



## Young and old are right mix for men's track



Junior Tim Overfield and the track team are out of the starting blocks and ready for 2001.

■ The Oregon track and field team has new and old reasons to make some noise at the Pac-10 and NCAA Championships

By Robbie McCallum  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Over the past decade, the makeup of collegiate track and field teams has changed drastically. Where teams were once measured in overall depth and well-roundedness, teams are now measured almost solely on their performance at the NCAA Championships.

Under the guidance of legendary coaches Bill Bowerman and Bill Dellinger, Oregon track and field teams were built into national powerhouses. Duck teams were deep, won meets and scored many points

at the NCAA championships.

Towards the end of Dellinger's coaching career, several trends began to change collegiate track and field. The reduction of athletic scholarships made teams less deep. Also, the influx of star international athletes made it easy for teams to score many points at the NCAA meet with only a handful of entrants.

Through the 1990s, Oregon stayed true to its heritage and kept a deep, well-rounded roster of mostly in-state athletes, but found itself falling by the wayside in the national scene.



“We went after the best possible athletes we could find, regardless of the event.”

Martin Smith  
head coach,  
men's track  
and field

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## Failing to put it all together



### TWO MINUTES FOR CROSSCHECKING

PETER HOCKADAY

The chemistry experiment went badly awry.

The beakers exploded in the Ducks' faces.

The Oregon men's basketball team thought that chemistry was going to be enough to carry it through a tough Pacific-10 Conference schedule and into the postseason for the third straight season.

On media day, before they had even tipped a practice ball, the Ducks spoke of "coming together" (head coach Ernie Kent) and "getting along" (freshman forward Luke Jackson). They spouted off about "helping the team" (junior guard Freddie Jones) and how it was filled with "good people" (junior guard Anthony Norwood).

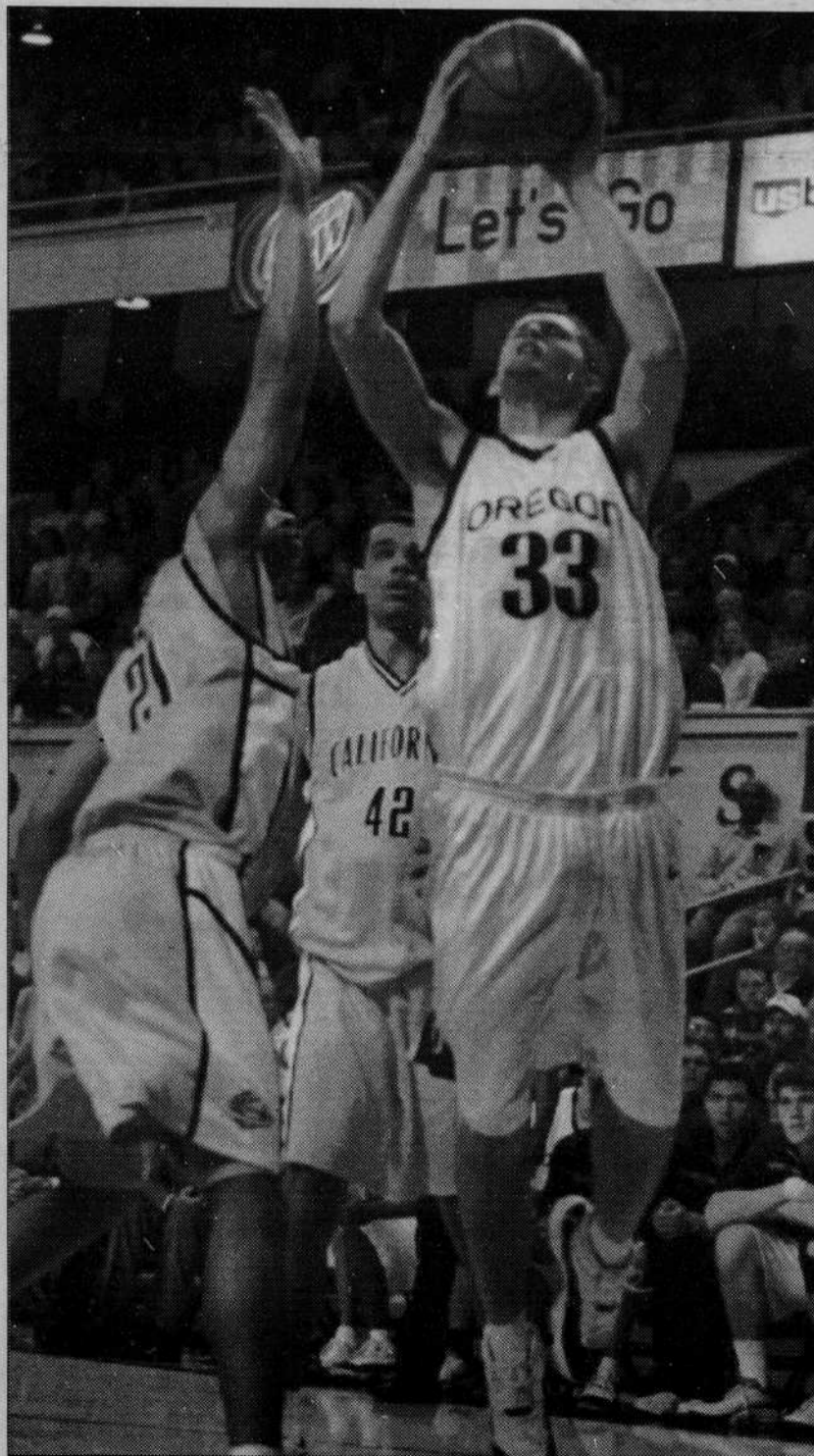
Ironic, now that all the Ducks have to show for the 2000-01 season are individual accomplishments.

But those individual accomplishments are impressive, aren't they? Luke Ridnour is the Pac-10's Freshman of the Year — the first ever for Oregon — Bryan Bracey was named first team All Pac-10, while Jackson joined Ridnour on the Pac-10's All-Freshman team.

Still, the fact remains that the Ducks will have to throw their own Big Dance parties, instead of dancing themselves. They won't even go to the middle-school hoedown that is the NIT. Ridnour said Monday he would have traded his honor for a trip to the NCAA Tournament, and who could blame him?

It remains nearly impossible to pinpoint the cause of Oregon's downfall this season. Baffling losses to Arizona State, Southern California and California at home left reporters, fans and even team members scrambling for answers. Lack of defense? Not enough intensity? Too much intensity? Poor shooting? Bad luck? All of those were thrown out as excuses by the Ducks this season.

A common link between all of Oregon's losses was lack of chemistry. Only twice during the Pac-10 season did the Ducks truly play together as a team, once when



Laura Smit Emerald

Oregon freshman forward Luke Jackson will be expected to play a key role in next year's team.

■ The 2000-01 season started off great for the Ducks, but then took a severe downward turn that left Oregon with nowhere to go in the postseason

By Jeff Smith  
Oregon Daily Emerald

No matter how highly ranked a recruiting class is, a team is going to have a rough time trying to replace three talented seniors with four inexperienced freshmen.

That was a point emphasized this past season, as the Oregon men's basketball team finished off a ho-hum, disappointing year with a tied-for-sixth place standing in the Pacific-10 Conference.

The Ducks (14-14 overall, 5-13 Pac-10) truly thought they could be the surprise team in the league and scoffed at critics who predicted them to finish sixth or seventh.

Granted, the Ducks knew that the loss of departed seniors Alex Scales, Darius Wright and A.D. Smith would be huge.

But with the returning nucleus of Freddie Jones, Bryan Bracey and Anthony Norwood, as well as a recruiting class that was ranked No. 1 in the West, the belief of the group was that a second straight trip to the NCAA Tournament was in their future.

As head coach Ernie Kent said at the annual media day in October, "They see what we lost, but they don't understand all of the inner workings," said Kent in regards to the critics. "Do the players get along? Are they on the same page? That is what I'm concerned with."

Kent's optimism would only grow once the season began and the Ducks won their first six games en route to a 9-1 preseason start. They were even impressive in their only defeat, a 101-97 overtime loss to Auburn at the Las Vegas Showdown.

But then the loss of the three seniors that accounted for 54 percent of its scoring and 37 percent of its rebounding the year before began to take its toll.

"Experience is a big factor," Oregon assistant coach Greg Graham said. "Those three seniors had the experience in close games that makes all the difference. They knew what plays to make and when to make them."

After beating Oregon State at home to open the Pac-10 slate, the Ducks embarked on a road trip to the Bay Area that would start the downward spin cycle. Oregon lost by a com-

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