Jackson

continued from page 7A

I.Q.," says fellow freshman starter Luke Ridnour.

Jackson's smarts, along with a heaping tablespoon of hustle, earned him the starting role and Kent's respect two weeks ago.

"He has come a long way since the start of the season," Kent said after he started Jackson for the first time against Washington State. "He's a much better player, a much more composed player, and a much more confident player."

But after two solid performances as a starter, Jackson suffered a blow to his growing confidence last Saturday against UCLA. The freshman came off the bench and played 22 minutes, but only scored three points. With 10 minutes left in the contest, Jackson hacked a UCLA player on the arm for his fifth foul and watched from the bench as the Ducks' lead slowly turned into a 10-point deficit and eventually a loss.

"My heart was in it, and I really felt like we were going to win that game," Jackson said. "To watch the lead slide there at the end ... that was tough."

Jackson is used to staying on the court. Before coming to Oregon, he was the star of Creswell High's basketball and baseball teams, and some of his statistics from Creswell are simply pop-your-eyes-out-of-their-sockets amazing.

> *"I've been a part of a lot of great games here, now getting the chance to play in those big games is really exciting."*
>
> **Luke Jackson**
> Freshman forward

The forward once scored 46 points in a game. He led Creswell to the Oregon state championship last year, and notched 13 boards and 13 assists in the title game. He is the fourth-best scorer in Oregon prep history, with 2,095 total points. Oh, and he struck out 16 batters in a baseball game. He was primarily a center fielder.

With all that attention focused on him for four years, Jackson must have had a tough time adjusting to the fact that at Oregon there were other players — even other classmates — getting more attention than himself.

Nope.

"We're building for a team that can be really, really good," Jackson insists. "I'm excited for that."

Another one of those building blocks — and one of the players stealing Jackson's glory — is top recruit Ridnour, who handles the ball almost as well as he handles his team.

"We play pretty good together," Ridnour says of his classmate. "He's easy to play with because I already know he's looking, making his cuts."

Ridnour and Jackson met for the first time this summer, when they played for a high school all-star team at the Global Games in Dallas, Texas.

"It helped me a lot just to play with him, to get a feel for how he plays in games," Ridnour said. "We played really well down there together. I knew from that tournament this was going to be fun."

The two Lukes have come almost full circle since that tournament. The difference is that now, they're playing on a Pac-10 team, not a high school all-star team.

Another difference is that now they're playing in Oregon, not Texas, and both are happier in this state than anywhere else.

Jackson used to be one of those kids you see at Duck games, laughing and playing as a toddler, then having feigning interest as a middle-schooler and then cheering on the Ducks as a high-schooler.

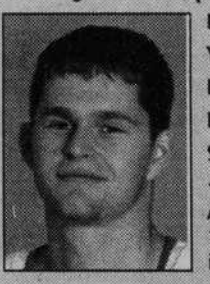
"I've been a part of a lot of great games here, now getting the chance to play in those big games is really exciting," Jackson said.

Jackson could have gone elsewhere. Arizona wanted him. So did Gonzaga and Utah. But his ties to his hometown kept him in Eugene.

Kent and the Ducks are ecstatic Jackson picked Oregon because of his play on the basketball court and his confidence off of it.

Maybe the rest of the Ducks will start to believe in Jackson's ideas. He is just a freshman, after all.

Luke Jackson (33)



Height: 6'7"
Year: Freshman
Position: Forward
Home town: Creswell, Ore. (Creswell HS)
Season Statistics: 7.2 ppg, 3.8 rpg, 1.5 apg, 1.0 spg, .443 fg pct., 15.4 mpg
Accomplishments: Oregon AAA Player of the Year in 1998 and 2000. Led Creswell to State AAA Championship in 2000. Three time Sky-Em League player of the year.

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 1). Something you put up with at home could become intolerable this year. Make the changes you've thought about. You may be frustrated in February. By March you're coming up with brilliant schemes, some of them totally unrealistic. By May you should have decided how to enact your plans. May is a practical month, good for laying new foundations. Romance blossoms in June — in abundance. Don't expect much of your mate in August; figure out what needs to be done yourself. Take action by November. Your hunches are right. Prepare for company in December.

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 6 — Take a friend's advice to heart and you'll benefit romantically. Let your gentle side out. You could benefit financially if you redirect funds to your savings account.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Today is a 6 — A struggle with an older person could end in a standoff. You won't budge and neither will he or she. You base your decisions on good practical common sense, and the other person uses facts and figures. You're both right. Try to compromise.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) — Today is a 5 — Travel looks attractive, but isn't a good idea. You need to finish an assignment first. Don't despair. Conditions for travel improve this weekend. Make a date and reservations now.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) — Today is a 7 — Friends might suggest spending more than you can afford. Even for a good cause, delay a little longer. Make sure your future is secure before you accept any more expenses.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Today is a 4 — Things could grind to a halt. Others know their objectives, but no one has your interests at heart. Might be good to stall. Don't worry, you're good at this.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Today is a 6 — Work and romance vie for your attention. Don't call your sweetheart long distance during office hours, even with an 800 line. You could get caught.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) — Today is a 7 — Save for this weekend and travel to a favorite place. You and your sweetheart will have a marvelous time, but plan ahead to keep expenses down. Stay with relatives, for example.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Today is a 6 — Something isn't going as planned. Your partner was nearly convinced you were right, but that could change by tomorrow. You may have to acquiesce to you mate, so be willing to compromise. Stand firm, of course, just to prove your point.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Today is a 6 — Be careful on a new program or difficult project. There may be more bugs to find. You have everything running smoothly, eventually, but more study is required.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Today is a 7 — Love means more than money to you, by a long shot. Don't feel guilty if you turn work down. Focus on loved ones, now, while you can. You can work over the weekend.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Today is a 6 — You're strong but don't seem to be getting anywhere. Check your brakes and anchors; one could be stopping you. Stay home tonight and rest. You cannot imagine the benefits.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Today is a 7 — Walk quietly and carry a big stick. Your idea will probably prevail. You may seem outnumbered, but your insight could be what others lack. Be gentle, as you persuade them you know best.

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