

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY
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NCAA Basketball
Maryland at
North Carolina
6 p.m., ESPN

Brains conquer brawn for Smith

Forward A.D. Smith leads the Oregon men's basketball team in rebounding and ranks second in scoring

Tim Pyle
Oregon Daily Emerald

He does not physically match the prototype of a dominant big man.

But what A.D. Smith, all 6 feet 8, 233 pounds of him, lacks in dimension, he makes up for in mental aptitude and effectiveness.

And the resulting numbers speak for themselves.

Smith ranks first on the Oregon men's basketball team in rebounding at eight per game, and he is second on the Ducks in scoring at almost 14 points per game. Those numbers are also good for fifth and 13th in the Pacific-10 Conference, respectively.

"I think he just really understands the game, and when to and when not to get shots off," head coach Ernie Kent says. "He's very, very selective and very, very smart in that area, and that basically gives him an opportunity to always play to his strengths."

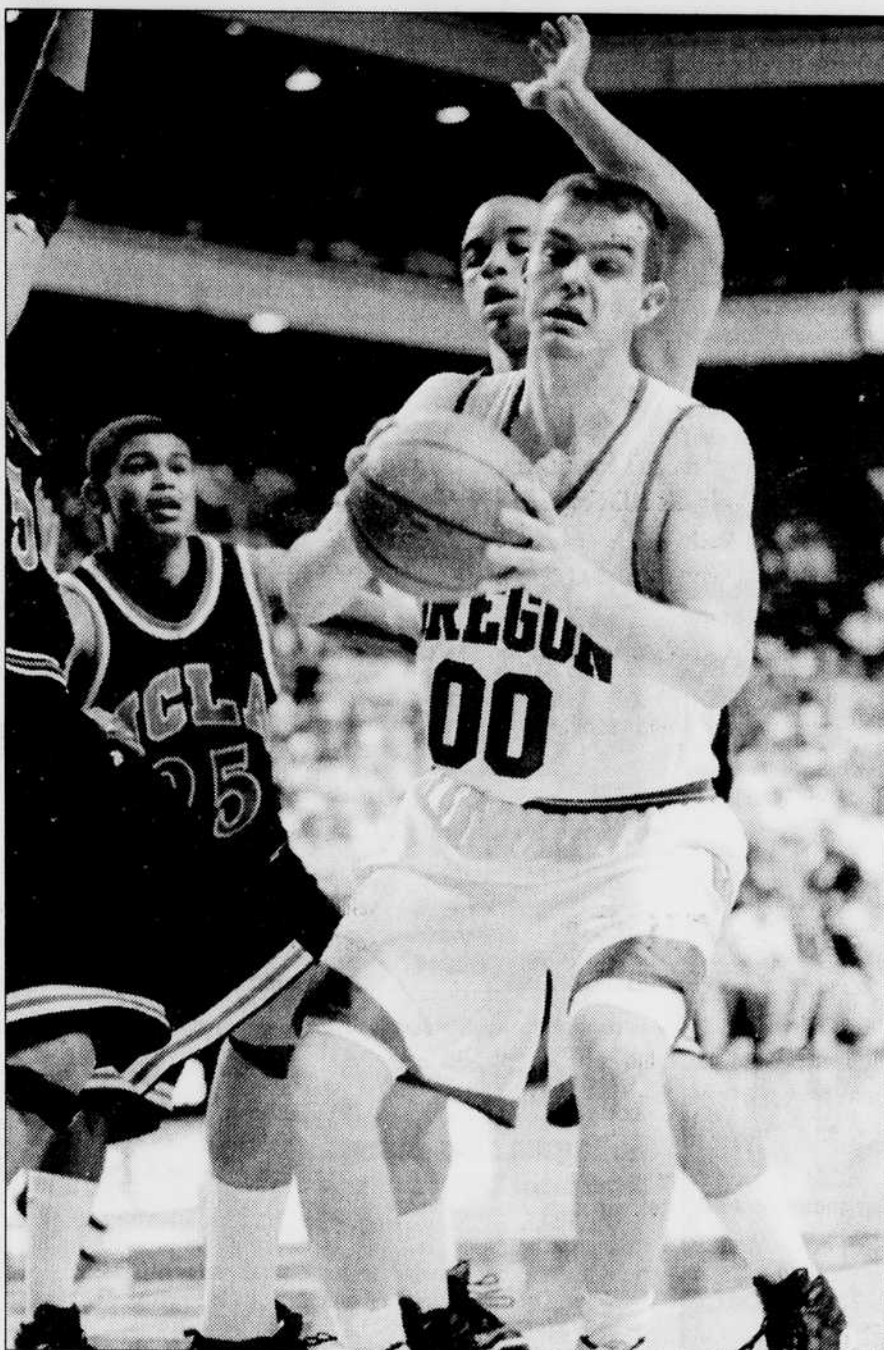
Despite playing power forward, a position usually reserved for brawn rather than brains, Smith imitates a point guard in his attention to the game's finer points. Whenever Oregon is in need of assistance from Kent on the sidelines — be it for an offensive set, inbounds play or whatever — Smith is often the first one to look to his coach and relay the orders to his teammates.

"I just like to know what's going on," says Smith, a fourth-year junior. "In high school, that's the way I was too, and that's just the way I play basketball."

"I think I have a good understanding of what's going on for the most part. And if I don't know what's going on, I like to find out what we're going to do before we do it."

That adherence to detail has aided in Smith's development from high school standout to collegiate star, all of which has happened in Eugene. After leading

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Forward A.D. Smith looks to score two of his team-high 16 points in the Ducks' loss to UCLA Saturday. Nick Medley/Emerald

Erickson takes position at Oregon State

Fired last month as head coach of the Seattle Seahawks, Dennis Erickson hopes to have better luck with OSU's program

By Landon Hall

The Associated Press

CORVALLIS — Dennis Erickson was introduced as the new head coach at Oregon State Tuesday, saying his goal was to make the Beavers a winner again after an infamous streak of 28 straight losing seasons.

"We want to win football games. We want to get to bowl games. We want to win the Pac-10. Let's don't settle with little things," said Erickson, who was fired last month as coach of the Seattle Seahawks.

Erickson, who signed a five-year contract with a base salary of \$150,000 a year, replaces Mike Riley, who last week became coach of the San Diego Chargers.

Erickson entered a crowded conference room through a giant inflatable Beavers helmet to the sounds of a nine-piece band. As the crowd began an Oregon State chant, the new coach said: "I knew I missed something about college football, and that's it right there."

Riley was 8-14 in two seasons at Oregon State, but a 5-6 record last season and three close losses to Washington, California and UCLA brought the Beavers to the brink of ending their infamous streak.

The hiring of Erickson, who won two national titles at Miami, gives Oregon State fans reason to hope.

Erickson, 51, was fired Dec. 28, one day after the Seahawks ended their season 8-8. In four years, Erickson had a record of 31-33 and no playoff appearances. Former Packers coach Mike Holmgren replaced him on Friday.

He said he has no hard feelings toward the Seahawks, although the two weeks he was unemployed were difficult.

"I'm not worried about them any longer. That's history," he said.

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Men's
Pac-10 Notes

Tim Pyle

Opponents shouldn't take Beavers lightly

The biggest surprise in the Pacific-10 Conference so far this season, besides Washington's 0-3 conference record, is Oregon State.

After sweeping the Los Angeles schools in Corvallis last weekend, the slightly regarded Beavers have forged a 2-2 Pac-10 record and jumped to 8-5 overall. Couple those wins with a near-miss at California, where Oregon State lost 54-52, and it is evident that head coach Eddie Payne is onto something in his fourth season at the helm.

Point guard Deandra Tanner was honored as the Pac-10 player of the week. He riddled then-No. 7 UCLA for 19 points, six rebounds, six assists and three steals last Thursday in the Beavers' 65-

63 victory, their first over a top-10 team since 1989, back when Gary Payton was running the show.

Tanner followed those heroics up with a career-high 27 points, 12 rebounds, four assists and three steals in a 69-66 overtime defeat of Southern California. The performance marked Tanner's first career double-double and gave Oregon State its first back-to-back Pac-10 victories since 1995.

Overall, in points, assists, rebounds and free-throw percentage, ranking among the conference leaders in all of those categories.

Sophomore Josh Steinthal, who averaged just three points per game last season, has developed into a good complement

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Lessons to be learned from East Coast matchup

Conference play is just two weeks underway and already some valuable lessons have been learned. The first has to do with how important the last four minutes of play can be.

No. 1 Connecticut battled No. 2 Tennessee last Saturday in front of a sold-out crowd of 10,027 in Hartford, Conn. It was a match between the two winning teams over the past five seasons and it proved to be nothing less than a grudge match until the end.

The game was tied eight times, the last tie at 76-76 with just over three minutes remaining in the game. Tennessee's Teresa Geter buried a 10-foot jumper that gave the Volunteers the lead. Connecticut committed a fatal turnover on the next possession and Tennessee reeled off 12

straight points to clinch the win and snap Connecticut's 54-game home winning streak.

Oregon faced a similar situation in its 72-76 loss to UCLA at Pauley Pavilion on Sunday. The Ducks led the Bruins for most of the second half, but made mistakes at the two-minute mark, allowing the Bruins to make a 9-0 run. The game was the Pac-10's version of the Tennessee/Connecticut game — a battle for the No. 1 spot in the conference.

California learned the same lesson in its second conference game of the season. The Bears were looking to rebound on a 64-49 loss at Oregon on Jan. 2 with a win against Oregon State.

The Bears had a career performance by freshman Shavaki Jackson, who scored 20

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Women's
Pac-10 Notes

Allison Ross