



Men look ahead, not back, as midpoint nears

The Ducks are 2-5 in Pac-10 play, but the second half of the season may be a little more prosperous than the first



“We’re looking to win about seven or eight more games,” freshman point guard Luke Ridnour said. “We’re looking forward to the next two weeks, playing in front of the students.”

Luke Ridnour
freshman,
point guard

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Pacific-10 Conference season just won't get any easier for the Oregon men's basketball team.

A week after dropping two games on their crucial southern California road trip, the Ducks (11-6 overall, 2-5 Pac-10) will take on No. 7 Arizona on Thursday, and then No. 1 Stanford and California (14-5) the following week.

On a positive note, all those games will be played at McArthur Court.

Almost more important than those games is the invisible milestone that Oregon will pass after playing Arizona State on Sunday: the Pac-10's midway point. While the past may look bleak, the future is bright if the Ducks can win some games at home that they lost on the road.

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Postseason posturing

With only a 2-5 conference record, and games against the Wildcats, the Cardinal and the Golden Bears looming, the word “postseason” isn't really in Oregon's vocabulary right now.

But with a little luck and a few key wins in the second half of the season, the Ducks may be able to think March Madness after all.

Oregon would most likely need a 10-8 Pac-10 record to make the NCAA Tournament. If the Ducks lose to Arizona twice and Stanford once, that means Oregon would need to win the rest of its conference matchups to achieve that mark. But the Ducks have already faced their tough road tests against California, UCLA and Southern California. In the second half of the season, the Ducks will face those teams in the friendly confines of Mac Court, and could very well beat them with a little help from the Pit Crew.

Road warriors

Oregon head coach Ernie Kent thought his team would be good on the road, but so far the Ducks have failed to win as a visitor in the Pac-10.

Kent, however, believes those losses will help Oregon in the long run.

“We’ve learned a lot of lessons,” Kent said. “We’re still growing as a team.”

Kent said his team made mental mistakes on the road that it might not make at home. The Ducks will play five more road games this season — against Washington, Washington State, Arizona, Arizona State and Oregon State — compared to six home games.

The biggest toddler ever

Oregon's 7-foot-2 center, Chris Christoffersen, has “come of age” recently, according to Kent. The big man is taking baby steps toward a starting role as the Ducks' center, and may even find himself starting Thursday against Arizona's Loren Woods, one of the premier centers in the country.

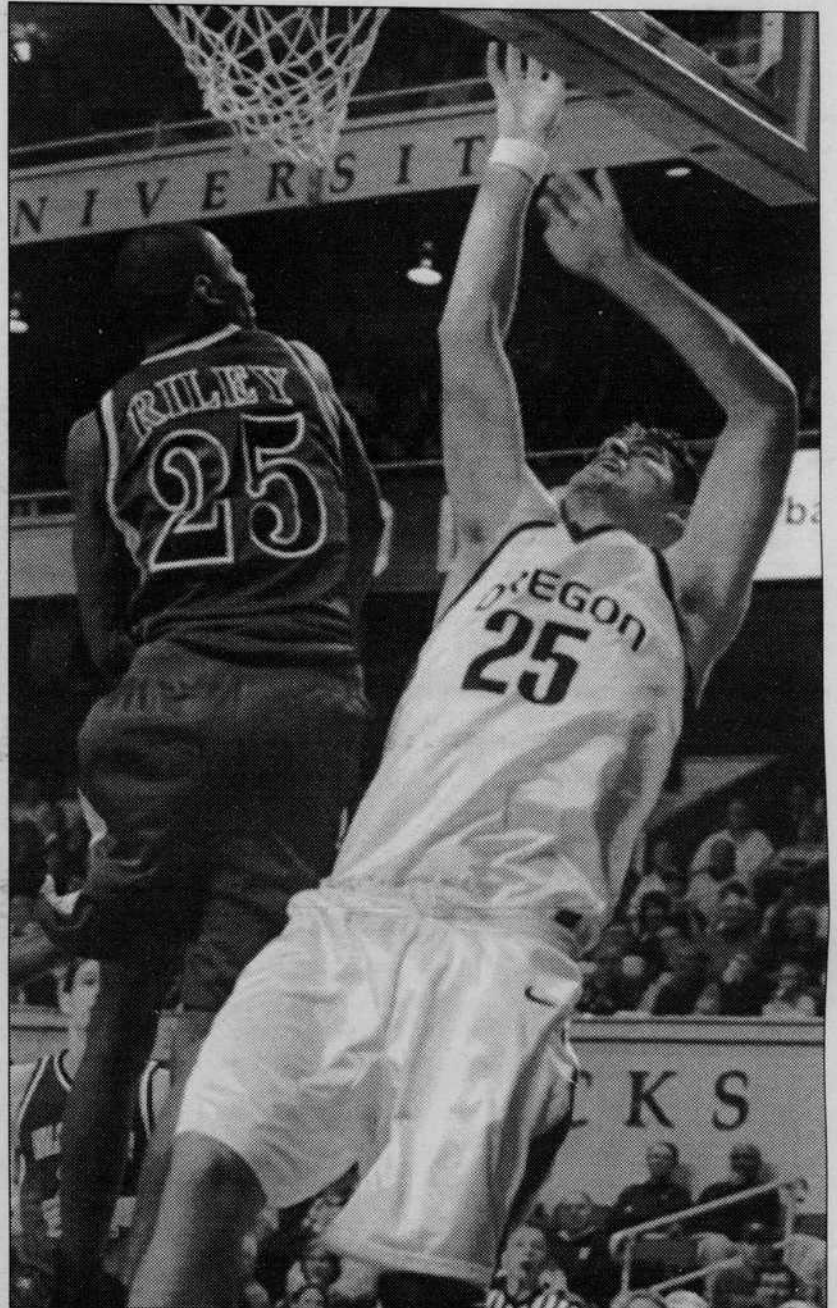
“We want to show the rest of the conference we're a force to be reckoned with down low,” Christoffersen said.

Christoffersen had the best game of his Oregon career Saturday, scoring 15 points and grabbing seven rebounds before fouling out late in the contest. The usually timid big man dunked, hit free throws and held his own on defense in the post against UCLA. Christoffersen had eight points against USC last Thursday, and 11 against Washington State in the game before that.

The Jones-Bracey Express

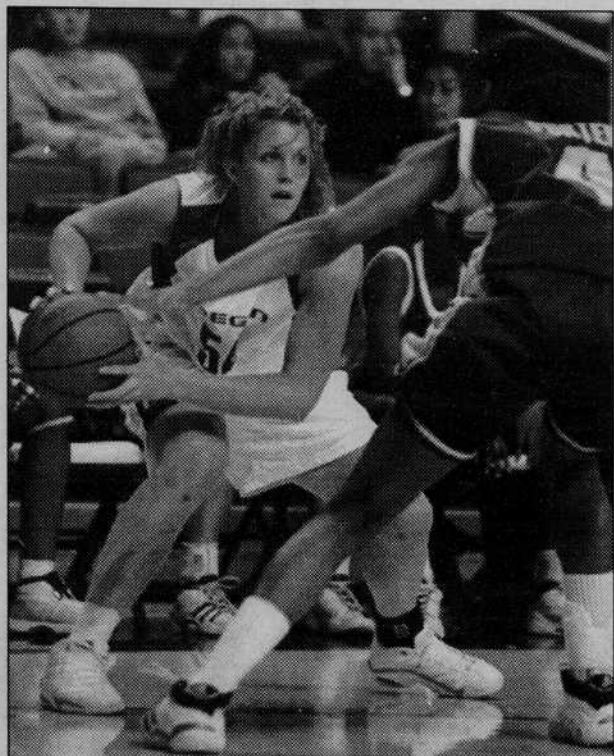
Freddie Jones and Bryan Bracey have been carrying Oregon on offense throughout the 2000-01 season, and they show no signs of slowing down.

Jones and Bracey combine for 34.2 points per game, more than 40 percent of the Ducks' total average. Bracey is currently the Pac-10's leading scorer at 19.4 points per contest.



Oregon's Chris Christoffersen netted a career-high 15 points against UCLA on Saturday.

Ailing Ducks climb back to health for Arizona trip



Senior forward Brianne Meharry is just 19 points shy of 1,000 total points for her career.

■ Although not completely healthy, Oregon will still have all of its weapons available for the Arizona trip this week

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

For the first time in two weeks, the Oregon women's basketball team may have its entire lineup healthy for a change.

Knock on wood.

Starting point guard Kourtney Shreve will play this weekend in Arizona after being treated for a mild concussion suffered in Oregon's game against UCLA last Saturday.

Senior forward Angelina Wolvert, who sprained the medial collateral ligament of her left knee Jan. 18 at Washington, will again come off the bench against Arizona. Wolvert, the team's leading scorer, scored seven points in 17 minutes against UCLA.

“Getting Ange back on the floor is

such a plus for this team,” Lindsey Dion said. “She’s such a presence out there.”

And Dion, who head coach Jody Runge said is still not 100 percent, said the swelling of her ankle is slowly starting to go down.

Shreve led the No. 22 Ducks (12-5 overall, 5-2 Pacific-10 Conference) with 11 points in the 54-43 victory over the Bruins on Saturday. She is averaging 7.3 points and 2.7 rebounds per game.

“I’m still a little light-headed,” Shreve said before Tuesday’s practice, the first time she had gone full speed since being knocked unconscious in Saturday’s game. “We’re very close to being full strength now ... and definitely more confident with Ange and Lindsey back in the lineup.”

Meharry lights it up

Brianne Meharry will be searching for the record books this weekend.

The senior forward is just 19 points shy of the 1,000 career-point total, and if she maintains her average this weekend (9.8 points a game) she will become the 15th player in school history to accomplish such a feat.

Coincidentally, Meharry is expected to start against Arizona Thursday, replacing Wolvert, who recorded her 1,000th career point Dec. 9 at Texas.

“Bri is just an invaluable player,” Runge said. “She is willing to take whatever role we give her and do whatever it takes to help the team succeed. She’s a gamer.”

Things that make you go hmmm

Since the 1996-97 season, Oregon has started each Pac-10 season with a 5-2 record. The last two years, of course, have produced conference championships.

In an almost identical scenario last season, Oregon came home from a win at UCLA to host the then-19th ranked Arizona — and lost to the Wildcats, 73-66.

Hmmmm.

The Pit is packed

Duck fans have jammed McArthur Court this season, making the women's hoops team the biggest attraction in the Pac-10.

Last season, Oregon ranked 12th nationally in total attendance, averaging 5,852 fans per contest. This year, the