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# Champs returning to take court

■ Sweating away the summer was business as usual for the women's basketball crew eyeballing another title

By Scott Peszkecker  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Soon, the quest for another Pacific-10 Conference Championship will begin anew, and the Oregon women's basketball team should be ready.

Four starters return from last season's conference championship team. Forward Brienne Meharry will be back. So will forward Angelina Wolvert and center Jenny Mowe. Last season's Pac-10 Player of the Year, junior point guard Shaquala Williams, will be ready for more. And Lindsey Dion — dubbed by head coach Jody Runge as the team's "spark plug" — will be back, and without injuries.

"They're all really working hard," Runge said. "They understand how difficult it is to try to repeat as champions. Generally, they have had a very productive off-season."

"We have as much experience as we've ever had coming back at a lot of different positions," Runge said. "That's a very positive thing."

The only losses from last season's roster are guards Nicole Strange and Karen Peirs. Strange, one of the best mid-range shooters in the nation, graduated after what was the finest season of her career. Peirs quit the team to pursue her academic goals and play basketball in Nova Scotia. Sophomore Kourtney Shreve will be expected to backup Williams at the point. Last season, Shreve slowly but surely replaced Peirs as the go-to point guard behind Williams.

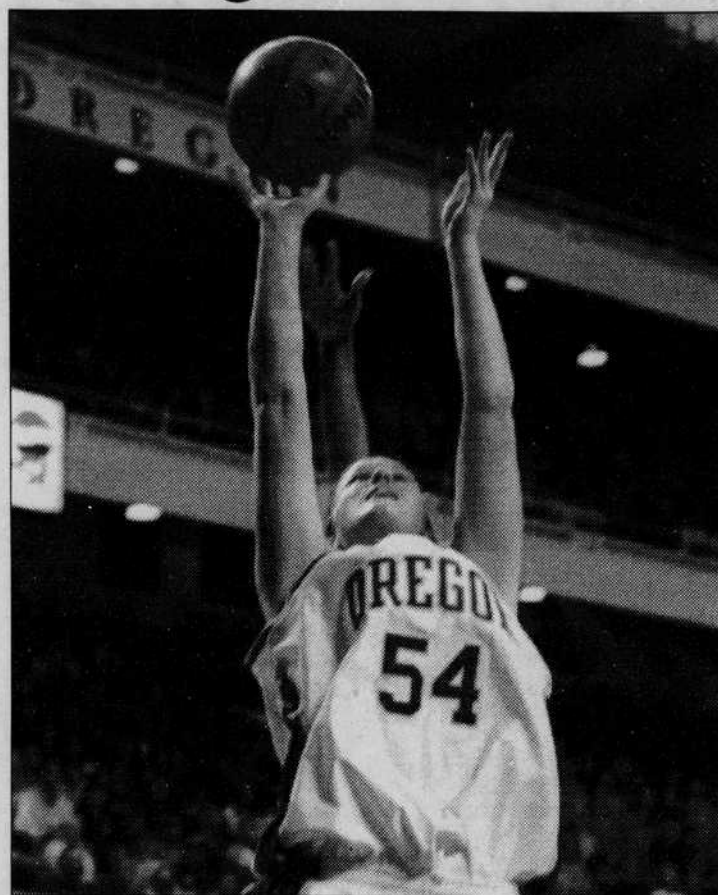
"Kourtney had a great summer and will be ready to take on that role," Runge said.

Led by a core group of seniors, all the ingredients for another title chase seem to be in place this year; but what about next year?

After the 2000-01 season, Oregon will graduate one of the most formidable frontcourts in the country in Wolvert, Meharry and Mowe.

Waiting in the wings in the forward and center positions are Ndidi Unaka, Courtney Moore and Alyssa Fredrick — all of whom have had their moments, but none of whom have proven to be consistent threats. At least, not yet.

So it makes sense that the Ducks' lone summer recruit, Catherine



Emerald

As one of four returning champions, senior forward Brienne Meharry will show new recruits how the big dogs play. The Ducks hope to relieve the glory of 1999 in 2000.

Kraayeveld from Lake Washington High School in Kirkland, Wash., is an accomplished forward. Standing at 6-foot 4, Kraayeveld was named the Washington Class 4A Player of the Year last season, averaging 19.7 points and 11.5 rebounds per game. "She's a very versatile player," Runge said. "She has a lot of skills that fit facing the basket at the three position, as well as playing inside at the four position. She can shoot the ball from the outside, and because of her height she can play perimeter players."

This season should be a learning year for Kraayeveld. Runge said she thinks the freshman will be comfortable on the floor come game time, but perhaps not with the poise displayed by newcomer Shreve last season. Kraayeveld could wind up competing with the Ducks' bench players for more playing time as the season progresses.

"Those kids have been in the program longer and have a huge advantage," Runge said. "But physically,

[Kraayeveld] has the tools to compete with them."

Oregon also picked up Katie Planski, a javelin thrower/guard from South Eugene High School. Runge expects Planski to stay with the Ducks for all four years, even though training hard in track and field will be her first priority. She will not, however, compete for the Oregon women's track team.

"She wants to do basketball and wants to use it to stay in shape," Runge said. "Also, she has ambitions of not sitting on the bench."

Redshirting this season will be 5-6 guard Ednisha Curry, a transfer from Cal-State Northridge. Curry, a two-time All-Big Sky honoree and the Matadors' all-time leader in three pointers, will play her final year for the Ducks in 2001-02.

"She can put the ball on the floor as well and shoot it off the dribble," Runge said. "From a confidence standpoint, she's a very confident shooter."

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## Volleyball

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Chute (who averaged more than 8 assists per game last season) will have crucial roles offensively this year. Unlike last season, the tandem will find themselves together on the floor, sharing the responsibility of assisting their teammates.

"We need to utilize the setting position as an offensive threat and move the ball quickly," Ferreira said. "That's going to be our edge."

Depth will also be a factor in Ferreira's scheme this season. With five freshmen, including 6-foot-3 middle blocker Alisa Nelson, the first-year coach will certainly be juggling the bench to find the best combinations.

Sophomores Kristin Ferris and Mara Kelly are the returning defensive specialists, while freshmen Diana Blank and Jessica Scott look to provide a secondary boost.

"Our foundation is solid and we want to be progressive," Ferreira said. "We may have bumps in the road, but our focus is to stay one-minded. It's not you versus me. It's us versus them."

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