

# Men's hoops

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what this team is about. Just staying together and winning."

Oregon's character was given a stern test when Arizona's Gilbert Arenas converted two of his 15 points on a fast-break dunk at the 12:23 mark to give his team the 64-51 lead. During the ensuing timeout, head coach Ernie Kent's ongoing frustration toward the referees resulted in him getting only the third technical foul of his career.

Arizona proceeded to score four more points to cap a crowd-silencing 13-0 run, and an Oregon win seemed just as improbable as it did Thursday.

Then came the turning point.

Senior forward Alex Scales received a pass from Wright and banged home a trey with 12:05 left.

A mere 26 seconds later, Scales continued his torrid three-point shooting by drilling another to cut the lead to 69-57. All of a sudden the tide had changed.

So much so that the Wildcats could only muster one measly field goal in the final 11:15. That included an impressive conclusion in which Oregon's team defense and transition offense accounted for a 15-1 run in the last 4:46.

One of the crucial possessions came with just under three minutes to play and the score 80-73, Arizona. Wright found sophomore guard Freddie Jones in the corner, who stroked home a three, rewarding Wright with one of his seven assists.

Jones was the passer two minutes later, when he found Scales for the layup to cap a 9-0 Duck run and knot the score at 80.

After six Oregon free throws

and a missed desperation three-pointer by Arizona's Jason Gardner, Oregon's best-ever 12th Pac-10 win was completed.

During that final run, eight of the 15 points came by way of perfect free-throw shooting by Wright and Jones. The Ducks' 24-of-25 showing (96 percent) from the charity stripe broke the school record of 95 percent set in December 1977.

"Our threes started falling and our free-throw shooting was superb," Kent said. "Once the momentum started to swing our way, and with the crowd coming alive like it did, we just stepped up to whole other level."



SMITH

Jones was the Duck who stepped up the most.

Often criticized for not playing to his potential, he was at his best. His team-high 27 points surpassed his previous career-high of 23 set last year against Washington State.

"He's got an all-around game," said senior forward A.D. Smith, who returned to action from cheekbone surgery much sooner than expected. "He does so many different things that keep him on the floor. How many times have you looked at the stat sheet and seen that Freddie has five assists and one turnover?"

This time around Jones' stat sheet showed that he led the team with six rebounds to go with his six assists and only one turnover in 34 minutes of action.

Although Smith's numbers were nowhere near impressive, his 25 minutes on the floor provid-

ed so much more than points, rebounds and assists.

"He was a big lift," Jones said. "When he announced that he was going to play it was a big confidence boost. We know the type of warrior he is and that he is going to play if he can at all costs."

Four minutes into the game, Smith made his first appearance. Just more than three minutes later he converted a layup to give the Ducks the early 17-11 lead, sending the crowd into an "A.D., A.D." chant.

Oregon pushed its lead to 36-28 after a thunderous two-hand slam by Jones. But Arizona showed why it is a top-5 team by overcoming a raucous crowd and going on a 16-2 run in the final four minutes of the first half. Arizona was led by sophomore forward Michael Wright, who scored a career-high 28 points.

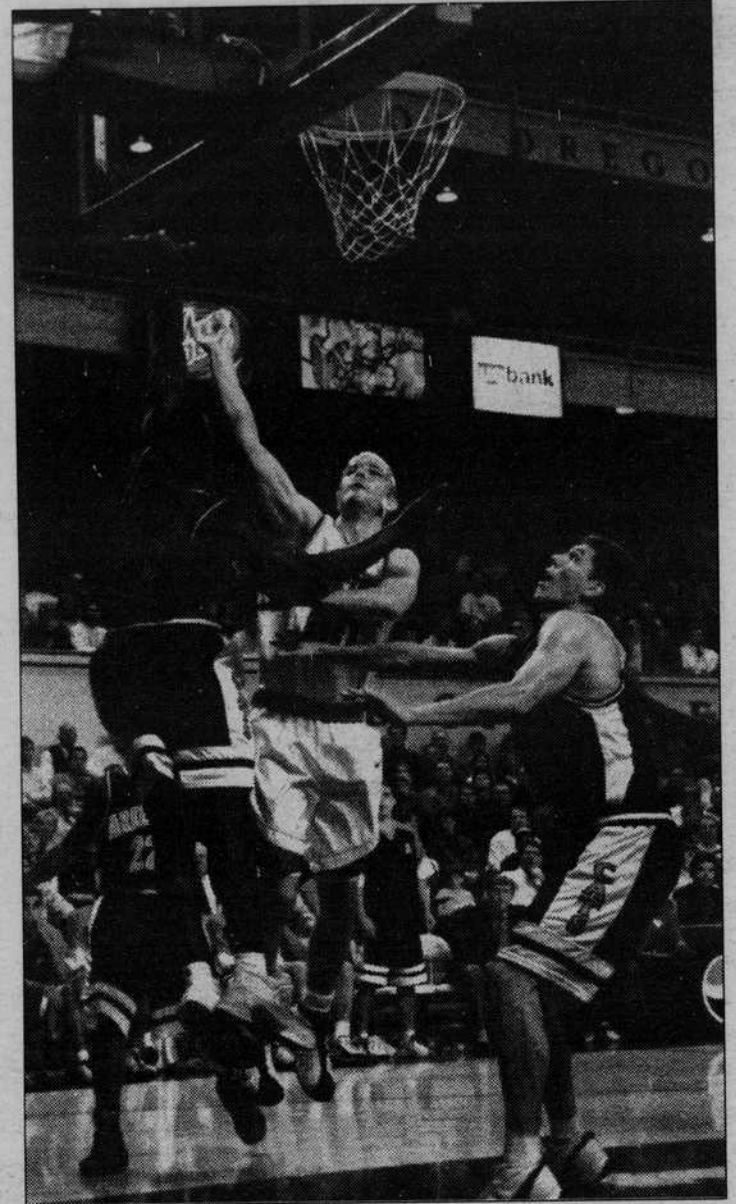
The Pit faithful proved once again why they are one of the most revered fan bases in the nation. With thirty-seconds to play, the rim began shaking side-to-side during an Arenas free throw, as it had earlier in the season in the win against Southern California.

"Mac Court was just outstanding," Kent said. "It was definitely the Mac Court of old for the entire game. That crowd was just awesome."

"The crowd no doubt helped them considerably," said Arizona head coach Lute Olson, who was clearly incensed about his teams' back-to-back upset defeats. "Neither the crowd nor their team felt they were out of it."

McArthur Court now has a full week of rest, and then one last chance to rock — on March 11 against Oregon State.

Let the Madness of Civil War week begin.



Ryan Starkweather Emerald

Oregon senior forward A.D. Smith scores two his eight points over Arizona's Michael Wright in his successful return from cheekbone surgery.

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