



Catharine Kendall Emerald

Oregon freshman Luke Ridnour has quickly bonded with his new teammates and adapted well to Eugene.

Family matters

■ Oregon point guard Luke Ridnour didn't expect to be a Duck at first, but now that he's here, he can't imagine being anywhere else

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

At the time, it didn't seem like there was that much at stake for the Oregon Ducks last season as they took on a touring Australian team in their first exhibition game back on Nov. 12, 1999.

The atmosphere in legendary McArthur Court that night was nowhere near what it is usually like for a Pacific-10 Conference game. Among the 8,009 fans seated in The Pit that night was a young man by the name of Luke Ridnour.

The players on the court may not have cared too much about their hum 98-87 win, but for Ridnour, the game helped him make a decision that would shock the basketball world and provide yet another example with how far Oregon athletics has come.

Ridnour was believed to be the top high school point guard on the West Coast and one of the five best in the nation. The 6-foot-2 point guard was one of the country's most complete prep talents. In his biography in the media guide it says that he is a "pure point guard who will evoke comparisons to the NBA's John Stockton and Jason Williams."

And on this particular fall night in Eugene, he was deciding on where he was going to spend his college career.

He had already visited Oregon, but had not yet seen a game. Even in the exhibition game he saw shades of what an amazing place Mac Court is to play in.

He fell in love and was sold on becoming a Duck.

"I came down for that first exhibition game, and even then it was almost sold out," Ridnour said. "It was only the first game and I knew right then

that I wanted to play there."

The day after the game, on Saturday, Nov. 13, Ridnour signed a letter of intent with Oregon. The news was so big that the Oregon football radio broadcast of its intense game versus California that afternoon was put on hold for a moment as play-by-play man Jerry Allen shared the exciting news of Ridnour's decision.

Kentucky, Utah, Washington, Gonzaga and UCLA. Five schools with rich basketball histories. Five schools that practically any high school recruit would die to play for. And five schools that were praying to have Ridnour be their point guard of the future.

Ridnour admits that it was the toughest decision of his life. Right off the bat, he decided not to visit UCLA, but did go see the other four. The maximum amount of schools that the NCAA allows a potential recruit to visit is five, leaving one lucky school with a shot at him — albeit a long shot.

Ridnour was then courted by both Oregon and Oregon State. Not really wanting to visit because of the fact that he hates saying no to people that are nice to him, Ridnour sort of reluctantly decided to choose one over the other.

Former Oregon State head coach Eddie Payne saw him play for only five minutes and offered him a scholarship. Ridnour was impressed and thought he might check out Corvallis.

But then Oregon head coach Ernie Kent proved why he is one of the most regarded recruiting coaches in the nation.

Kent, who had heard of Ridnour even back in his St. Mary's coaching days, connected with the youngster. Kent sold Ridnour on the electricity of Mac Court. On the deafening roar of the crowd. On the Pac-10 and its skilled players. And on the city of Eugene and its small-town feel.

The sales pitch was successful. "Coach Kent was real impressive when he came in on a recruiting vis-

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Ducks reflect on Stanford's loss of guard Jamie Carey

■ The 2000 Pac-10 Freshman of the Year can't play ball anymore due to concussions

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

Stanford guard Jamie Carey always knew she'd grow up to play basketball in the Cardinal uniform.

Unfortunately, she never knew the tragic end that her career would have.

Carey suffered a concussion on Oct. 19 that doctors say caused minor brain damage. Fearing that another hit — even a slight blow to the head — would cause further damage, doctors told Carey she can never play basketball again.

"I'm devastated to say the very least," Carey told reporters at a Nov. 7 press conference. "I guess it's kind of a shock. You never really — in all the highest dreams and everything — you never really consider something like this would happen."

Since the seventh grade, the basketball phenom suffered several concussions. After each one, she'd experience symptoms such as dizziness and headaches. Every time, the symptoms would disappear in a few days.

But Carey was playing defense during an Oct. 19 practice when she tripped, slid across the key and hit her head on a teammate's shin. It wasn't too hard of a hit, she said, but she felt the concussion symptoms setting in.

She rested for five days, but when the dizziness didn't stop, she told coaches about her symptoms. Doctors ran tests on

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Laura Smit Emerald

Oregon guard/forward Lindsey Dion (23) missed games and practice last season after she suffered a concussion.



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