



Ducks welcome Yellow Jackets into the Pit

Oregon begins its postseason tonight in a first-round NIT game against Georgia Tech of the Atlantic Coast Conference

By Rob Moseley
Oregon Daily Emerald

It may not be the Big Dance, but for the Oregon men's basketball team tonight, the dance card is full.

The Ducks (16-11 overall, 8-10 Pacific-10 Conference) missed out on qualifying for the NCAA Tournament by just one game, but they get consolation in the form of a first-round National Invitation Tournament matchup against Georgia Tech at 9 p.m. at McArthur Court.

The game will be televised live nationally by ESPN.

The Yellow Jackets (15-15, 6-10 Atlantic Coast Conference) will be making their second straight appearance in the NIT, having won twice last season before losing to eventual runner-up Penn State.

This season, Georgia Tech is a markedly different team. Gone are its three leading scorers, including NBA draft pick Matt Harpring, who took his 21.6 points and 9.4 rebounds per game to the Orlando Magic.

Gone too are Michael Maddox and Dion Glover, the only two Yellow Jackets to start every game last season. Maddox left after completing his eligibility; Glover, just a freshman last season, has missed all of this season after tearing his anterior cruciate ligament in the preseason.

The loss of Glover, who averaged 18.4 points and five rebounds per game last season, left a gaping hole in the Georgia Tech backcourt. The Yellow Jackets starting point guard, Tony Akins, is merely a freshman, and the entire roster features just six upperclassmen, none of them seniors.

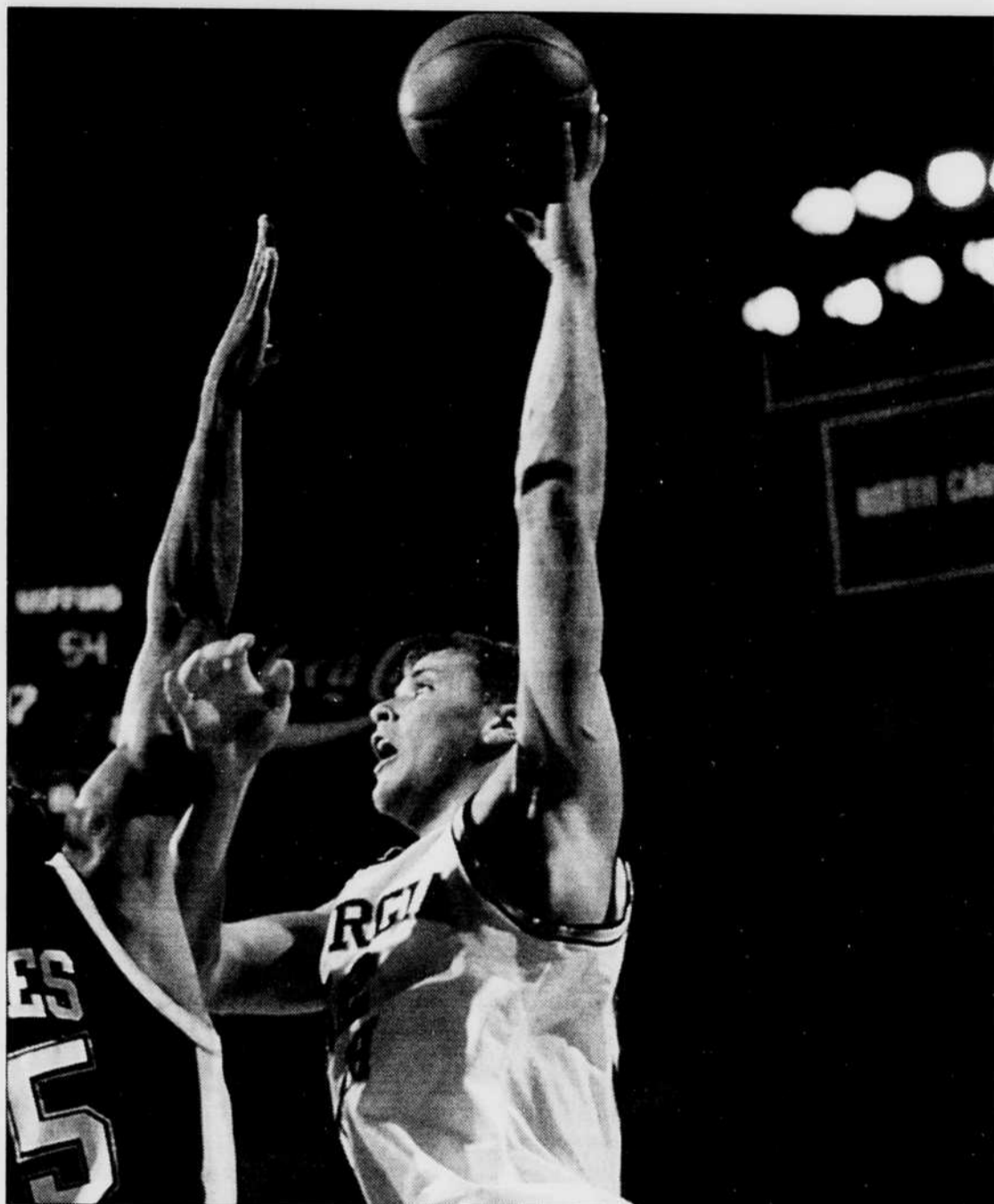
"We're a very inexperienced team, so what I'm hoping for is that the more we play, it will mean something next year for us," Georgia Tech head coach Bobby Cremins said. "The opportunity just to play is good for us. In the long run, I hope it means something to these guys, because we've got everybody back [next season]."

What Cremins does have this season is a pair of posts as formidable as any the Ducks have faced this season.

Alvin Jones, a 6-foot-11, 265-pound center, averaged seven points and seven rebounds per game last season as a freshman and had 141 blocked shots. This season, his

"They're a real tough team from a tough conference."

A.D. Smith
Oregon forward



All-ACC selection Jason Collier averaged 17 points and 10 rebounds per game for Georgia Tech after transferring from Indiana. Courtesy Photo

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Big Dance has been groovy for Pac-10 last two seasons

Men's Pac-10 Notes



Tim Pyle

The odds constructed from recent NCAA Tournaments tell us that the four Pacific-10 Conference teams grooving in the Big Dance this season will fair well.

In the past two seasons, eight of the nine Pac-10 teams invited to the NCAAs have stayed well past midnight — at least until the Sweet 16, to be exact.

So who will be raising the roof and representing the West Coast in the late hours — er, rounds — of the tournament this time?

Pac-10 champion Stanford (25-6 overall, 15-3 Pac-10) is the obvious choice, as the Cardinal boasts depth, experience and expectations.

Plus, Stanford got to stay close to home as the No. 2 seed in the

West Region, opening against 15th-seeded Alcorn State.

The Cardinal hope to avoid the infamous Sports Illustrated cover jinx — SI proclaimed Stanford its national champion with a photo of point guard Arthur Lee sprawled across the cover of its college basketball preview issue last fall — by advancing deep into the tournament again.

Last season, the Cardinal surprised most prognosticators by making the Final Four.

Now, Stanford has the same starting lineup and another season under its belt. The Cardinal should make the Sweet 16 rather easily.

Barring an upset against Alcorn State, Stanford will travel to Phoenix and face No. 3-seed-

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Pac-10 sends four teams to NCAAs, but each has a different purpose

ESPN was there. So were about 2,000 of the Oregon women basketball team's closest fans and supporters. When the big-screen television flashed Oregon as a No. 5 seed and once again headed to Ames, Iowa, the jaws of everyone stationed at McArthur Court dropped to the floor.

The fans booed. The players lost their smiles. And in the center of it all was Jody Runge, who looked as if she was using every last ounce of her strength to keep from blowing up.

Was Oregon — co-champions of the Pacific-10 Conference for the first time, winners of nine of its last 10 games, the top-drawing team in terms of fan attendance in the Pac-10 — a victim in this

NCAA Tournament selection process?

You bet. But the No. 16 Ducks can make up for any injustices by the selection committee this weekend with two victories in Iowa. And that won't be an easy task.

Cincinnati, the Ducks' first-round opponent, is a very talented and very aggressive defensive team. Iowa State — should Oregon get by the first round — looks to be a difficult matchup as well.

As for the rest of the Pac-10, UCLA, Arizona and Stanford seemed to fair a little better in Sunday selection.

The No. 15 Bruins, Pac-10 co-champions with Oregon, were given a No. 3 seed and will host at least a first-round game. UCLA could wind up

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Women's Pac-10 Notes



Joel Hood