

SPORTS

Thursday
May 13, 1999Best Bet
NBA Playoffs
San Antonio vs. Minnesota
4 p.m., TBS

Runge dismisses recruiting coordinator

After seven seasons with the women's basketball team, assistant coach Stephanie Osburn Norman is not returning

By Mirjam Swanson
Oregon Daily Emerald

Stephanie Osburn Norman, the recruiting coordinator and an assistant coach for the Oregon women's basketball team, was "shocked" to find out that her contract will not be renewed.

Head coach Jody Runge announced Tuesday that Osburn Norman will not be retained for next season.

"This announcement comes as a complete and utter shock to myself and my family," Osburn Norman said. "This was my dream job."

Osburn Norman, 33, had the longest tenure of any of Oregon's current coaches, having joined the staff in 1992, when Elwin Heiny was head coach.

Runge called Osburn Norman Monday night to inform her of the decision.

"Stephanie worked very hard to help us build this program," Runge said. "And we

wish her well in her future endeavors."

During her stay at Oregon, Osburn Norman was the primary recruiter for teams that recorded six consecutive winning seasons, averaging 20 victories a year.

Osburn Norman helped recruit many of Oregon's starters, including 1999 Pacific-10 Conference freshman of the year Shaquala Williams.

"We are all surprised," Williams said. "Nobody gave us any reason. The coaches just said it was a personnel move, something that they thought would be better for the program. Everyone around here is going to miss her."

Assistant coach Fred Litzenberger said he was also surprised by the move.

"I had no idea," he said. "It's a personnel decision by Coach Runge. That's why Coach Runge is the head coach. That's why she sits in that chair and makes those decisions."

Osburn Norman hails from Florence,

where she was a standout basketball player in high school, becoming the first female Siuslaw player to receive a NCAA Division I-A scholarship.

Before coming to Oregon, Osburn Norman coached at Arizona State, British Columbia and Hawaii.

She said she is unsure of her coaching future.

"It's very difficult because of the timing of the situation," Osburn Norman said. "There's not a lot of job opportunities available right now. If this had happened three months ago, I think I'd have had an opportunity to pursue jobs of equal stature."

Osburn Norman said she didn't expect the team to have a problem adjusting to the change.

"They're mature young women," she said. "They're strong, they'll move on. I want them to win not only a Pac-10 Championship, but a national championship."



OSBURN NORMAN

Harker says Oregon not in his future

After one season as a Duck, forward Skouson Harker leaves the men's basketball team

By Tim Pyle
Oregon Daily Emerald

Skouson Harker on Tuesday became the fourth player since Feb. 1 to leave the Oregon men's basketball team.

"As far as hanging out with the guys on Oregon, I'd love to stay," said the 6-foot-9, 219-pound Harker. "But as far as getting on the court, I needed to go."

Harker, a forward who transferred from a Nebraska junior college before last season, joins guards Yasir Rosemond and Mike McShane and forward Donte Quinine as Ducks who have left the program recently. All would have been seniors next season.

Head coach Ernie Kent had a mixed reaction.

"After this year, nothing surprises me," said Kent, just off his second season at Oregon. "I was somewhat surprised because we had a conversation before where I didn't think that was the decision he was leaning toward."

Harker played in 27 of the Ducks' 32 games last season as A.D. Smith's backup. He averaged more than two points and two rebounds in almost eight minutes per game.

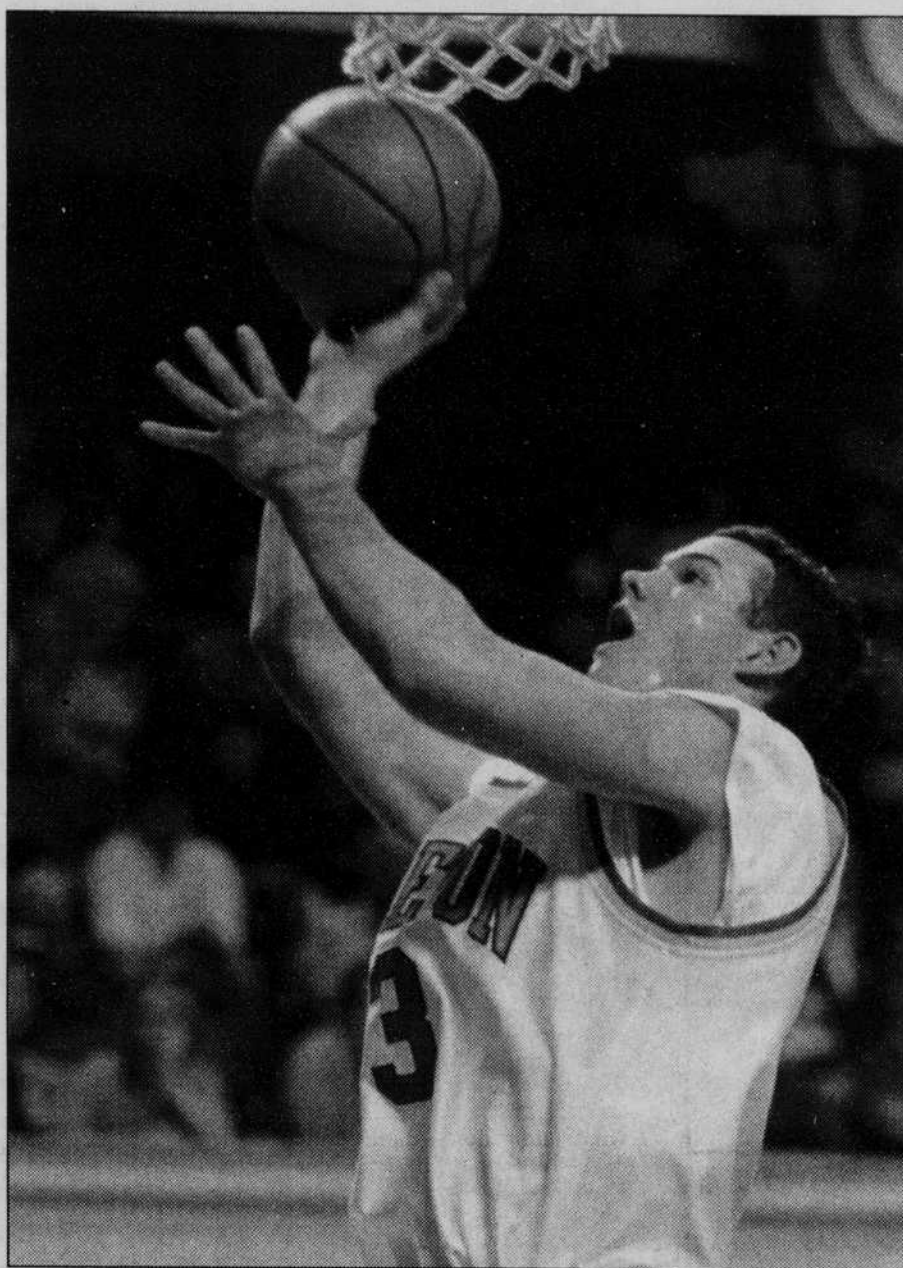
"I feel like I want to step in and get a lot of minutes to play," said Harker, who is planning to commit to a Division II school in the next few days.

After playing in Oregon's first five games, Harker sprained his right ankle in a game against Brigham Young on Dec. 5 and missed the next three. The injury lingered all season, and he had surgery a week ago.

He returned to action against Vanderbilt on Dec. 22 and played in the next 14 contests, recording 15 points and five rebounds against St. Martin's, 10 points and two rebounds at Washington State and six points and eight rebounds at Washington.

As his playing time dwindled, Harker failed to score in 11 of the last 17 games. He did not play in the season-ending loss to Xavier in the third-place game of the National Invitation Tournament.

After the season ended, Kent said he talked with Harker about contributing more next season.



Nick Medley/Emerald

Skouson Harker provided toughness and rebounding off the bench for the Ducks last season.

"I understand it, because kids wanna play," Kent said. "It's happening all across the country, and Skouson's no different."

Harker said the off-season additions of junior college transfers Bryan Bracey and Julius Hicks, who are both post players, did not significantly affect his decision.

"Even with the big guys this year, I didn't play much," Harker said. "I don't want to sit on the bench."

After also receiving limited playing time,

McShane and Quinine left the team in an eight-day period in early February. Rosemond, also a reserve, announced he would not return for his senior season April 22.

Quinine and Rosemond have committed to Seattle Pacific, and McShane is headed to Montana State-Billings. Harker said he may also play at MSU-Billings next season. None of the four will be forced to sit out next season because they did not transfer to a Division I-A university.

IBM executive to give speech at symposium

After a stellar swimming career, Elizabeth Primrose-Smith now mixes business with sports

By Allison Ross
Oregon Daily Emerald

Elizabeth Primrose-Smith set a goal when she was 6 years old. It was a lofty goal, but as it turns out not at all unrealistic.

"I remember very vividly at 3 years old watching my father at the pool coaching," Primrose-Smith said. "At 6, I made a goal to win a medal."

As a high school swimmer in Baltimore, Primrose-Smith was already leaving the competition in her wake. In 1963, she was a member of a 4x100-meter freestyle relay team that won a gold medal at the Pan American Games in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The following year, Primrose-Smith made the Olympic trials in the 100 backstroke. At 16, she seemed well on her way to achieving the goal she had set 10 years prior.

But Primrose-Smith missed swimming for an Olympic medal in the 1964 Olympic games by 0.2 seconds. In sports, 0.2 seconds is the difference between fingertips touching walls and toes crossing the finish line.

In everyday life, it takes seconds for deals to be made and partnerships to be formed. Primrose-Smith is still involved with the Olympics as IBM's Vice President of Worldwide Olympic and Sports Sponsorships.

Primrose-Smith brings her knowledge of business and sports to Oregon as the keynote speaker at the Warsaw Sports Marketing Center's fourth annual women in sports business symposium. She will speak tonight from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in Gerlinger Lounge.

"It's important, if I have an opportunity, to talk to young people and answer questions," Primrose-Smith said, "and maybe inspire them."

The Warsaw Center was founded in 1994

On Tap

WHAT: Keynote address for women in sports business symposium
WHO: Elizabeth Primrose-Smith, VP Worldwide Olympic and Sports Sponsorship, IBM
WHEN: Tonight, 7 p.m.
WHERE: Gerlinger Lounge

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