



For player, life is Strange

Nicole Strange's first season as a starter began when room- and teammate Lisa Bowyer suffered an injury

By Allison Ross
Oregon Daily Emerald

Nicole Strange is full of eccentricities. But three things define the 5-foot-10 junior — her love of ketchup, her love-hate relationship with the three-point line and her nickname: Donk.

"My freshman year, this girl said I looked like Eeyore," Strange said. "In some Winnie the Pooh episode the boy says to Eeyore, 'Hurry up, Donkey Boy.' So they call me Donkey Boy. The coaches call me that too, but most people just call me Donk."

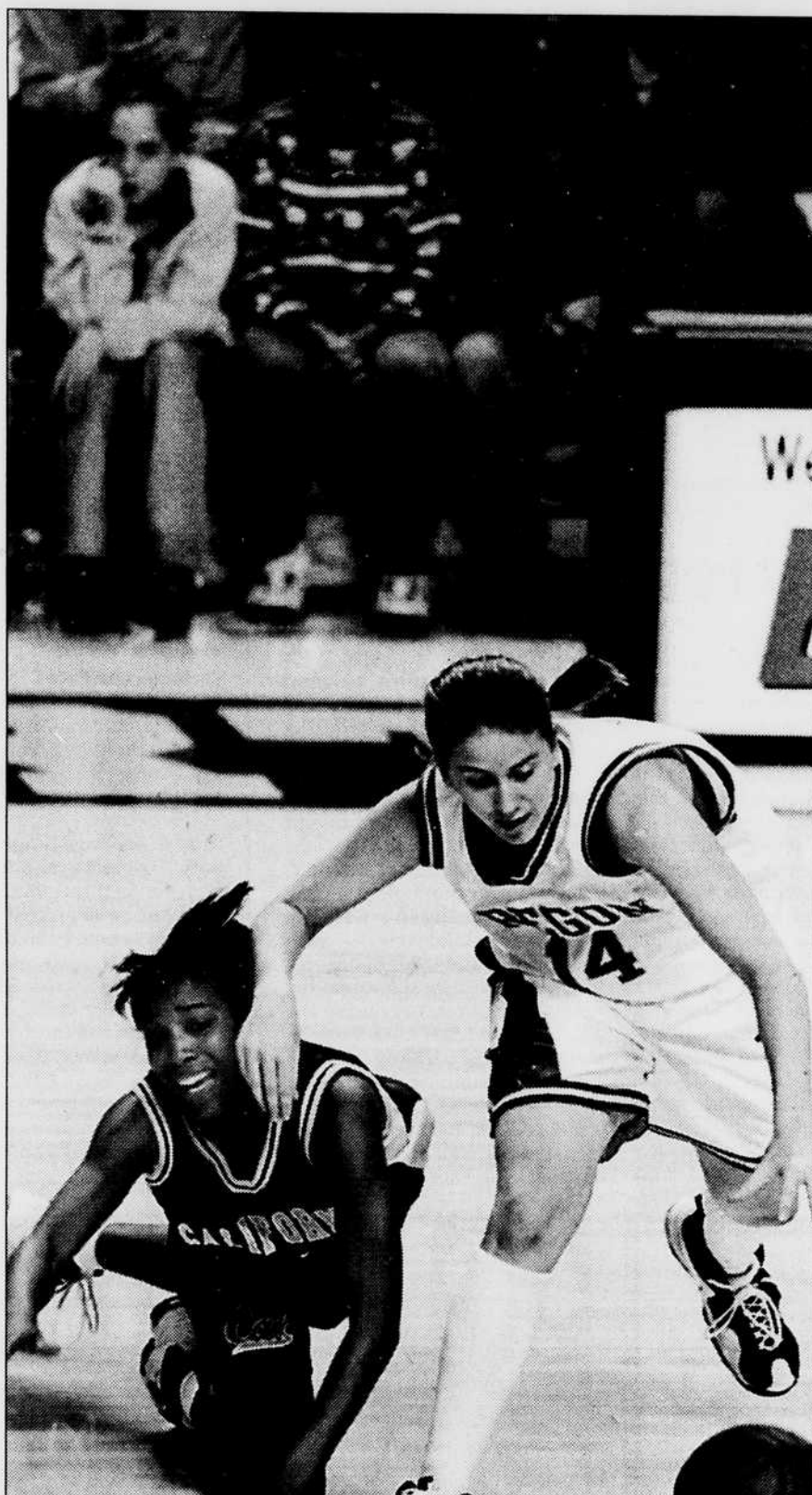
Strange is making a new name for herself this season — starter. When senior Lisa Bowyer, who is also Strange's roommate, sustained a broken finger on Dec. 29, Strange was called upon to take over. And it was no easy task, as Bowyer was leading the team in steals, assists and three-point shooting.

"It's kind of a joke between us," Strange said. "Like I told that girl to hurt her so I could play more. Defensively, I look up to Lisa because she is the best defensive player I've ever seen in my life. I don't try to play like her because I'm me, but she does stuff that's really good, so I try to do it."

She's doing a good job so far. Strange currently leads the team in conference play with 13 steals and is fourth in scoring, averaging eight points per game. She logs just under 30 minutes per game and has recorded 10 or more points in three conference games. Against Southern California, Strange matched a career-high 13 points.

"Being in the starting line up has really boosted her confidence," head coach

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Nicole Strange reaches for a loose ball during Oregon's 64-49 victory over California at McArthur Court Jan. 2.

Matt Hankins/Emerald

MacCulloch named player of the week

After slaughtering Oregon yet again Saturday, Washington center Todd MacCulloch was named Pacific-10 Conference player of the week.

In wins over both the Ducks and Oregon State, MacCulloch collectively made 19 of his 24 shots from the field for a sparkling .772 shooting percentage. Those performances raised his league-leading percentage to .665.

MacCulloch led the Huskies to their first Pac-10 win last Thursday by dominating the Beavers for 20 points and 13 rebounds.

Oregon, which MacCulloch riddled for 46 points on 19-of-21 shooting and 19 rebounds last season, had an even harder time with the 7-foot, 280-pound senior center from Canada. In Washington's 86-76 overtime victory, MacCulloch poured in 27 points on 10-of-12 shooting and corralled 12 rebounds before fouling out in the second half.

Overall, MacCulloch is tied for fourth in the Pac-10 in scoring with almost 18 points per game. He paces the conference in rebounding at nearly 11 per game and finds himself tied for second in the league with 1.6 blocked shots per game.

The beauty of MacCulloch's game is that he manufactures all of these statistics with little flash. His game is simple — he uses his size to post up, block out and fill the lane and then calls upon his quiet effectiveness to complete nearly every play.

About the most flash you will ever see from MacCulloch also came at the Ducks' expense Saturday. After losing a shoe on offense during the first half at the Hec Edmundson Pavilion in Seattle, MacCulloch calmly picked up his stray foot gear, ran to the defensive end of the court and rebounded an Oregon miss before calling a timeout. Husky fans rewarded their star with a loud ovation.

The two straight home wins placed Washington (9-6 overall, 2-3 Pac-10) in a three-way tie for fourth place in the confer-

Men's Pac-10 Notes



Tim
Pyle

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Oregon and UCLA: Sizing up the two Pac-10 women's heavyweights

Women's Pac-10 Notes



Joel
Hood

Midway through the Pacific-10 Conference season, two teams have officially pulled themselves out in front of the pack. Between them, UCLA and Oregon lead nearly every major conference category on both offense and defense.

With one game remaining between the two Pac-10 superpowers (Feb. 4 in Eugene), here's how the No. 10 Bruins and the No. 25 Ducks stack up against each other.

UCLA (14-4 overall, 6-0 in the Pac-10) leads the conference in both scoring offense, averaging just more than 86 points per game, average margin of victory of nearly 15 points, field goal percentage, a gaudy 49 percent from the field and ranks fourth in three-point percentage, hitting close to 32 percent behind the arc.

Talk about your even matchups. Oregon

(14-3, 5-1) ranks first in the Pac-10 in scoring defense, allowing just more than 55 points a game, defending field goals — opponents are hitting only 35 percent from the field — and rebounding, with about 35 a game.

All this means is that the second half of the Pac-10 schedule should be as exciting as the first.

The conference's coaches say that the difference between the elite teams and the rest of the pack has been the Bruins' and the Ducks' ability to win on the road this season.

UCLA is 4-0 on the road in the Pac-10 this season. Oregon is just 1-1, but its only loss was a four-point defeat at the hands of the Bruins at Pauley Pavilion on Jan. 10.

This week's sign ...

It's too late to eliminate Stanford from the conference race, but every week there are new signs that the Cardinal's confer-

ence reign is soon coming to an end. Last Saturday, UCLA ended Stanford's 67-game Pac-10 home winning streak with an impressive 80-72 victory at Maples Pavilion.

How rare is a home conference loss for the Cardinal? The last time it happened, most of Stanford's current starters were first attracting the eye of head coach Tara VanDerveer in grade school.

"It certainly was a good win for us," UCLA head coach Kathy Olivier said Tuesday.

"We were down seven points in the second half, so it was a good comeback by this team."

Asked if she now feels comfortable in the Pac-10 driver's seat, Olivier said, "You can never sit back and relax in the Pac-10. You have to be ready to go every week."

Cougar comeback

Anyone shocked by how easily Wash-

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Kathy Olivier
UCLA head coach