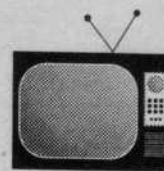


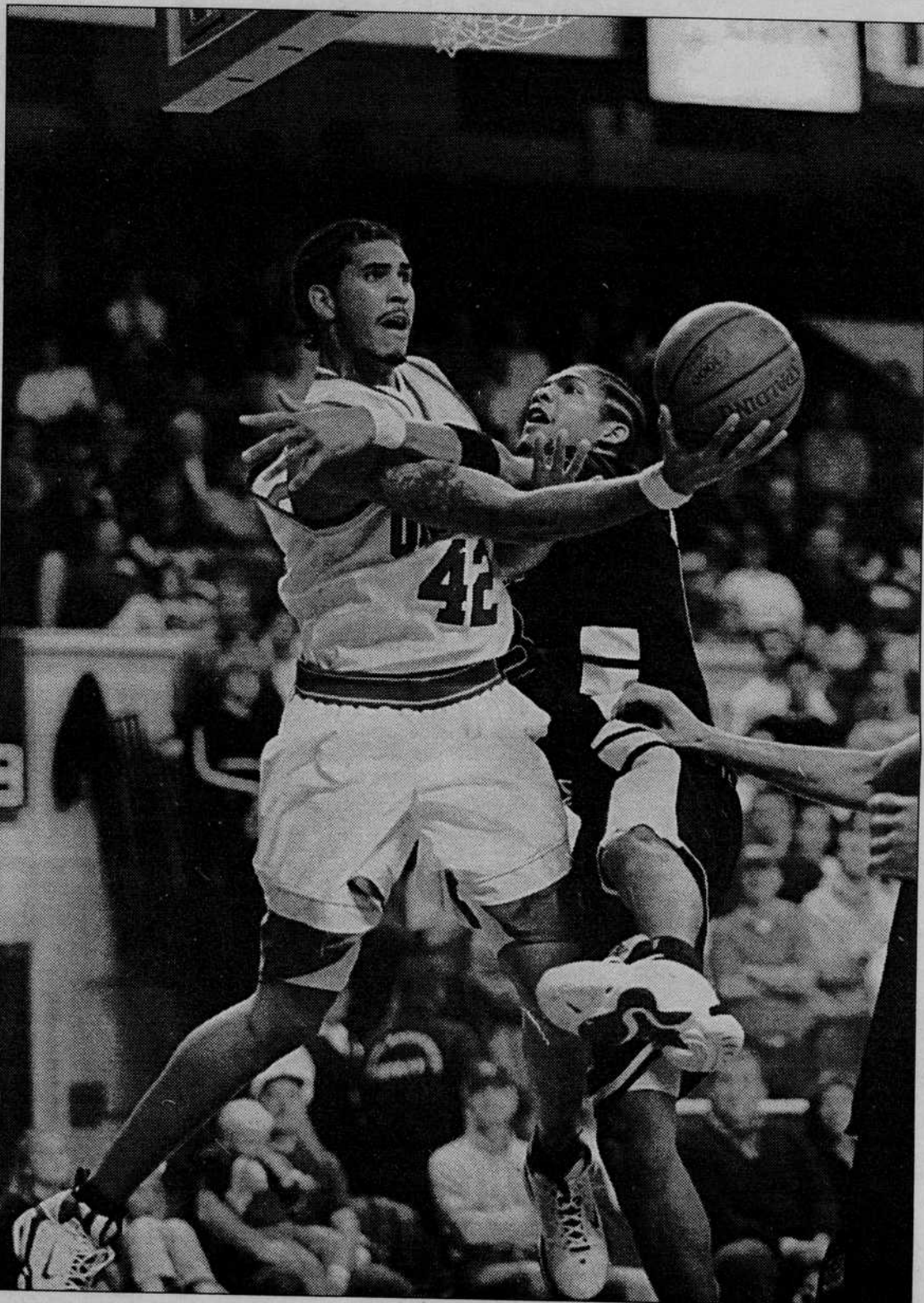
Oregon Daily
Emerald
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Sports

Best Bet
NBA Basketball
Portland vs. L.A. Lakers
7:30 p.m., FOX



Ducks aim to make strides in Portland



Junior forward Bryan Bracey has shown smooth moves and a soft touch in his first two regular-season games as a Duck. *Jeffrey Stockton Emerald*

■ The Ducks meet Portland State tonight with hopes of solving early-season problems

By Tim Pyle
Oregon Daily Emerald

Forward A.D. Smith was only talking to the media when he said it, but the rest of the Oregon men's basketball team should consider their senior co-captain's warning.

"I think Portland State's a better team than Portland," Smith said after the Ducks' 74-62 win over the Pilots on Tuesday night, which was anything but easy. "If we play that poorly, we're definitely gonna have our hands full Friday."

Still in search of its first complete performance of the season, Oregon (2-0 overall) meets the Vikings (4-1) at Portland's Memorial Coliseum tonight at 8:05 p.m.

"We just need to give a better effort both offensively and defensively," said senior point guard Darius Wright, who is averaging a team-high 13.5 points in 30.5 minutes per game.

Portland State, a member of the Big Sky Conference, has beaten Simon Fraser, Cal Poly and Pacific on the road and Portland at home. The Vikings' only loss was a 79-57 setback at the hands of Arizona State in Tempe, Ariz.

Senior forward Hasan Artharee paces Portland State in scoring with more than 15 points per game. The 6-foot-6, 235-pound graduate of Portland's Central Catholic High School also averages better than five rebounds.

Two other Viking starters are also averaging double figures, senior forward Ime Udoka and senior guard Derek Nesland.

Udoka, a 6-6, 215-pound graduate of Portland's Jefferson High, leads the team in rebounding with almost seven per outing in addition to his 13 points per game. Nesland, a 6-6, 180-pound Vancouver, Wash., native, scores nearly 12 points per game.

Although the series dates

“We just need to give better effort both offensively and defensively.”

Darius Wright
point guard

back to just 1996, Portland State already has a history of giving the higher-profile Ducks trouble.

After Oregon won the 1996 meeting in Portland's Rose Garden, the Vikings pulled an upset in McArthur Court with a last-second three-pointer in 1997.

Last season, the Ducks got some revenge with a 73-62 home win. Portland State shot just 35 percent from the field, and Oregon got 23 points from since-graduated guard Terik Brown, 16 points from forward Alex Scales and 11 points and 10 rebounds from Smith.

Much of the Ducks' early-season struggles have stemmed from poor ball-handling in the first half. In the season-opening win at Illinois-Chicago,

Oregon committed 17 first-half turnovers to trail 27-22 at the break. Tuesday, the Ducks turned the ball over 15 times in the first half on their way to a 25-23 halftime deficit.

"The biggest thing for us now is to play games," head coach Ernie Kent said.

Unbeaten UO unsatisfied as it prepares for Buffs

■ In its last home game until Jan. 20, No. 13 Oregon hopes to stay undefeated against Colorado on Saturday at McArthur Court

By Mirjam Swanson
Oregon Daily Emerald

After withstanding a first-half scare against Portland earlier this week, the No. 13 Oregon women's basketball team remains unbeaten as it heads into Saturday's game against Colorado (2-3 overall).

Off to their best start since going 5-0 in 1996, the Ducks (4-0) have won their first four games by an average margin of more than 18 points, including a 20-point blowout

of then-No. 21 Virginia Tech last Saturday.

Even so, Oregon is far from satisfied with its play so far.

"We still haven't really had a solid all-around game," said junior forward Brienne Meharry, who scored 16 points against the Pilots. "Afterwards when we watch film, we're like, 'Man, we were pretty bad.' So we want to come out and play really solid, and we haven't done that yet."

They're next chance is against the Buffaloes, who venture into McArthur Court after losing to rival Colorado State on Wednesday, 73-67.

"Obviously, they had a great game against Colorado State," Oregon head coach Jody Runge said.

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Jeffrey Stockton Emerald

“Colorado is pretty young right now, but we can't look past them.”

Brienne Meharry
forward

Guard Karen Piers was the only non-starting Duck to play well at Portland on Tuesday night, according to Oregon head coach Jody Runge.