

OREGON BASKETBALL

Mowe able to block out past injuries

The 6-foot-5 sophomore has worked her way back from injury to be a force at center

By Allison Ross
Oregon Daily Emerald

The best athletes are those who play their sport year-round, never giving it up unless their body forces them to take a break. They may lose part of their game, but they always find it again.

Two years ago, Jenny Mowe was a member of the USA Basketball Junior Women's World Championship team that won its first gold medal. Mowe was coming off an honorable freshman season at Oregon in which she tied the team lead with 30 blocks and was third in rebounds with almost four per game.

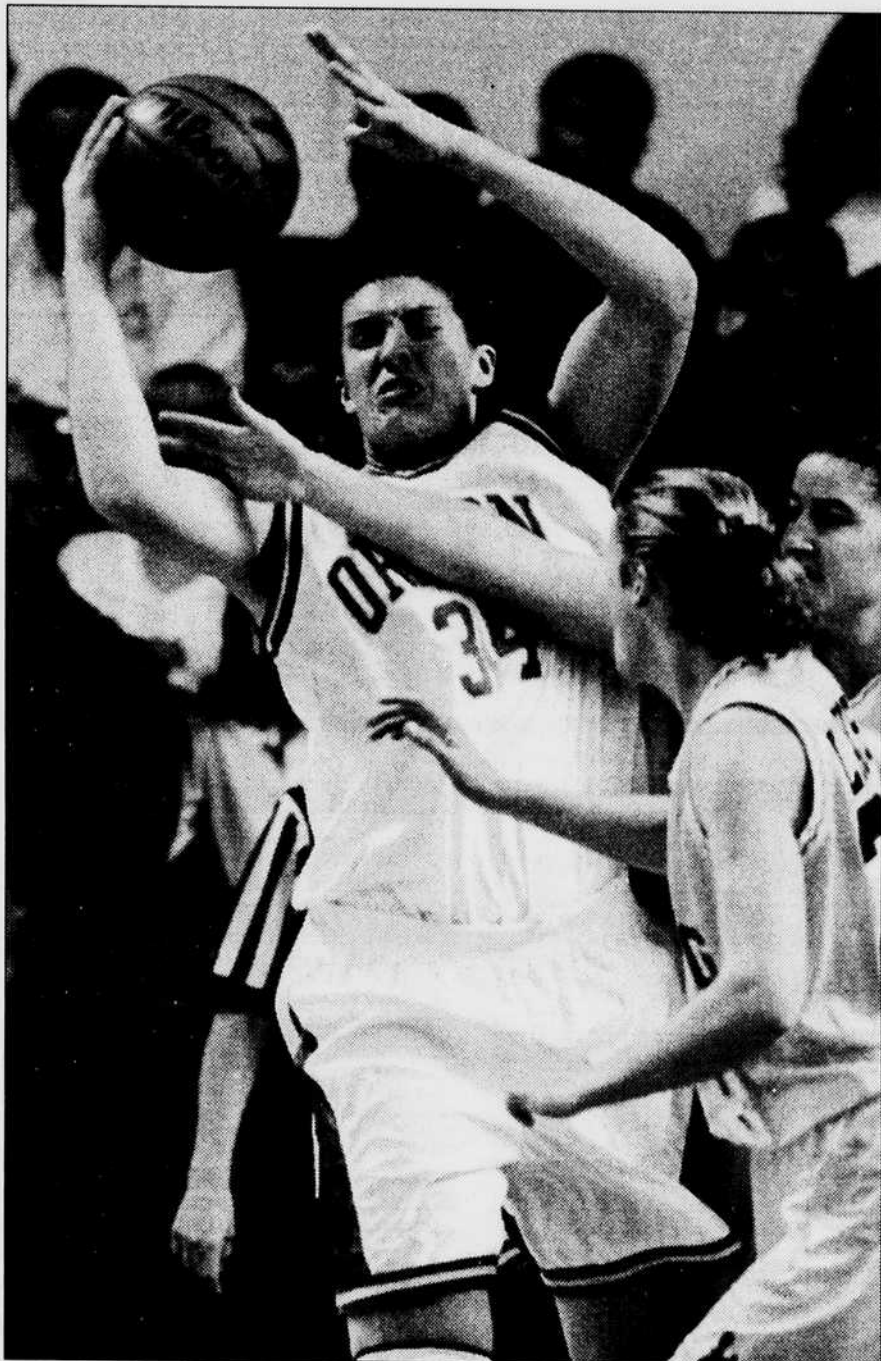
The Pacific-10 Conference All-Freshman team honoree played in all 29 of Oregon's games in her debut season, converting more than 50 percent of her shots and scoring in double figures six times.

"When she went to the Junior National Trials she was playing as well as I'd ever seen her play," Oregon head coach Jody Runge says.

Last season, Mowe was on track for another stellar season. But several years of continuous play — years in which she competed in the summer, fall and winter — had taken their toll. Tendinitis in her right knee slowed her progress during fall practice. Mowe was never at full strength and played in just the first four games of the season.

"It was hard to sit out all of last season," Mowe says. "I didn't even practice. Now, I want to be [playing at my potential] and the coaches want me to, but my body just isn't quite there."

Mowe's performance in those four games — 10 points in the season opener against Idaho, followed by 26 points, 18 rebounds and eight blocks in an MVP performance in the Pepsi Shootout — earned her another invite to the USA Basketball Junior National



Matt Hankins/Emerald

Center Jenny Mowe rips a rebound away from two Wyoming defenders last November.

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Top two teams to tangle over Pac-10 title

It all comes down to this — maybe. Provided that Thursday's games go according to plan, the Pacific-10 Conference title could be decided Saturday night, when No. 9 Arizona and No. 6 Stanford tangle in Palo Alto, Calif., at Maples Pavilion at 7:30 p.m.

Unless, that is, whichever team wins the game — or both — stumbles in the final week of the season, which is always a possibility in the wildly competitive Pac-10.

The Wildcats (20-4 overall, 11-3 Pac-10) have doggedly kept up their pursuit of a second straight league championship by winning five straight and seven of eight.

Point guard Jason Terry further entrenched himself as everybody's Pac-10 player of the year by leading Arizona to home victories over the Oregon schools last week and being named player of the week for the second time this season.

Terry scored 21 points to accompany six assists and two steals against Oregon State before he burned the Ducks for the second time this season with 32 points and seven assists Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Cardinal (22-5, 12-2) seemingly got its groove back — my apologies to Stella — by destroying fourth-place Washington in Seattle, 89-57, Thursday to recover from a stretch in which it lost three of six after a 13-game winning streak.

But then last-place Washington State promptly took Stanford to the wire Saturday night, eventually succumbing 64-58.

The Wildcats started what has become the Cardinal's late-season tailspin with a 78-76 win in Tucson, Ariz., on Jan. 28. In that game, Terry, in what has been his dramatic fashion all season long, hit a game-winning runner to show that Stanford, which had been considered invincible by many in the Pac-10 to that point, was in-

Men's Pac-10 Notes



Tim Pyle

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UCLA's Martin the early favorite for conference player of the year

Women's Pac-10 Notes



Joel Hood

Arizona head coach Joan Bonvicini sees it as strictly a three-horse race. UCLA's top dog Kathy Oliver thinks there is just one logical choice.

Oregon's Jody Runge doesn't have a clue who to vote for.

The Pacific-10 Conference's player of the year race is heading down the home stretch and there are a handful of worthy candidates.

First on the list is UCLA junior Maylana Martin, who finished second in the voting last season and was also a third-team All-American and a first team all-conference selection. The 6-foot-3 forward averaged 18 points and more than seven rebounds a game.

This season, despite injury, Martin's productivity has not dropped off. She leads the Pac-10 in scoring with an average of more than 18 points a game. Martin also ranks second in rebounding, nine boards per game, and third in field goal percentage at 54 percent.

"Maylana is one of the most competitive players I've ever worked with," Oliver said Tuesday. "The attitude she brings with her is such a big part of this team. It's difficult for us

to practice without her, let alone have to play an entire game."

Other coaches agree.

"Maylana is probably the best player in this league," Bonvicini said.

Martin, from Perris, Calif., turned in the seventh-best scoring performance in Bruins' history last weekend as she poured in a career-high and Pac-10 season-best 38 points and grabbed 18 rebounds in UCLA's 82-64 win at USC on Friday.

For her efforts, Martin was named Pac-10 player of the week Monday for the second time this season.

Washington senior Amber Hall and Oregon freshman Shaquala Williams are the two other names most often mentioned in the same breath as Martin.

The 6-3 Hall leads the conference, averaging more than 10 rebounds a game, and ranks seventh on the Pac-10's all-time rebounds list with 952.

Williams, who didn't take over the starting duties until Oregon began its Pac-10 schedule against California on Jan. 2, ranks second on the team in scoring (just fewer than 10 points a game) and has scored in double figures eight times this

season.

Tournament talk

Here's the scoop on Oregon's NCAA Tournament information. The Ducks will make the tourney for the sixth consecutive time under Runge, but when and where they begin their postseason journey is still up in the air.

Regardless of whether Oregon hosts the first and second rounds of the tournament, those games will be played on Thursday, March 12 and Friday, March 13. The tournament's second round will begin a day later and run through the weekend.

If the Ducks make it through the first two rounds of the tournament, something they have never done, they could play their Sweet 16 games at the L.A. Sports Arena in Los Angeles on March 20. But that is only if the Ducks host the first and second rounds in Eugene.

This season, the Final Four will be played in San Jose, Calif., at the San Jose Arena on March 26 and 27. The championship game will be played on Monday, March 28.