

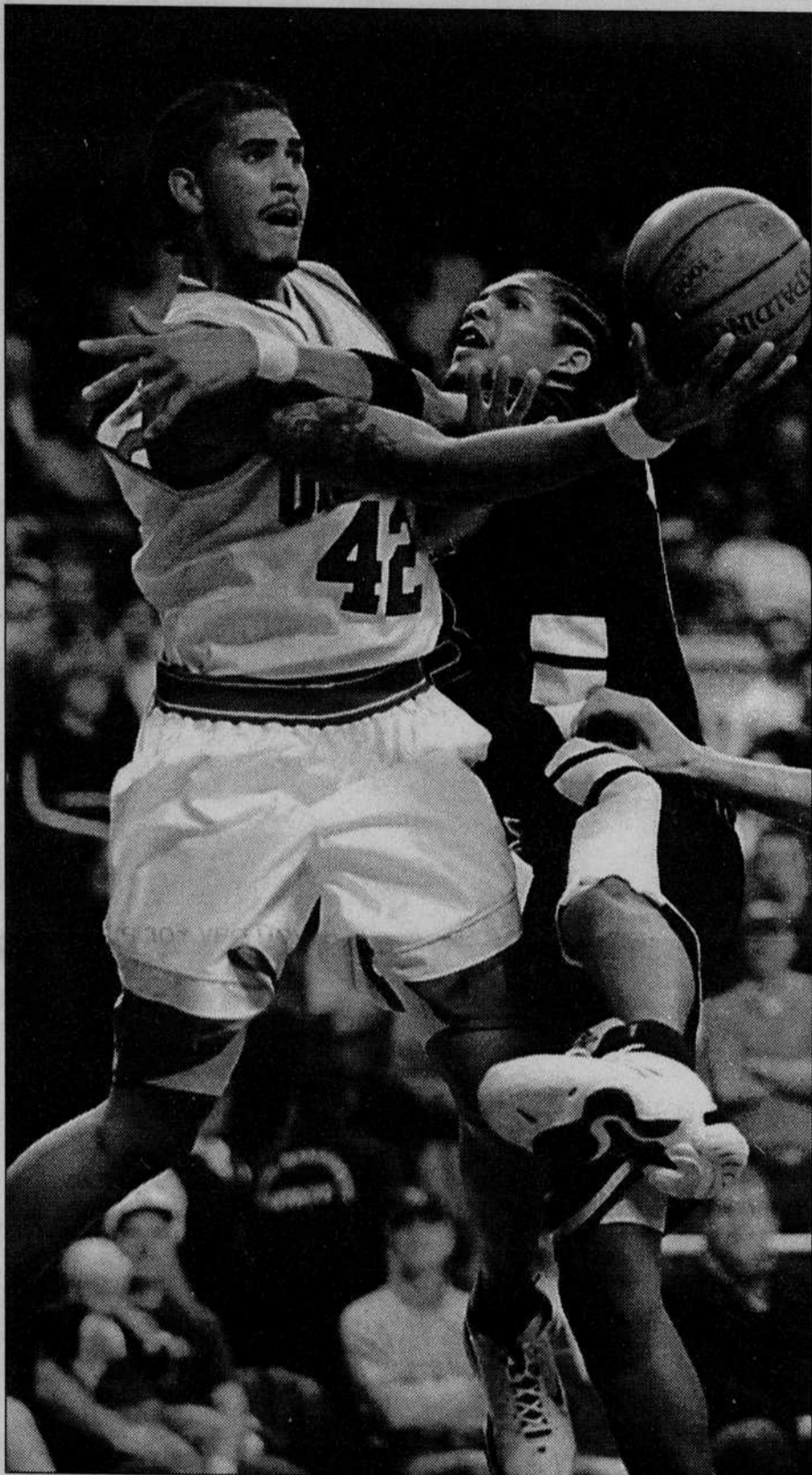
SPORTS

Tuesday

Best Bet

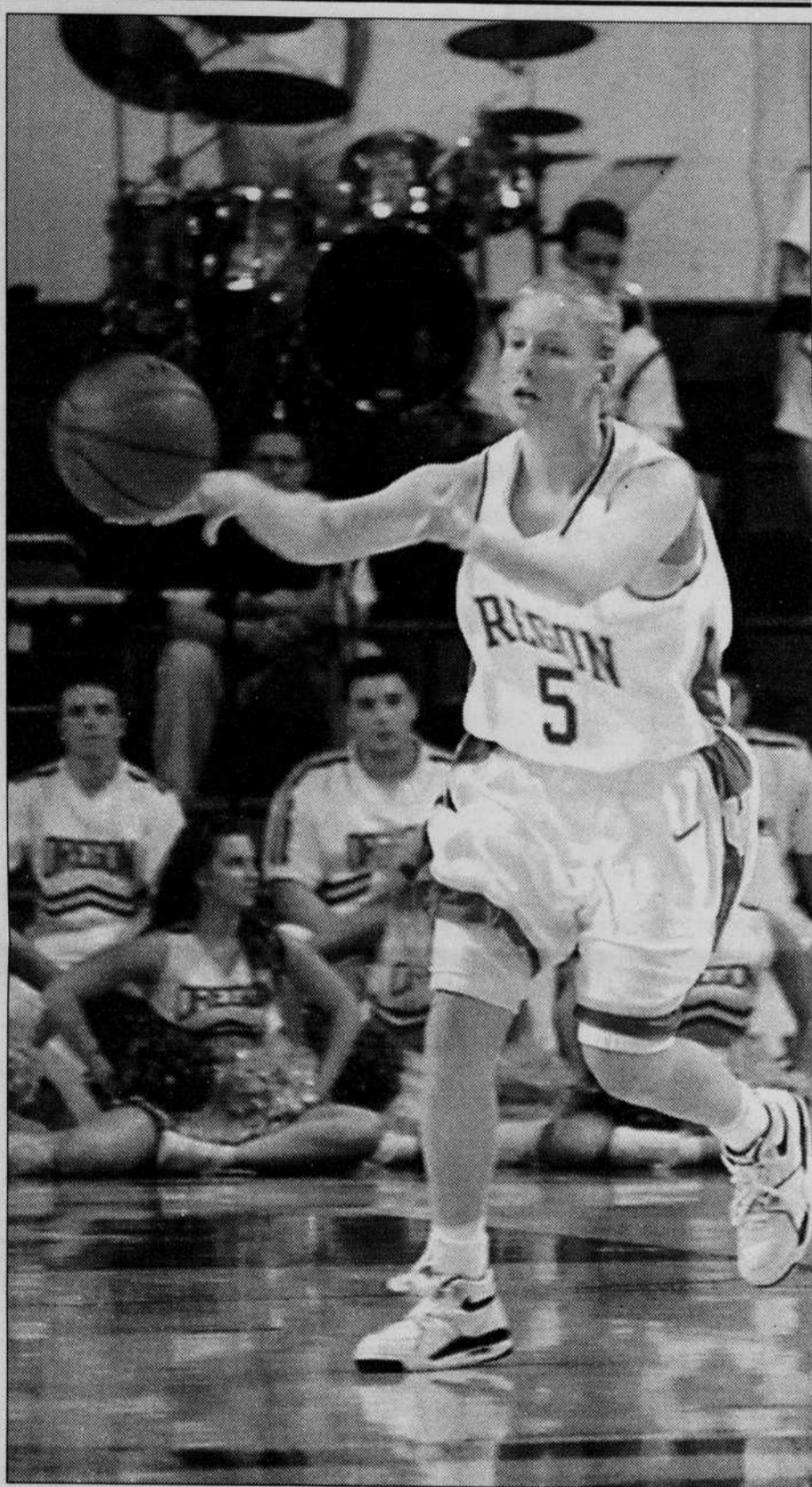
MLB Playoffs: Seattle at N.Y. Yankees, ALCS Game 6
NBC, 5:15 p.m.

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Emerald

Senior forward Bryan Bracey will be looked upon to fill the large void left from the graduated A.D. Smith.



Emerald

Sophomore Kourtney Shreve starts at point guard this season in place of the injured Shaquala Williams.

■ The Oregon men's basketball team loses three key players, but returns with a healthy dose of experience and a quartet of talented freshmen

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

Head coach Ernie Kent smiles when reading the national projections for his 2000-01 Oregon men's basketball team because it excites him even more than he already is.

Not because of what the predictions say, but rather for what they don't say.

For example, from CBSSportsline.com: "Smith, Scales and Wright will all be gone and they will be hard to replace. Oregon is likely looking at a season in which a .500 record and an NIT bid will be more realistic goals than contending for the Pac-10 title."

Kent concedes that losing three valuable seniors like A.D. Smith, Alex Scales and Darius Wright will hurt, but points out that there's key components to his team that the national media can't see.

"Sometimes you read Dick Vitale and all those other magazines, and they're doing an

analysis of our team from the peripheral," said Kent, while addressing reporters at Oregon's annual media day last week. "They see what we lost, but they don't understand all of the inner workings. Do the players get along? Are they on the same page? That is what I'm concerned with."

"Someone told me the other day, 'Wow, that is the most together basketball team I've ever seen.'"

It is comments like those that have Kent genuinely thrilled "about the anticipation and the prospects of where we are going as a basketball team."

Oregon is coming off a year in which it went 22-5 — its best record in 55 years — and reached the NCAA Tournament for only the second time since 1961.

The Ducks held its first practice Saturday,

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Beating the odds

■ Talent must overshadow a lack of perimeter depth in order for the Oregon women's basketball team to win its third-straight Pac-10 title

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

Angelina Wolvert believes the Ducks are still No. 1 in the Pacific-10 Conference.

Oregon's junior forward is not worried about the loss of star point guard Shaquala Williams or the bad luck of the injury-prone Lindsey Dion.

None of that really matters too much, Wolvert said, because the Ducks have enough talent to compensate for their losses.

Enough talent, she added, to secure a third-straight Pac-10 title.

When hearing the results of the preseason

coaches poll, which picked Oregon to finish second in the conference to Stanford, a light-hearted Wolvert said, "Were we really? What! We were picked second to Stanford? Are you serious? That's a bunch of crap! That is awful! I don't think so, I don't think so. That is terrible, I'm sorry they chose Stanford over us."

"Our team can form and evolve into what we need to be to win a Pac-10 championship."

Wolvert isn't the only member of the Oregon women's basketball team who believes the Ducks can overcome adversity, as was obvious Friday at McArthur Court when the women suited up to meet the media.

"I don't think a three-peat is out of the question in any way, shape or form," Oregon head coach Jody Runge said. "I just think it's going to take a lot of work and people are going to have to step up and share the limelight. We're very capable of doing that. The team has come back in the kind of shape to have the best season they can have."

Much has happened since the Ducks' agonizing loss to UAB in the first round of the NCAA Tournament last March.

Oregon lost its leading scorer when

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