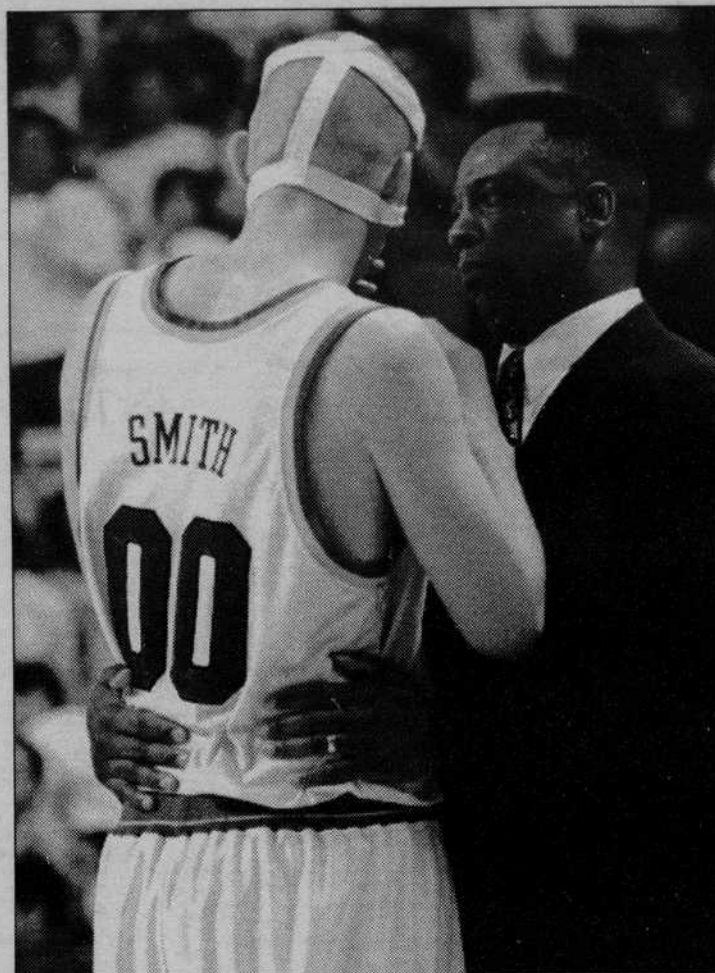


Emerald

A.D. Smith has been a positive presence in his five years as a member of the Oregon basketball program.



Ryan Starkweather Emerald

To the delight of fans and teammates, Smith returned to action last weekend.

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Want to be the Editor?



The Oregon Daily Emerald, the independent student newspaper at the University of Oregon, is accepting applications for Editor in Chief for 2000-2001.

Editor is responsible for all editorial operations and editorial content of the newspaper.

Interested parties should pick up an application packet, which includes a job description, at the ODE front desk in Suite 300 EMU or call 346-5511 for more information.

Application deadline is Tuesday March 28 at 5 p.m.

Candidate must be a student at the University.

Oregon Daily
Emerald

A.D. Smith

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Beavers' fan.

"I didn't know I wanted to be a Duck until a week before I signed," Smith said. "I grew up a Beavers' fan, and that was something that I wanted to do ever since I was a little kid. But I had an opportunity to go there, similar to the one I got here, and I just thought at that time that coming here was the best decision for me."

According to Smith, overriding factors influenced his decision to switch over from the orange-and-black to the green-and-yellow.

"Having the opportunity to have my family here was important," Smith said. "No one else on our team has that opportunity with the exception of Freddie [Jones from Gresham] and David [Jackson from Portland] to have their family come watch. My family has seen just about every game I've played here."

Smith has played quite a few. Out of 116 in all, which game does he hold closest to his heart?

Could it be the game against Hawaii earlier this season when he put a clinic, collecting a career-high 29 points and nine boards? Could it be when he led the Ducks with 22 points against his former school of choice, Oregon State?

"It's ironic that out of all the games I've been a part of, the Arizona State game was one of the most emotional, and that was the only game I didn't play in," said Smith, who sat out after sustaining a broken cheekbone the weekend before. "It was the way it ended and how big it was."

"The way the guys came together, with Alex [Scales] and Darius [Wright] making big plays, that's the game I will certainly remember for a long time."

Most people expected to see Smith in street clothes watching the game from the sideline, just two days after surgery was performed to repair his cheekbone and three metal plates were inserted to keep it in place. But there he was, in warm-ups, suited-up, wearing a specialized mask.

Smith said agreeing with the

doctors' initial prognosis that he'd be out until the postseason was hard, but it was something he tried to stay positive about.

"Certainly, it was an emotional time," Smith said. "You can have tears about not being able to play in the tournament. But even at that time, it was just a hurdle, and I felt like it was something I could handle. If I didn't come back, I could look back on my career and feel comfortable."

Although he didn't play in Oregon's amazing victory over the Sun Devils, Smith refused to stay out of the line-up, heroically returning to give the Ducks' an emotional lift in their victory over No.3 Arizona, scoring eight points and grabbing four rebounds.

"It was a lot of fun to just to come back out there because earlier I didn't know if I would ever get another chance," Smith said. "I was still pretty upbeat because of the opportunity to come back sooner than expected in a big game and a big weekend like that."

When Smith entered the game mid-way through the first half, McArthur Court erupted in applause. The Oregon fans wanted Smith to know their admiration.

"I've gotten a lot of support ever since I've been here, and the people in the community have been real good to me," Smith said. "But Saturday was exceptional. The support I've gotten from being hurt, literally over 100 different calls, e-mails and cards, has really been a great reception."

After five years in the Ducks' program, Smith finally gets his wish this year, an invitation to "March Madness." Smith red-shirted his sophomore year, and he insists it was one of the best decisions he's ever made. It has allowed him to pursue a masters degree, something Smith said he "wouldn't have done if he was here only four years."

"I am happy I chose to redshirt because it's really expanded my opportunities, both from a basketball perspective, and also from the school side."

"It's been one of the best decisions I've ever made."