is congratulated by his teammates after his performance against an Australian club team last November at McArthur Court.

Emerald

Carson

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bounds and 3.6 blocks per game his senior year, Carson expected to immediately contribute to the Ducks.

Before that season even began, however, Carson had surgery on a stress fracture in his right foot. He then played in just seven games before a follow-up exam revealed the injury had not healed, forcing him to undergo another surgery and miss the rest of the season.

Carson says that season was especially difficult because he was also going through the routine freshmen adjustments, and then he missed Oregon's NCAA Tournament loss to Texas, which has been the Ducks' only tournament appearance during his career.

"I found out I had played too many games to even get that year back [in the form of a redshirt]," Carson says, "and with being home sick, surgeries and struggling in school, it was pretty depressing."

In his sophomore season, Carson made six starts near the beginning of the season and tallied 3.4 points and rebounds per game

while playing an average of 13 minutes. He also enjoyed the finest game of his career thus far when he torched Hawaii-Hilo for 19 points and nine rebounds in November of 1995.

But instead of a progression, Carson's junior season marked a regression.

His averages dipped to 1.1 points and 1.4 rebounds in just seven minutes per game. He did not start a game.

So last season was to be Carson's coming out party as he would be a full-time starter for the first time in his career.

He performed steadily in those first six games, averaging 7.5 points, 4.5 rebounds and 18 minutes a game.

However, the injury bug struck again.

Although the setback hurt at the time, both Carson and Kent now see it as a blessing in disguise.

"He gets to work with just a great group of guys, a very talented group as well this year, and be a major contributor with this basketball team," Kent says. "He just

needs to regain his composure and his confidence and contribute."

Guard Terik Brown, the only other senior on the team, says Carson plays a key defensive role for Oregon.

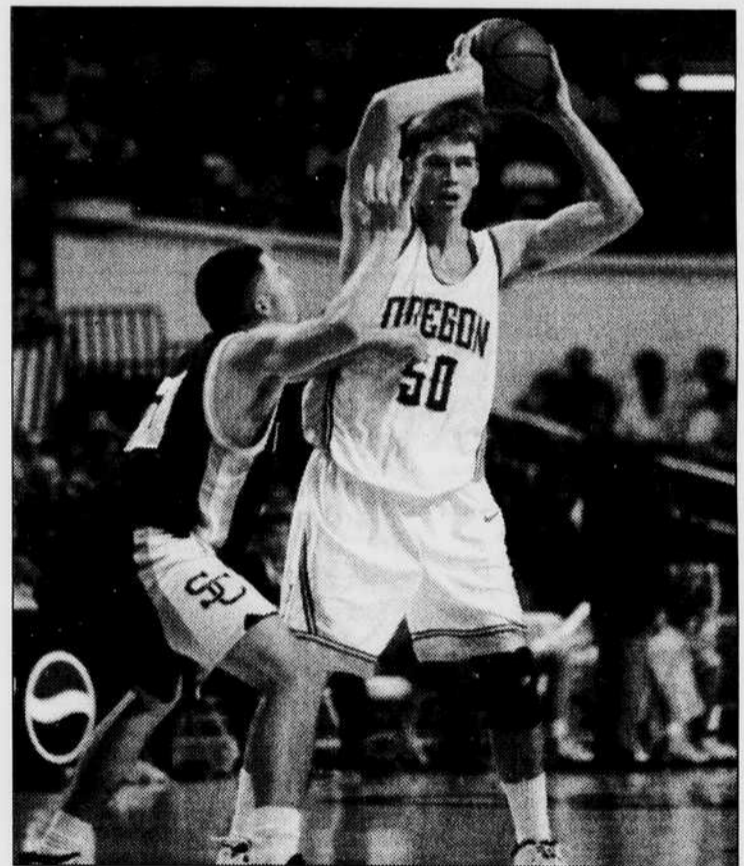
"I think Mike brings a force and a presence in the middle," Brown says. "He lifts our defensive spirits. I think he's one of the best defensive big men in the Pac-10."

Carson leads the team in defensive rebounding through the first three games with 12 and is also tied for the overall rebounding lead at 6.7 per game with forward A.D. Smith. He is also averaging 6.3 points and 25 minutes per game.

With Oregon off to a 2-1 start heading into Saturday night's home game against Brigham Young, Carson is excited about Oregon's potential.

"We've got the tools this year to go to the NCAA Tournament," Carson says. "And that's something I've really wanted to go back to since my freshman year."

In the end, Carson hopes the pieces will fit together after all.



Carson looks to pass inside in the Ducks' 67-58 victory against Santa Clara last November.

Emerald

Sports brief

Clemens to leave Jays after two years

NEW YORK — Available: The only five-time Cy Young Award winner.

Price: Negotiable.

Roger Clemens, angered that the Toronto Blue Jays won't spend enough money to field a contender next season, told the team Wednesday he wants to be traded, and the club said it will comply.

"This is certainly not done with any acrimony or with any anger on either side," Blue Jays' general manager Gord Ash said, adding, "The team will make every effort to complete a deal within 10 days."

When Clemens signed with the Blue Jays in December 1996, team president Paul Beeston said, if Clemens didn't think Toronto would contend, and he

asked for a trade, the Blue Jays would deal him. Beeston left the Blue Jays during the 1997 season to become baseball's chief operating officer, but Ash said he will honor Beeston's commitment.

"It's a two-prong situation," Ash said. "There's a desire to be closer to home or with a club that has a better chance to provide him with a World Series ring."

The World Series champion New York Yankees, the Houston Astros and the Texas Rangers are considered the top contenders to land the 36-year-old right-hander.

Ash visited Clemens at his home in Katy, Texas, outside Houston last week along with the Blue Jays' two assistant general managers, Dave Stewart and Tim McCleary.

"There was a lot of listening," Ash said.

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