



UO men prepare for last stand at Mac Court

Oregon will try to win for its five graduating seniors in its final homestand of the season

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

It's ironic that the Oregon men's basketball team may be getting hot just as its season is coming to a close.

The Ducks have one hand in their pockets, and the other one's playing some basketball.

After a split with the Washington schools last weekend, Oregon returns home to face UCLA Thursday and Southern California Saturday in the Ducks' final homestand of the season. The Ducks will then close out the season on the road against Arizona State, Arizona and Oregon State.

If the Ducks can win at least one game this weekend, they will almost certainly be headed to the postseason.

It's so hard to say good-bye

This weekend's games should be emotional for Oregon: Five seniors will play their final games at McArthur Court.

Bryan Bracey, Julius Hicks, Flo Hartenstein, David Jackson and Kristian Kristensen will all participate in a pre-game ceremony to honor their careers at Oregon.

"This is our seniors' last weekend, and we don't want them to go out on a losing effort," junior guard Freddie Jones said.



KENT

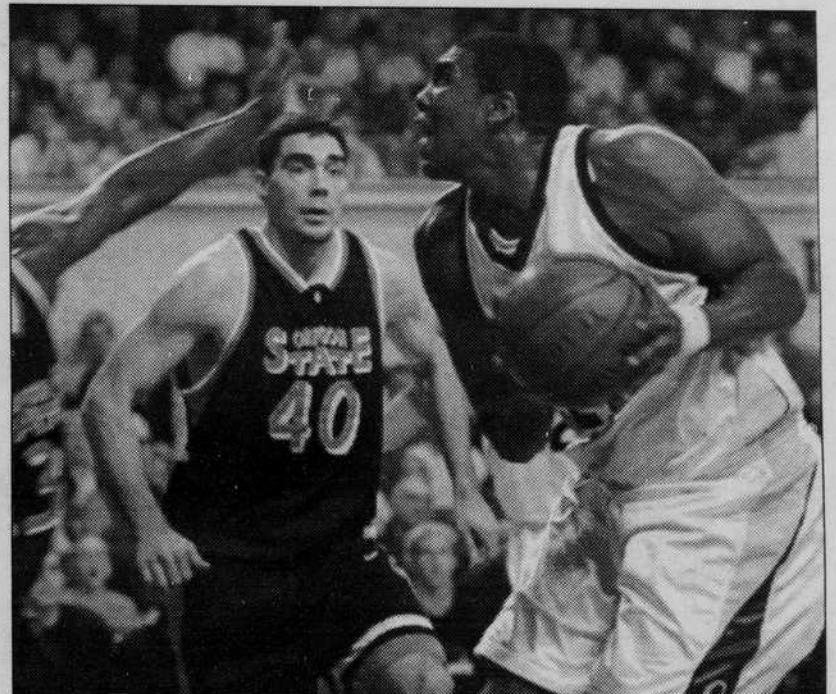
"The underclassmen understand how important it is to not let them lose. It's important for us to finish out this homestand strong for those upperclassmen."

Turn back the clocks

Saturday's game against USC, originally scheduled for 7 p.m., has been moved back to a 6 p.m. tip-off to accommodate the television broadcast of the game. That contest, along with Thursday's game against USC, will be broadcast on ESPN2.

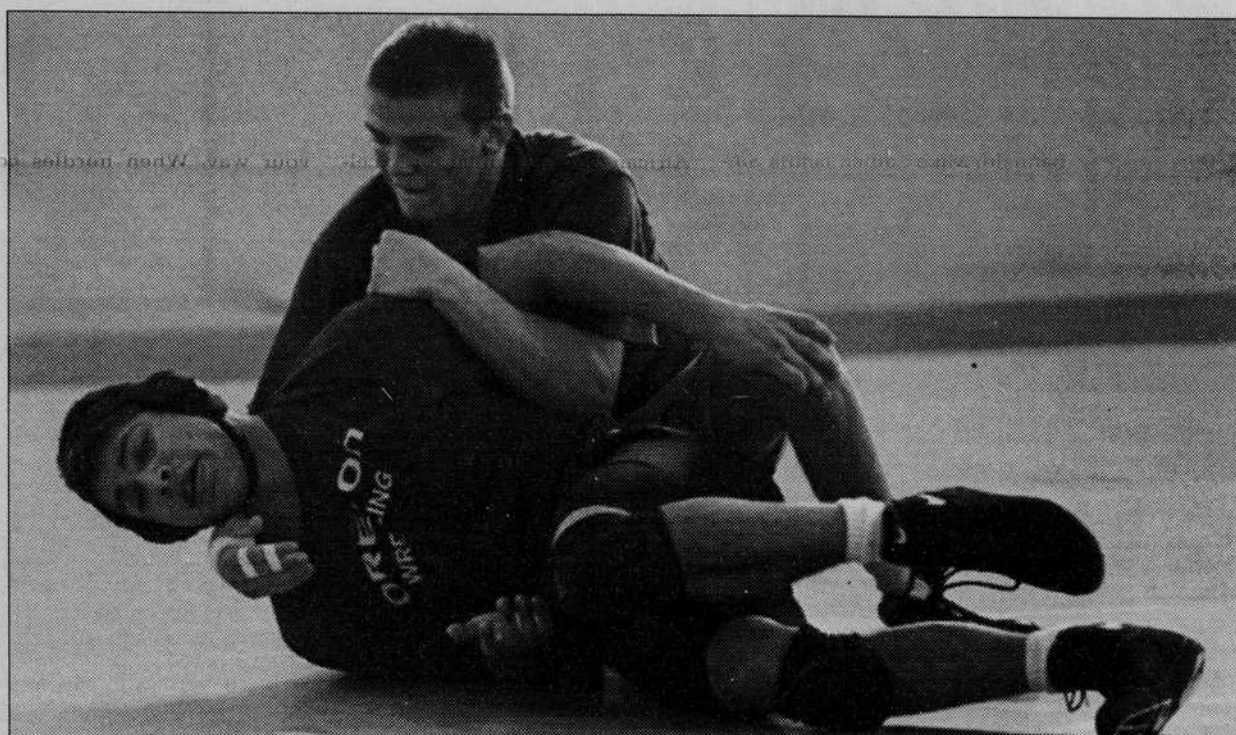
Senior student managers Andy Whiteside and Nick Graham will also participate in the ceremonies with the players.

"These guys know that it's the seniors' last homestand," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said after Tuesday's practice.



Adam Amato Emerald

Senior Julius Hicks will be one of five Ducks who will play their final game at Mac Court.



Chrystal McConnell Emerald

Junior transfer Shaun Williams (top) has made an immediate impact for the No. 17 Ducks.

FAST & FURIOUS

Junior transfer Shaun Williams is out to score points and win big in the process

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.

The famous Muhammad Ali quote is used synonymously with contact sports such as boxing, martial arts and wrestling. It is also the perfect sentence to describe Oregon wrestler Shaun Williams.

Williams' first match in an Oregon singlet, a 21-6 pasting of UC-Davis' Tommy Schurkamp, demonstrated his quickness. Out of the buzzer, Williams earned a quick takedown and a three-point near fall for an early 5-0 lead. After Schurkamp escaped, Williams earned another takedown from the legs. After hold-

ing off an attempt at a reversal, Williams earned more near fall points.

Seven takedowns and two periods later, Williams earned a major decision. Like most matches, Williams' opponent's only points came from one-point escapes.

"I try to get on the mat and score as many points as I can without stalling," Williams said. "I'm one of the guys who go out and score a lot of points, win or lose, and have fun. Because that's what it's all about."

"The more points you score, the more fun you have."

Since transferring to Oregon from North Idaho Junior College, the 125-pound grappler has won

the most Oregon matches at the lightweight position since All-American Kevin Roberts in 1996 — and has scored a lot of points in the process.

The Pretoria, South Africa, native leads the Ducks in decisions won, major decisions (a win by eight to 14 points), technical falls (a win by 15 or more points) and is tied for second in total wins. In 32 matches this season, Williams has scored a grand total of 353 points.

"When you're a takedown wrestler, which Shaun is, you go for the legs much more," Oregon head coach Chuck Kearney said. "He's a catch and release kind of

Big Dance still in reach for women

With five games remaining, the Ducks may have to win out to earn an eighth straight appearance in the NCAA tournament

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

Despite the recent five-game slump — which ended in Saturday's 64-60 overtime victory against Washington — the Oregon women's hoops team still has a shot at an NCAA Tournament berth.

And while the cliché of "one game at a time" still holds true, the Ducks (13-10 overall, 6-7 Pacific-10 Conference) know they must essentially win their final five games to make an eighth consecutive trip to the Big Dance.

"I don't think that's in the back of our minds; it's in the front of our minds. We want to go to the tournament," head coach Jody Runge said. "That's where we have our focus."

The Ducks currently sit in sixth place in the conference, one-and-a-half games behind California (7-5, 11-11) and two games behind fourth-place Arizona (8-5, 18-7). Last season, four Pac-10 teams made an appearance in the NCAA Tournament.

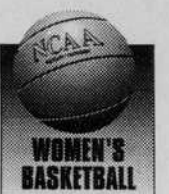
"We haven't given that up," junior guard Jamie Craighead said. "I think we can still do it. I know we can make a strong case with our preseason."

If the Ducks fail to earn a bid to the NCAA Tournament, Runge has said she would rather not go to the WNIT. But, after Saturday's win over Washington, she said she would ask the team members what they wanted to do if that circumstance came up.

Stealin' the spotlight

Sophomore point guard Alissa Edwards will start Friday at UCLA. The original starter, sophomore Kourtney Shreve, has been battling through a shooting slump of late, limiting her confidence and playing time.

"I think right now it's just being so



It's very difficult not to start Alissa Edwards right now because she's done such a tremendous job.

Jody Runge head coach

