

# Basketball

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But as Oregon players talked Monday at McArthur Court, it was clear that they realize that they were one or two plays from returning home with a Pacific-10 Conference record of 2-3, instead of 4-1.

"We really don't like to be in those tight situations, and we can't be doing that anymore," said junior forward Bryan Brace, who went a perfect 10-for-10 from the floor against Washington.

"But it does give us confidence in knowing that we can come from behind. It shows us that even if we're not playing well in a game, we still have a chance to come back."

Head coach Ernie Kent echoed his players' comments.

"I think our two wins were good in the sense that they taught us how to pull out some close ball games," Kent said.

"On the other side of that, we played down to a level that we shouldn't have. That's not disrespecting Washington or Washington State; we just didn't play good basketball."

## The Scales are tipped in his direction ...

As Kent mentioned after Saturday night's win, "Big time players step up at big times."

Alex Scales exemplified that as he carried his Ducks against the Cougars with a career-high 27 points. He also contributed 17 points against the Huskies, including some key baskets in overtime.

"Alex really played great up in Washington," Smith said.

"He hit two huge threes for us against Washington State that won the game for us. It takes a lot of guts to say 'I'm going to take those shots and make them.' And that's what he did."

Scales is currently listed on

ESPN.com as one of the top shooting guard prospects for the 2000 NBA Draft — and was the only Pac-10 player mentioned.

He is described as "another scorer who needs to be more consistent to get into the first round [of the draft]. He's rangy and has the build for the next level, but there's still a wait-and-see attitude."

Smith is among those who believe in his teammate's abilities.

"He definitely has a career someday in pro basketball," Smith said. "But I think he's mature enough not to really think about that stuff too much. He's more concerned with how we do as a team."

## Still on the sidelines ...

Watching his team win 10 of its last 12 games and once again waiting for his chance to play is junior guard David Jackson.

Jackson has been sidelined with tendinitis in his knee since the Dec. 4 game at Portland State. He underwent arthroscopic surgery on Jan. 3, and he is now finally starting to get healthy enough to think about playing next week.

"My last few workouts have been really good," said Jackson, who had to sit out all of last year after transferring from Utah. "It's getting stronger and there's no pain. I'm going to try and go full speed at practice next week and hopefully be able to play."

He tries to stay upbeat about his situation but admits it's tough.

"This sucks man, but there's really nothing I can do," said Jackson. "Being frustrated and being pissed all of the time won't do anything to help me. So I just have to try and stay positive and keep working hard."

Kent knows that a healthy David Jackson will bring another weapon to a loaded arsenal.

"I still think that at some point in time this year he's going to help us win some key basketball games," Kent said.

# Volleyball

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immune to success. Success is relative to the plan you have in place and how you implement what you're going to do.

"I know there has been a perception of Oregon volleyball. This is my opportunity to change it."

The hiring will be complete on Feb. 2, when Ferreira signs a four-year contract worth an annual salary ranging from \$70,000 to \$75,000 per year. Ferreira was one of 45 applicants who applied, and just one of three who was interviewed in Eugene.

Ferreira is familiar to some members of the Oregon volleyball team but less familiar to others. All the Ducks, however, seem to think that having a new coach is a positive thing.

"We really need someone who can light that fire under us again and make us want to play and really want to work hard," said sophomore right-side hitter An-

nie Pogue. "He can give us a renewed sense of team because I think we lost a lot of our spirit last season because it was so frustrating."

"He really, really wanted the job. He was really positive and upbeat, and I think that's what we need."

Ferreira has met several of the players, but he has not watched any video. He said he is not aware of their work ethic or actions on the court.

Once he gets situated at Oregon, Ferreira said his focus will be making everyone on the team better.

"I'm going to start with the people who are there," Ferreira said. "My job is to change the culture of Oregon volleyball on the team, in the community and in the region."

Ferreira also wants to be a competitive recruiter. He said he is close to signing a pair of talented athletes.

"They are players who have already committed to Oregon," Ferreira said. "Also, I have players who have committed to me. And the staff I'm bringing in, they have

players committed to them."

Ferreira, 38, is no stranger to coaching in a competitive volleyball conference. He compiled a record of 48-43 in the last three years as head coach at Idaho, and during that time, Idaho moved from the Big Sky Conference to the Big West Conference. The Big West is regarded along with the Pac-10 as one of the toughest volleyball leagues in the country.

Prior to his tenure at the helm of the Vandals, Ferreira was head coach at California State, Bakersfield, where he coached the Roadrunners to an impressive 100-13 record in three seasons. His Roadrunners finished second, third and fifth at three NCAA Division II tournaments.

Ferreira also has assistant coaching experience at Fresno State and Stanford.

"I had not pursued another job while at Idaho," Ferreira said.

"I have a family, and a certain quality of life is always considered. This job fits the right conditions."

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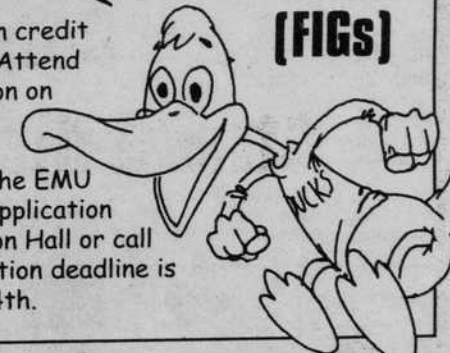
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