

Veterans lead UO to win in season opener

■ Oregon's Bryan Bracey and Freddie Jones lead the charge, in helping Oregon secure a season-opening win

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

With all the hype surrounding a highly recruited, highly talented freshman class, the veterans on the Oregon men's basketball team almost got overlooked before the 2000-01 season.

Almost. In Friday's season opener against Mississippi Valley State, veterans Bryan Bracey, Freddie Jones and

Julius Hicks combined for 52 points to lead the Ducks to an 85-70 victory in front of 7,664 fans at McArthur Court.

"They all stepped up and played like veteran guys, like it was their opportunity and their time," head coach Ernie Kent said.

Bracey had his first career double-double, finishing with 22 points and 12 rebounds on the game. Bracey was an "automatic

score" in the post, according to Kent.

"He's done a great job of making himself a better basketball player, and now he needs to focus on making us a better basketball team," Kent said. "That's where the rebounds come in."

Bracey had only two rebounds in each of the Ducks' two exhibition games before Friday's season opener.

"That's my job, to crash the boards, and just play hard to help my team win," Bracey said. "I'm an offensive-minded player and I love

to score, and if that's what my team needs me to do than that's what I'm going to do."

Bracey's 22 points left him one short of his career-high.

Jones also had an almost-best performance Friday night, scoring 21 points in the third-highest showing of his career. But Jones contributed to the team in another way: He brought back the flashy plays that the Mac Court faithful used to see from Alex Scales last season.

"People don't realize it wasn't just Alex doing that last year," Jones said.

The veterans made up for the poor play of the freshmen. The trio of older players scored 61 percent of Oregon's points, while the three freshmen — Ridnour, Luke Jackson and James Davis — scored a combined 14 points.

Wisdom over youth? Kent hopes the two will combine at some point.

"We're going to get there," Kent said when asked if the freshmen will learn from Friday's game and gel with the upperclassmen. "It's just going to take us some time."

Heartbreak

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Both teams would score once more in the second half for the final margin.

Obviously, an Oregon win would have sent the Ducks (9-2 overall, 7-1 Pacific-10 Conference) to their first Rose Bowl berth since the 1994 season. Instead, the loss has put them in bowl limbo.

The Ducks' most likely possibility is a trip to Hawaii for either the Aloha or the O'ahu Bowls, but

they still could end up in San Diego, Calif., for the Holiday Bowl or back in El Paso, Texas for the Sun Bowl.

Oregon State could have earned its first Rose Bowl berth since 1964 with the win — but only if Washington would have lost. Instead, the Huskies learned of the Civil War score, and then ran all over Washington State, 51-3, in the Apple Cup to reach the Rose Bowl.

The three Northwest schools are all Pac-10 co-champions, but Washington gets the nod because it controls the tie-breakers in the three-

way tie. The first comparison is the non-conference record, with Oregon's 2-1 mark being cause for elimination.

Then, Oregon State and Washington — who both finished 3-0 in the preseason — get matched up head-to-head, with the Huskies coming out on top due to its 33-30 victory against the Beavers Oct. 7.

The Ducks will not learn its bowl fate until Dec. 3, when the final Bowl Championship Series rankings are released and the BCS bowls selects its teams. The Beavers are still in the running for

a BCS bid such as the Fiesta Bowl, which would send the Ducks to the Holiday Bowl. A USC victory over Notre Dame next weekend would help the Beavers' cause.

"Man, I tell you what, I have nothing against El Paso or any other bowl games, but I'm not trying to go back to El Paso," senior wide receiver Marshaun Tucker said. "Hey, Hawaii or Sun Bowl, whatever."

Tucker admitted that even when things looked bleak for Oregon, he never stopped believing.

"We've been fighting from behind all year long. They could

have put up 30 points and it wouldn't have mattered to me, because I know what kind of team we got," Tucker said. "Unfortunately, we couldn't do the type of things that we have in the past."

"But without a doubt you can say it's a great season."

The Ducks will have the week off to clear their heads and enjoy the Thanksgiving break before getting back together to prepare for a bowl game and a chance for the first 10-win season in Oregon football history.

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 20). Priorities are changing. From playing in the present, you're growing toward planning for the future. Parties still take precedence in November. A friend's actions are a surprise in December. Feed a fascination in January. Disrupt your home to make it better in February. Your partner's stern admonition is well meant in May and could lead to bounty in June. Save aggressively so you can take a jaunt in September. Quick thinking leads to profits in October.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Today is a 4 — This sure is Monday, isn't it? A critical co-worker makes you do the job over and over until it's perfect. Don't complain; that'll get back to the boss. Polish the brass and be ready for inspection. It could come at any moment.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Today is an 8 — Make plans with your family for your next project. You're a creative bunch, especially this week. Once you get the blueprint worked out, building it will be easy. Get input from an older person to avoid a common mistake.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) — Today is a 4 — The less said, the better. Keep your head down and listen. A person who's generally secretive might confide in you. That would be wonderful. Otherwise, hang out at keyholes and gather as much information as you can.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) — Today is an 8 — The information you're learning helps you express yourself more clearly. Others begin to understand how valuable you are. Don't keep your skills hidden. Let others know what you can do, and they'll think of more ways you can help.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Today is a 5 — You might feel sluggish today, like you're stuck in the mud. Postpone meetings until tomorrow. You might profit by gathering up money that other people owe you. To succeed, you won't have to think quickly; just be stubborn.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Today is an 8

— You're strong, so carefully calculate your next move. If you're not sure what will happen if you push button "A," read the manual first. A few extra moments spent in preparation will help you avoid an embarrassing mistake.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) — Today is a 5 — You get stronger as the day goes on, but you still need to exercise caution, especially if money is concerned. Don't talk much about your finances. Just stash away as much as you can, for later. You'll find a good use for it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Today is a 7 — Ask friends what you're wondering about. Finding the person who knows won't take long. It's a good day for a fact-finding mission. It's also a good day to teach what you know. Your friends will be fascinated.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Today is a 5 — The sense of grim foreboding you awoke with may still be there. You may feel overwhelmed by a difficult task that has to be done perfectly. You can rise to this challenge and advance your career. Nobody said it was gonna be easy, though.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Today is an 8 — You have relatively easy going now. You could lap the pack, making it difficult for others to catch up. You're also lucky in romance with a person you've known for years. A discussion about old times leads to plans for the future.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Today is a 5 — You may feel inhibited and stifled, with good reason. An older person is critical. Instead of complaining, fine-tune your act. You'll be more successful tomorrow, so don't worry now. Just apply the coaching.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Today is an 8 — Push ahead with whatever you've been planning. Your partner's anxious to start and might even fund this operation. You can make progress on a goal that you've had for ages. Don't wait; you may not get this good a chance again for a while.

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