



Emerald

Freddie Jones' defense will be tested by Eddie House, the Pac-10's top scorer.

## Men

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ic number of 20 that would virtually guarantee Oregon its first trip to the Big Dance since the 1994-95 campaign.

"For us, if we can get by this game, the window opens up," said Oregon head coach Ernie Kent, who has won more games in his first three seasons than any other Ducks' coach since Howard Hobson in the 1930s. "If we can get this game, we will be no less than third. Then we can talk about the last two games and the importance of seedings.

"I think it's an excellent opportunity to get into the tournament. The fact that it's a 20-win season right there for us makes the game even more important. I think this team will respond. They need to respond."

Oregon will face the Sun Devils without A.D. Smith, one of its most consistent players. Smith—who is ninth in the Pac-10 in scoring with a 15.3 average—will miss at least the remainder of the regular season with a broken cheekbone, which he suffered in Saturday's win at Southern California.

Kent said the loss of Smith adds significance to tonight's game.

"This is our next game, and we have a lot of adversity to face without A.D. being there," Kent said. "After this, the games just continue to get bigger with Arizona looming on Saturday. The next step for us right now is to just get the next ball game because it is so crucial."

The Ducks once again will have their hands full trying to contain House. He scored a conference record-tying 61 points against California on Jan. 6.

After his last performance against Oregon, House vowed revenge. The senior was held to just four first-half points and 15 total in the first meeting at Tempe.

"He has to come out and prove it will be different this

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Ernie Kent  
head coach

time around," said Oregon guard Freddie Jones, who was one of many of the Ducks' defenders who harassed House into one of his poorest shooting performances of the season. "He didn't play his best game down there, so we're going to try to keep him to that. He's a great player, so he has a little leeway in talking like that because he can back it up. We just have to come out and play with a lot of intensity so it doesn't happen."

When distinguishing how important House's play is to Arizona State's success, statistics don't lie. Last week in a loss to Arizona, House was held to a dismal seven points. In the last 11 games that House has scored in single digits, the Sun Devils are 1-10.

Kent said he anticipates House being a major factor in a game with this much magnitude.

"They're right there on our heels, and they have an excellent opportunity to go into the postseason as well. And he is the type of player that will play up in Mac Court with that crowd and the energy in the air," Kent said. "We need to make sure we do the best we can to limit him from having one of those monster games that he is capable of having."

While House is the Sun Devils' biggest threat, the Ducks know he can't beat them single-handedly. Arizona State freshman Kyle Dodd and Tanner Shell have been playing particularly well as of late, with Shell averaging 10.8 points in 20.6 minutes the last 11 games off of the bench.

"Their whole team is filled with great athletes," Jones said. "We just have to stop them as a team."



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