

Ducks take positives out of their two losses

■ The Ducks reflect on their two-game road trip, where they lost both by more than 15 points

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon men's basketball team was in good spirits Tuesday afternoon, trying to turn a disastrous road trip into a positive lesson.

The Ducks (10-3 overall, 1-2 Pacific-10 Conference) are coming off a two-game road swing through the Bay Area, where they lost by a combined 40 points to California and No. 1 Stanford.

It was the first time since the 1997-98 season that Oregon has failed to win at least one of the two games in a road series.

"We learned from that," freshman point guard Luke Ridnour said. "We just have to come out and execute every time like [Stanford does]. I mean, they come out and do everything right every time down the floor, and if we can get to that point then we're going to be a great team too."

Each game in the Pac-10 is important, and Oregon knows that in order to keep up with the pace of the league it can't afford to slip on its home court, where it faces the Washington schools Thursday and Saturday.

Head coach Ernie Kent attributed his team's road woes to a lack of composure.

"We missed like 12 layups and missed a lot of three-pointers [against Cal] and just got rattled," Kent said. "And that rolled into Stanford."

Kent knows that he has a young team this year that is not yet used to all the challenges of the road.

"That was a tough road trip for us," Kent said. "The first thing is to put it behind us. We've gotten that trip out of the way and taken the positives out of it."

The main positive was the play of the freshmen, particularly guard James Davis, forward Luke Jackson and center Jay Anderson.

Ridnour continually has been impressed with Jackson, whose 22 total points last weekend made Kent realize that he needed more minutes.

"He works hard every day, and when a guy works hard it's hard not to give him minutes," Ridnour said.

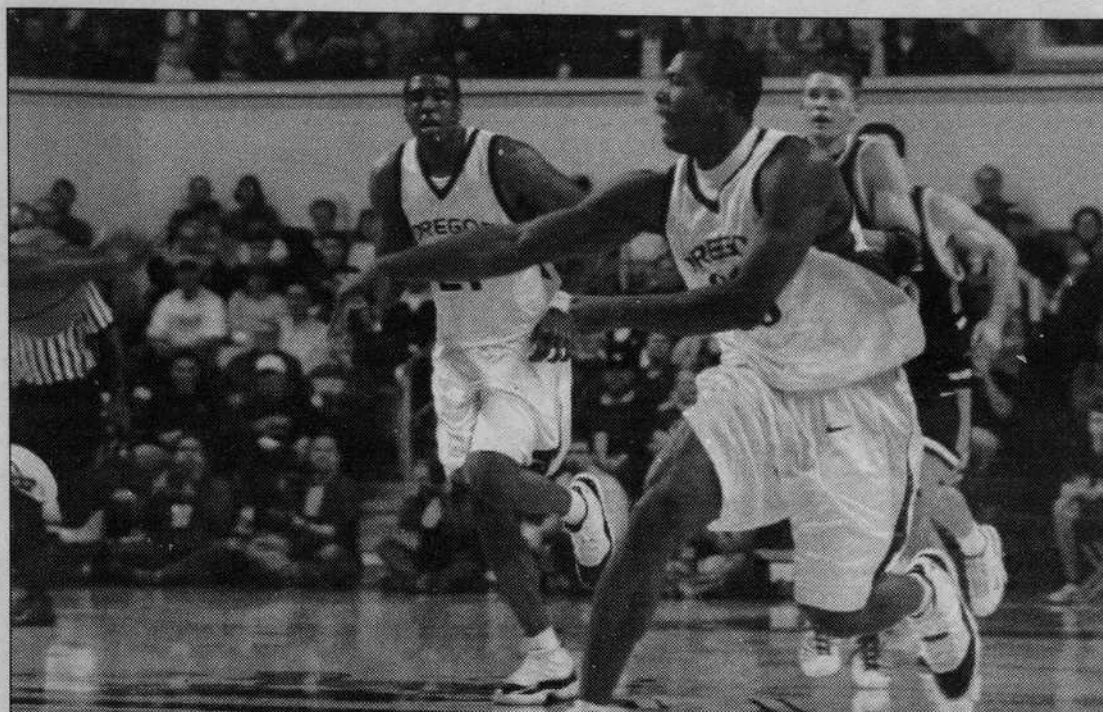
Getting his health back

In the first five minutes of the Cal game, Oregon junior guard Freddie Jones suffered a lower back strain.

"I could never get back in rhythm and it hindered me the whole trip," said Jones, who had nine points against Cal and only two against Stanford. "It was definitely frustrating, but it gets better every day. I've been going through treatments and just trying to do everything I can."

"But my back wasn't an excuse for my play. I just didn't play well, and hopefully I'll get back on track."

The Ducks face the Washington Huskies Thursday night at 7 p.m. at The Pit.



Adam Amato Emerald

Oregon junior Freddie Jones was not 100 percent last weekend because of a back problem, but said that the injury is not serious.

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surpass Don Brown for the school record.

Sonnen also won his 96th match

of the year, good enough for eighth on the career list. The All-American is on pace to finish 10th on the all-time winning percentage list.

Lee also vaulted into the top-10 career victories list. Lee is 91-31 at Oregon and 17-7 this season.

Bellotti

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On Tuesday, though, Youngstown State head coach Jim Tressel was in Columbus, Ohio, touring the campus, while reports surfaced that Oakland Raiders head coach John Gruden was the new top candidate for the Buckeyes' job.

Meanwhile, Bellotti mentioned how the situation at Oregon is comparable to that at tradition-filled Ohio State.

"I felt the interest was genuine on [Ohio State's] part," Bellotti said. "But there is a uniqueness to our program that I wanted to continue to be involved in."

Bellotti's sudden visit to Columbus surprised many, as it came less than two months after his decision to take his name out of consideration for the Southern California head coaching position.

"Yeah, I had no idea it was coming; by the time I heard about it he was already in Ohio," Oregon junior quarterback Joey Harrington said. "I'm happy, the same reaction I had when he pulled out of USC. I know he was making the decision for what was best for him and his family."

Bellotti, 50, is a self-labeled "family man," who has mentioned

that staying in Eugene was important to him so he could be more a part of his three children's lives. He said that he's been offered "four of five jobs" during his Oregon tenure, but that this was the first time that he's taken his wife, Colleen, and his children with him on a campus visit.

Moos, however, mentioned how close he is with Bellotti as a friend and a co-worker and said he remained confident that he wouldn't have to hire a new coach.

"I honestly felt that this was something that was a compliment to him and what he had accomplished," Moos said. "If he wanted to go take a look at it, he should so he could have that behind him and say, 'Hey, I could have been the coach at USC or Ohio State, but I'm proud to be the coach at the University of Oregon.'"

Bellotti has a 49-22 record in his six years as head coach for the Ducks, and has guided Oregon to four straight bowl games. Oregon finished the season ranked seventh in the final Associated Press poll, while Ohio State dropped out of the poll after an 8-4 season and a 24-7 loss in the Outback Bowl.

"The U of O has become a destination and not a stepping stone," Moos said.



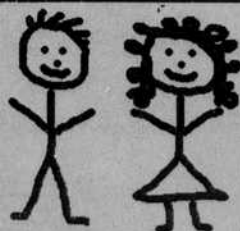
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