



## Pac-10 tourney would be ideal for 2001 Ducks



### THE HOME STRETCH

ROBBIE McCALLUM

As we enter the first weeks of March, it is becoming less likely that the men's or women's basketball teams will be participating in any of the madness that comes with this month.

Both teams are wrapping up disappointing seasons in which upsets were few and losses were many. Instead of Mayor of Bracketville ballots, coaches Ernie Kent and Jody Runge may be on the NIT City ballot at best.

Things don't look bright for the month of March.

If this were to happen next year, however, things would be much different. The first Pacific-10 Conference Tournament in 10 years will be instated, and the top eight teams in the conference will be vying for the top spot and an automatic NCAA tournament bid.

Teams like the 13-14 Duck men and 16-11 Oregon women will have a chance next year to reach the field of 65 despite less-than-perfect regular seasons.

At first, many in the Oregon sports scene denounced the conference tournament, saying "there are a lot of unanswered questions" and that "the logistics need to be worked out."

Many coaches around the Pac-10 preferred letting the regular season decide the conference champion instead of a three-day tournament.

Now that Oregon is in a position to benefit from a conference tournament, opinions are changing.

"When I first heard about it, for this year I really didn't want one," Oregon guard Alissa Edwards said. "But now that the season's almost done, I kind of wish we had one this year because of where we're at in the standings. I wish we could prove ourselves, now that we've dug ourselves a hole."

Both the men and women experienced disappointing seasons but showed the ability to explode in big game situations — much like they would need to in the Pac-10 Tournament.

If the tournament were today, the women would host No. 5 seed Arizona, a team they beat 83-78 on Saturday, and could face either Washington, Southern California or Washington State in the semi-finals.

The men, however, would face league-leading Stanford at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. The Ducks led top-ranked Stanford by seven points at home on Feb. 9 before falling 69-62.

Aside from Oregon's potential gains this year, the conference tournament would bring a part of March Madness that has been absent from the Pac-10 for more than a decade.

This week, die-hard hoops fans are riveted to ESPN for "Championship Week." Conference tournaments from all around the nation bombard our television sets and let us know that it's tournament time. Where are the Oregon men? Getting ready for the mighty Beavers to decide whether they'll have 13 or 14 wins this season. Whoopee!

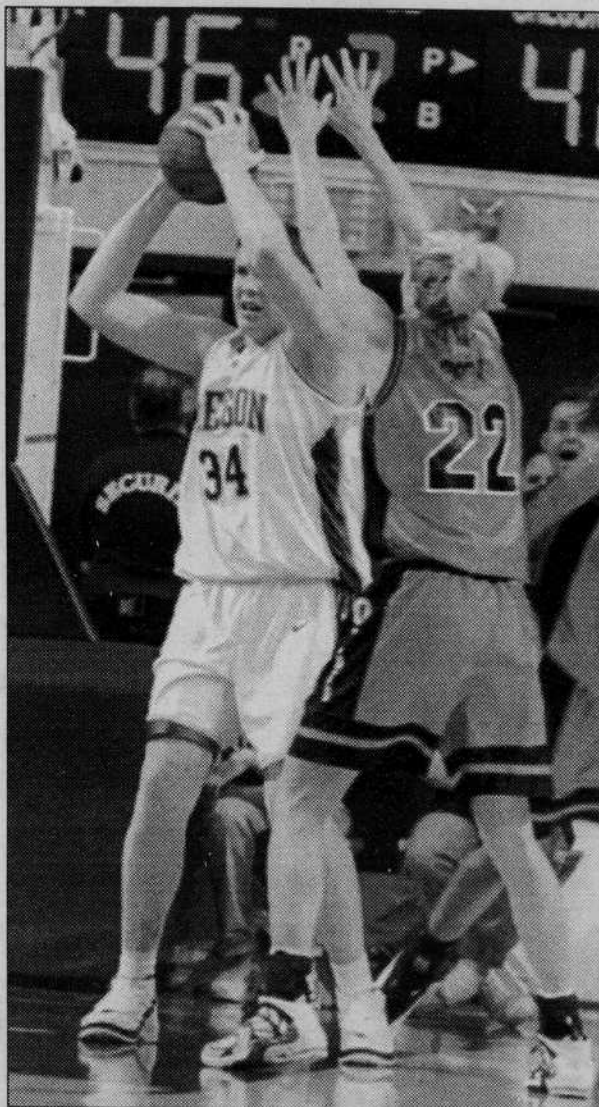
Having a conference tournament would not only give Oregon a chance for something better this season, it would give them a warm-up for the NIT or even the NCAA Tournament.

A conference tournament "gives you big game experience, which is helpful as you go through the Big Dance," said guard David Jackson, who went through the Western Athletic Conference Tournament and NCAA Tournament while at Utah.

The conference tournament provides fans and players alike a chance to warm up to a tournament atmosphere before the real tournament starts.

Both Oregon teams will be in different situations next year, when the first tournament happens. And if the Ducks don't happen to win the first Pac-10 Tournament next year, there's always the NIT.

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In previous Civil Wars, the matchup at center between Oregon's Jenny Mowe and Oregon State's Ericka Cook has been anything but civil.

## TOUGH LOVE

■ The surprise friendship of arch-rivals Jenny Mowe and Ericka Cook shouldn't cool down the always-heated rivalry between Oregon and Oregon State

By Scott Pesznecker  
Oregon Daily Emerald

An unlikely alliance was formed when the Oregon women's basketball team arrived at the Eugene Airport in early February.

The Ducks, traveling to road games at Stanford and California, were dismayed when they discovered they'd be sharing a flight with their in-state rival, Oregon State.



Oregon center Jenny Mowe and Beaver forward Ericka Cook.

The teams' two post players have shared nothing but shoves, elbows and fouls since they first stepped on the court together. Their rivalry was immortalized when, at a Jan. 29, 1999 game in Eugene that Oregon won 59-46, Mowe delivered a

sharp elbow to Cook's jaw, sending the Beaver to the floor.

Cook was treated for 10 minutes on the bench before returning to the game. By the game's end, Cook — then Ericka Brosterhous — gave Mowe a bloody nose.

So you know what Mowe was thinking last month about being trapped in a plane with Oregon State players.

"They pulled up to the Stanford flight, right outside the airport, and I go, 'Oh great, now we're going to have to go with Oregon State,'" Mowe said. "I said 'With my luck, I'm going to have to sit right next to Cook.'"

Guess what happened next?

"Sure enough, I'm like, 'yeah, I got the exit row, yeah!'" Mowe continued. "I walk in the plane, and I'm like, 'oh, no!'"

Neither player will soon forget the moment when

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## 'Refreshed' Ducks still eye NIT bid

■ The Ducks say they are rejuvenated after taking some days off and continue to hold out hope for an NIT bid with a Civil War win

By Jeff Smith  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Luke Ridnour threw up during last Thursday's loss to Arizona State.



last weekend, but rather because he was battling the flu all week.

The trip to Arizona, though, did make many of the Ducks sick to their stomachs as they dropped both games in the desert by a combined 51 points. The defeats dropped Oregon to 13-14 overall and 4-13 in the Pacific-10 Conference.

"It was ugly," senior Flo Hartenstein said. "We weren't ready to play."

The Ducks played flat, and as a result, Oregon head coach Ernie Kent gave his team Sunday, Monday and Tuesday off to rest up for this week's practice preparation for Saturday's Civil War game in Corvallis.

"I thought they needed that," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent

said. "I thought we were a very tired basketball team down there in the desert. They certainly were more refreshed today."

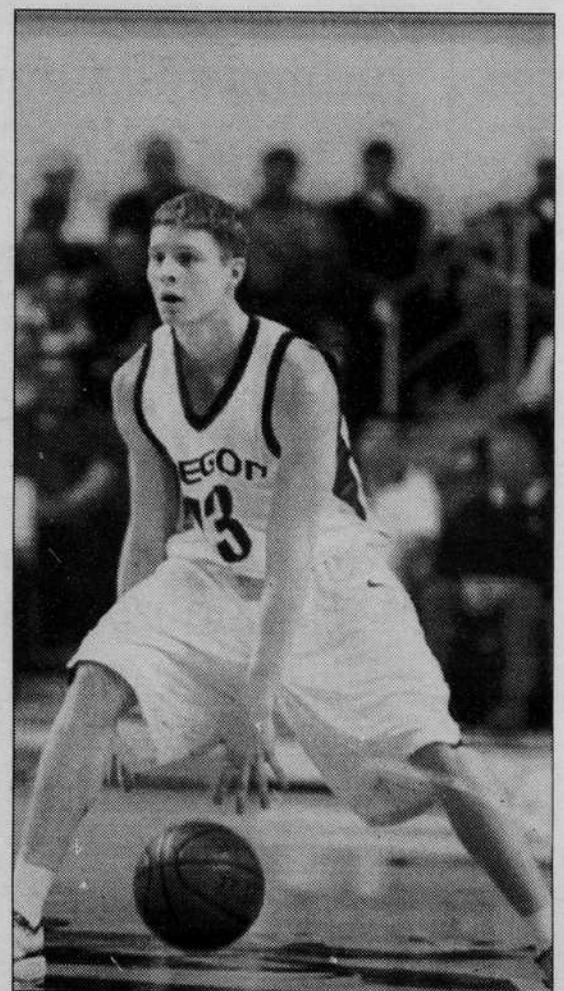
"And of course when the sun's out, it seems to give you a little more energy."

The rare Eugene sunshine combined with the three-day break appeared to have a positive effect on the Ducks during Wednesday afternoon's practice — the only practice open to the media all week.

Many Oregon players sported smiles and played with enthusiasm as they wound down their workout with a five-on-five drill. They know that their season could be over after Saturday, but want to at least go out on a winning note.

"We just got to go for it all when we're on the court, because that's it, it's your last one," Ridnour said. "If we win, we have a chance, but if you lose, you're done."

Yes, that's right, despite losing 13 of 16 games, Oregon still has a chance at the NIT. Before, the talk was that the Ducks had to win two of its remaining games to receive an invitation. But in actuality, all they have to win is



Tom Patterson Emerald  
Oregon freshman point guard Luke Ridnour says he feels better this week after being plagued with the flu in games in Arizona.

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