

Oregon Daily
Emerald
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Sports

Best Bet
MLB Postseason
N.Y. Yankees vs. Boston
5 p.m., Fox



Just how high can hoops programs fly?

■ The defending Pac-10 champion women begin the season with a Nov. 7 exhibition game

By Mirjam Swanson
Oregon Daily Emerald

Last season was all about accomplishment.

So much so that by March 14, when the members of the Oregon women's basketball team walked away from their loss to Iowa State in the second round of the NCAA Tournament, they did so with a whole laundry list of achievements and accolades.

They were co-Pacific-10 Conference champs. They'd made an unprecedented sixth-straight tournament appearance. Their 25 victories equaled the Oregon record. Their 15 wins in Pac-10 play set a new school record. Freshman point guard Shaquala Williams was named honorable mention All-American. And so on...

This season, 10 players return from last season's 25-6 team. And with five roster additions, Oregon is primed to continue its ascent into the upper echelon of women's collegiate basketball.

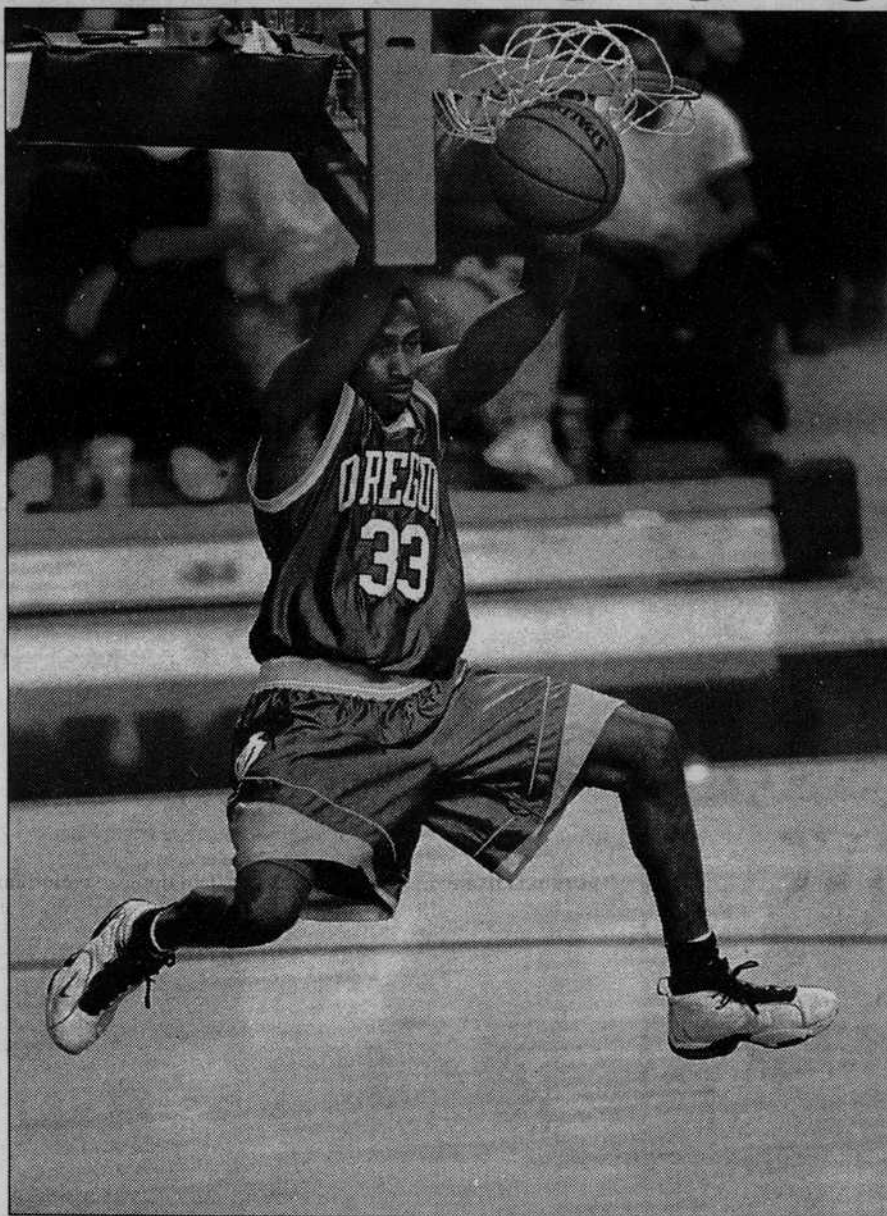
"We have a lot of confidence this year," said guard/forward Nicole Strange, the team's only senior. "We should be able to take it to the next level, 'cause now that we won, we know we're good."

The Ducks will need to be good in order to advance to the round of 16 — something Oregon hasn't yet accomplished.

Sharing the Pac-10 title with UCLA was fabulous, the Ducks concur, but they have grander goals for March 2000.

"Obviously, every year you want to try and win a conference champi-

Turn to **Women**, Page 12



Senior Alex Scales dazzles the McArthur Court crowd with a dunk during Saturday night's public practice.

Jeffrey Stockton Emerald

■ Coming off an unlikely run to the NIT semifinals, Oregon will accept nothing less than an NCAA Tournament berth

By Tim Pyle
Oregon Daily Emerald

Expectations are high for the 1999-2000 edition of Oregon men's basketball.

Most preseason forecasts have the Ducks finishing fourth in the Pacific-10 Conference and earning their first NCAA Tournament bid since 1995.

Ernie Kent did nothing to quell such hopes during the program's annual media day at McArthur Court on Friday.

If anything, the third-year head coach only heightened them.

"When I look at this year's basketball team on paper, it's certainly the most talented team that I've had an opportunity to coach as a head coach," Kent said. "I don't think you will see any team in this conference that has an overabundance of talent that's greater than what we have."

That talent is led by a trio of senior starters in point guard Darius Wright and forwards Alex Scales and A.D. Smith. Scales and Smith were first and second, respectively, on the team in scoring last season, and Wright averaged almost five assists per game in accumulating the sixth-highest single-season total in Oregon history with 150.

With Terik Brown and Mike Carson graduated, the other two starting spots will feature new faces. Kent was reluctant to divulge who he has in mind to start at shooting guard and center Friday, saying any such designations on his part would be purely speculative.

But sophomore Freddie Jones and junior David Jackson figure to receive the

Turn to **Men**, Page 13



Ducks still sliding, swept twice

Oregon suffers its worst loss of the season Saturday night at McArthur Court, scoring a combined total of six points

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

Somebody overbooked McArthur Court on Saturday night.

Throughout the Oregon volleyball team's match against Southern California, basketball fans made their way into McArthur to prepare for Oregon's not-so-midnight madness.

The basketball exhibition event happened after the volleyball game, but the madness arrived early, beginning at the start of the volleyball match's third game.

In front of 1,867 people — the Ducks' largest crowd this season — Oregon (6-12 overall, 0-9 Pacific-10 Conference) was shut down in three games, losing to the Trojans (11-4, 6-2) by scores of 15-3, 15-3 and 15-0.

The loss was the Ducks' 12th consecutive, capping a weekend that also included a three-game sweep by No. 6 UCLA (17-1, 9-0) on Friday night.

Oregon committed just three errors in its game 3 loss to the Trojans, and both squads had 27 kill attempts. However, while Oregon completed only 10 of those attacks, USC hit 20 of 27 for a phenomenal .704 attack percentage in game 3.

"There were some times when we had some spark, and we showed some spunk," Oregon head coach Cathy Nelson said. "But we're not taking advantage of point-scoring opportunities right now, and obviously that's why we got stuck at zero. We just didn't take advantage of the times that we did

have to score a point."

The Trojans utilized a balanced scoring attack throughout the match, led by Antoinette Polk's 12 kills in 24 attempts. Jennifer Pahl and Kashi Cormier each contributed 11 kills.

USC also had 34 defensive digs and 51 assists, while the Ducks had 19 and 29.

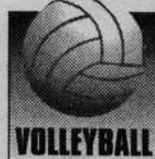
"We were trying to get an equal set distribution," USC head coach Jerritt Elliot said. "Our focus was to trying to get into a really consistent offensive scheme for ourselves. We passed extremely well. By balancing our attack, we were able to spread the ball a little bit more and get some gaps for our attackers."

Defensive specialist Carli Halligan led the Ducks with seven kills. Halligan, who does not usually hit, had to fill the role of injured Heather Gilmore, who collided with setter Julie Gerlach Friday night while diving for a ball.

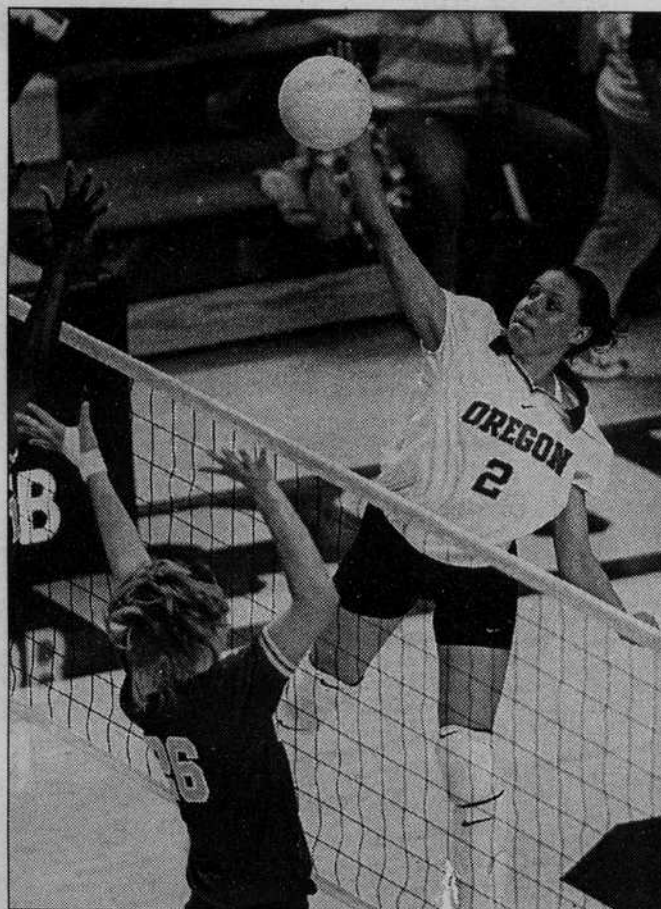
Halligan also led the Ducks with six defensive digs. Gerlach and Amy Banducci each contributed four digs.

The Ducks, who have yet to win a Pacific-10 Conference match, were swept 15-5, 15-4 and 15-4 Friday night by the Bruins.

Kristee Porter led UCLA's offense with 18 kills and was fed mostly by teammate



Turn to **Volleyball**, Page 16



Oregon's Laura Norton hangs at the net during Saturday night's loss to USC.

Jeff Stockton Emerald