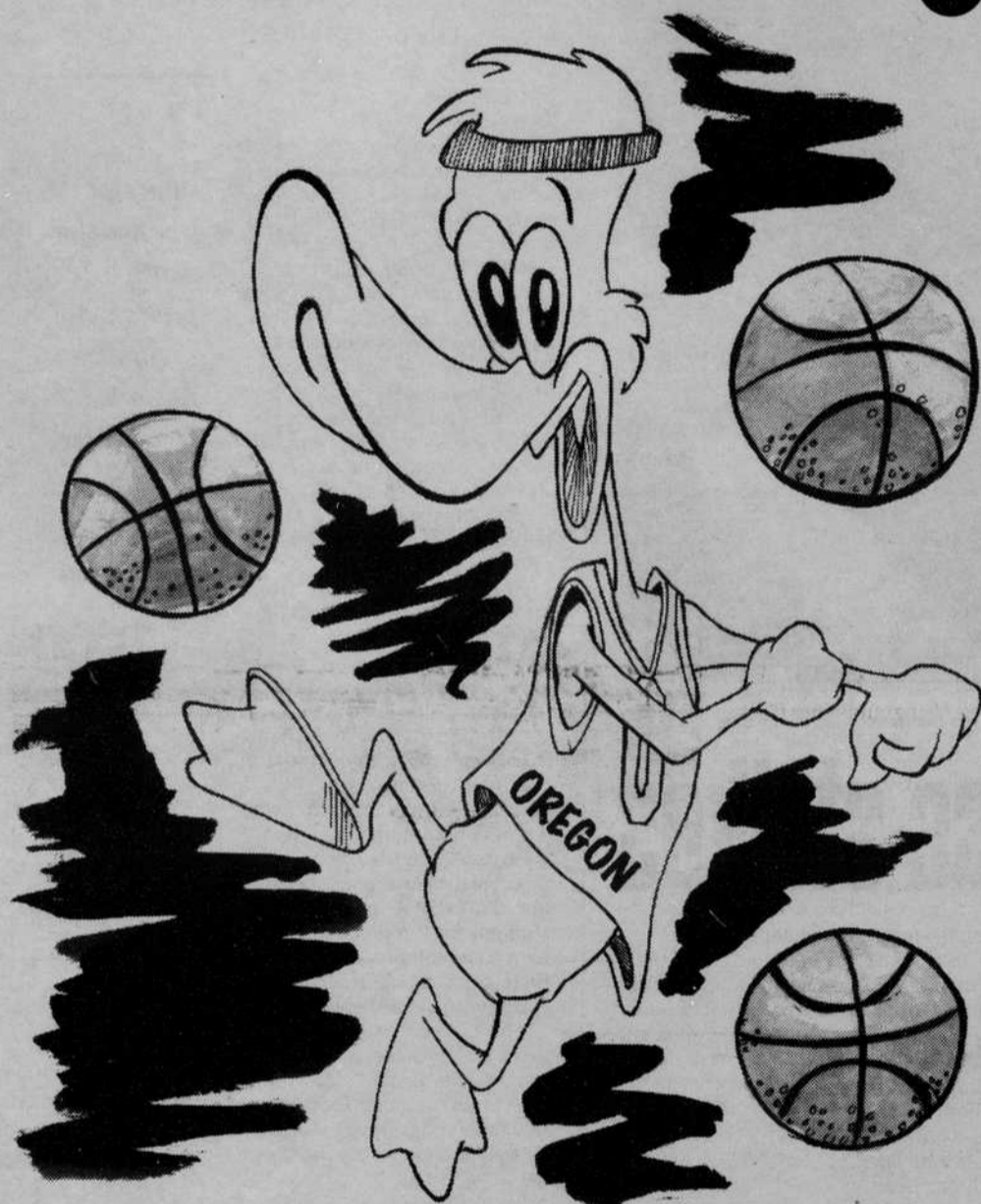


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# Perspectives

## We're going to Bracketville!



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

Sometimes things just go your way. Like this weekend, when both Duck basketball teams had incredible finishes to important games that virtually guarantee them a berth in the Big Dance.

The men, down 17 in the second half at McArthur Court against No. 3 Arizona — home of fantastic guards and the new generation of NBA-bound Waltons — outscored the Wildcats 14-1 in the last five minutes to win 86-81.

The women, down 22 with 17 minutes to go, came back with a vengeance to secure a 75-71 victory away from home.

We've set the NCAA Tournament in our sights. And we are so ready to dance.

Both of the Duck teams haven't grooved at the same time since 1996. Just as it seemed the women's team was becoming dominant, the men had a few years of sub-par seasons.

Now that the men are having their winningest season since 1945, the women could have fallen by the wayside.

But no. They've both emerged as two of the top teams in the Pacific-10 Conference, and they've turned heads nationally. ESPN.com named Alex Scales one of the top two guards in the nation. And Shaquala Williams, our "Shaq," should — if the world is worth living in — be the Pac-10 player of the year.

Both coaches are beloved. Our players seem to feel at home in Eugene too. Fans pack the stadium. For once, it's one big dream.

And while Oregon may not beat Duke or Tennessee in the Final Four, we've come a long way. There's just a sense of believing in our teams and really supporting them. When the basket at Mac Court swings a few inches either way because the crowd is stomping its feet so hard, you know we're rockin'.

It's easy sometimes to pick on collegiate sports, to say that it takes money from other programs, that it is beholden to corporate greed, that athletes are like mini-professionals who work the academic system. And while, to an extent, any one of those could be true, it's more true that collegiate athletics are a unifier. Especially at Oregon.

There's nothing wrong with saying you support the teams, that you love watching Freddie Jones fly, that you love seeing Jody Runge stalk the court, that you love seeing a sweet hook from our heartland hero Jenny Mowe, that you love saying "You've gotta ERN it!"

The atmosphere — with all its positives and negatives — is something we can all relate to. We see the drama, the comedy, the maturation, the heart-stopping victories and, yes, sometimes the depressing defeats. But we see them together.

And we will watch the postseason action together. We'll root and holler and try to magically send our team to the national championship. That's not so terribly impossible. On any given game day ... watch out.

So here's a message to all the players, who may or may not already feel a ton of responsibility to the fans: Just do your best. And believe us, that's exciting enough.

How 'bout them Ducks?

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

### QUOTED

"Personally, I hate playing at Mac Court. I can't stand playing here. The fans are great, but as far as my focus, I think I'm better on the road."

— Shaquala Williams, Oregon guard. ODE, Feb. 17.

"Every year we start off coaching for the national title. The first year, it gave us 13 wins; last year, it gave us 14 wins and a trip to the final four of the [National Invitation Tournament]. We're coaching this year for a Pac-10 championship. When you set your goals that high, the NCAA Tournament will take care of itself."

— Ernie Kent, head coach of men's basketball. ODE, Feb. 8.

"It is hard because you just want to fast-forward to the end of the season and say, 'OK. How'd we do?' So it's hard to take it one game at a time — but we're definitely doing that, just slowing the whole process down."

— Jenny Mowe, women's basketball center. ODE, Feb. 17.

"How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time."

— Jody Runge, women's head coach, on her team's taking it one day at a time.

"It's a cliché, but we really have to take it one at a time. ... We're still within striking distance of Stanford and Arizona."

— A.D. Smith, Oregon men's forward. ODE, Feb. 7.

### Letters to the editor

#### Poverty demands second look

Your editorial "The Crime of Innocence" (ODE, March 3) demands a response.

Poverty is not a verb, therefore it isn't "something reprehensible going on."

"Born equal" is not the same as "created equal," which is what the Declaration of Independence says.

"Racism, sexism and nationalism" are ideas, while poverty is a result of certain actions. When was the meaning of poverty changed to "the depreciating value of the American worker"?

According to Robert Grossman, John Yanak and Jeff Ford, in Perspectives, the top 5 percent of taxpayers paid 48.8 percent of all U.S. taxes in 1995, up from 1985 when the top 10 percent of taxpayers contributed that

percentage. The burden on the bottom 50 percent of taxpayers dropped to 4.6 percent from 7.2 percent during the same time.

A 1996 study by the Advisory Commission to Study the Consumer Price Index, chaired by Stanford University economist Michael Boskin, said the CPI "overstates the true rate of inflation by about 1.1 percentage points per year." That suggests the average worker is earning 20 percent more than in the 1970s, instead of 10 percent less.

Current Health and Human Services statistics indicate that the poverty level for a family of three is \$14,150. The Oregon minimum wage of \$13,520 would be supplemented by \$2,142 in federal and \$214 in state earned income credits for a two-parent family of three; and \$3,592 and \$359 respectively for the same single parent family. The first case is 12 percent greater, while the second is 23

percent higher than the poverty level, not 27 percent below it.

Robert L. Mullins  
journalism, sociology 1999

#### Domestic violence a serious issue

Every 15 seconds in the United States, a woman is beaten by her husband or partner, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Domestic violence is a serious issue. I suggest that next time, when the Emerald does its reporting, it should treat the epidemic of violence against women a little more seriously. Under the headline "To Tonya just being Tonya" (ODE, Feb. 28), the Emerald gave her thumbs down for "allegedly heaving a hubcap at her boyfriend and repeatedly punching him in the face."

The Emerald failed to mention that Tonya Harding was acting in self-defense against an abusive partner. Ninety-five percent of domestic violence against women is man to woman, and in violence against men,

most reports show that the woman was trying to defend herself in an attack. Perhaps the Emerald will think twice next time when they send the message that self defense against physical and sexual abuse is a "thumbs down" action.

I also noticed that the Emerald felt no need to give Louis Farrakhan Jr. thumbs down for facing two felony accounts for "striking his wife, Lesil, [who was eight months pregnant], with a metal serving tray ..." (The Register Guard, Feb. 26). Another appropriate thumbs down could go to the judicial system that allowed him to go free on bail.

Or better yet, maybe the Emerald should think about giving Harding's abusive partner a "thumbs down" for contributing to a country that beats its women, holds no one accountable and blames the victim for defending herself.

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