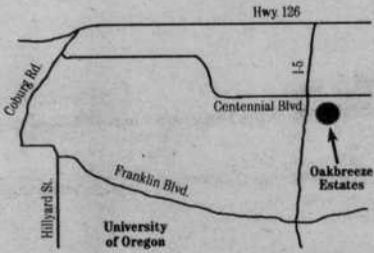


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Let's show 'em some love

It's time to get rowdy. Hope you have digested all of your holiday food and nursed your voice back to full strength after your wild New Year's celebration.

Because tonight, at 7:05 p.m., it's time to really cut loose. The Oregon men's basketball team hosts its first Pacific-10 Conference game against California and it will be needing you out there to supply as much craziness as you possibly can. They don't call this "The Pit" for nothing folks.

The first home stand in the Pac-10 season goes a long way to dictating the rest of the year. A year ago, the Ducks' first four home games were against USC (L, 85-84), UCLA (L, 65-63), Arizona (L, 85-83) and Arizona State (L, 64-60). Those four losses ruined any chance Oregon had of reaching the NCAA Tournament.

Sure, Mac Court was going playoff crazy in the two home wins in the National Invitation Tournament against Georgia Tech and Wyoming. But seriously, which tournament are you going to brag about to your friends who go to the other Pac-10 schools?

Exactly. And what is the one advantage that the Oregon Ducks have over the rest of its league competition?

Yup, you. I'm talking about you, who is trying to decipher these words amidst the bumpiness of one of Eugene's transit busses on your way to school.

I'm talking about you, who has just spilled ketchup on this paper while eating a hamburger at the freshman hangout, Grab 'N' Go.

And I'm talking about you, who happens to read this while holding the paper above your head in the form of an umbrella.

The great thing about Mac Court is that you are involved. In every way, shape and form. Don't think the players notice?

Just ask them.

"There isn't nothing like the Pit when it's rocking," senior forward Alex Scales said.

"We're all really excited about Thursday,

and I can't wait to see how loud it's going to get," sophomore guard Ben Lindquist said.

How loud it will get all depends on you, baby.

Oregon students cheered their lungs out for most of the 20th century — the first game held at Mac Court was on Jan. 14, 1927, when Oregon beat Willamette 38-10 — and now that we are into the 21st century, it's your turn.

Players don't forget the intensity and emotion that the fans provide. They remember the heart-pounding vibrations that the four-story, ivy-covered building can produce.

Current Minnesota Timberwolves point guard Terrell Brandon, who was the 1991 Pac-10 Player of the Year as a Duck, still recalls fondly his college days at The Pit.

"You'll never find a place to play like Mac Court anywhere,"

Brandon says in the Oregon media guide. "The fans are behind you 100 percent."

Also in the media guide it says, "Opponents cringe at the thought of playing in Mac Court, fans speak of it with unmatched reverence and visitors liken the fabled West Coast facility to the Boston Garden in the East."

Sound like something you want to experience? Tonight's the night. This season's opening weekend of games features California and then the nation's No. 3-ranked team in Stanford on Saturday.

Two wins and the Ducks would be in great shape. Two wins and a top-25 ranking would surely happen. Two wins and the Pac-10 race will be mighty interesting.

But without you, those two wins would be much harder to acquire.

Tonight's game is a perfect chance for you to go crazy and forget about the rain, the textbooks and the papers.

The place will be packed, and if you were late in getting your tickets I'm sorry because the student tickets are sold out. But if you already have them, get ready to rock.

The Oregon cheerleaders will be there in their usual high-flying fashion. The OMB — that's the Oregon Marching Band for the band-illiterate — will be in full force blasting out those pump-up tunes.

And of course, Alex, Freddie, A.D. and the gang will be there, and they'll be eagerly awaiting the arrival of one very special person...

You.

Jeff Smith is a sports reporter for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the paper. He can be reached via e-mail at Smittside@aol.com

**Most
UO students
[80%] have**

4

**drinks or fewer
when they party**

NEW VIEW
2000
Office of Student Life
University of Oregon

Data taken from
1998 UO Health Center Survey.



**74% of UO students drink
1 or fewer days a week
... or don't drink at all.**