



Seriously, all of us should get a shot ... even Alex



OUT IN LEFT FIELD

ADAM JUDE

Maybe it's just my random way of thinking, but doesn't it seem like more than just a coincidence that the Blazers fired head coach Mike Dunleavy eight days after Jody Runge resigned from her coaching position with the Oregon women's basketball team?

Blazers general manager Bob Whitsitt had to have seen all the hype surrounding the Runge controversy in the last few months. And he most certainly had to notice Runge's impressive run in eight years with the Ducks.

While Bill Moos and the Oregon Athletic Department frantically search for Runge's replacement, Runge is sitting at home — collecting a cool half-million dollars — reminiscing about the good old days.

But c'mon, Jody, get off the couch — the Blazers need you, girl.

With Rasheed Wallace, Bonzi Wells and a host of have-beens (i.e., Scottie Pippen), the Blazers have a load of talent and no excuse for not winning the NBA championship.

Put simply, the Blazers need a proven winner.

Runge is a winner.

The 38-year-old Runge compiled an impressive 160-73 record while leading the Ducks to eight straight NCAA Tournament appearances. Her .687 winning percentage is the best of any basketball coach — man or woman — in school history.

She's perfect for the job. And many of you agree. In this week's Emerald sports poll (which you can find at www.dailymerald.com/vnews/display.v/SEC/Sports or by going to the Emerald's home page at www.dailymerald.com and clicking on the "sports" link, located on the left side of the page, the third category from the top, in red, underlined font) one-third of voters so far think that Ms. Runge is the best fit for the vacancy in Portland.

Sure, Magic Johnson has shown interest, but what qualifications does he have that Runge doesn't?

Furthermore, Runge's hard-nosed, rigid coaching style would most certainly turn around the Blazers' bad-boy image while molding a perennial power.

Whitsitt even said he would consider a woman for the job.

"I'm thinking in terms of the best head coach," Whitsitt told *The Oregonian* last week. "And it doesn't necessarily have to be a male. In the past, I've interviewed a woman for an assistant's job. I have no criteria. I'm ruling out nothing right now."

If you've read this far, you're probably asking yourself, "What the hell is this dude talking about? Does he even have a point?"

I'm wondering the same. And, no, I don't really have a point.

But, if you think about it, the NBA is due for a revelation. There are two female referees in the NBA, but no women head coaches.

Runge is the person for the job. She's broken ground before. She's not afraid to stand up for what's right. She can and should declare herself eligible for the NBA head coach's draft.

If Charles Barkley has a legitimate chance of making a second appearance in the NBA, then Jody Runge should at least have one shot. Then we could rest easy at night knowing that Runge has moved on and was given a fair opportunity elsewhere.

In other news, Texas Rangers' shortstop/aerospace expert/really rich guy Alex Rodriguez has announced that he will be seeking election as Texas governor.

Adam Jude is a sports reporter for the Emerald. He can be reached at ajude34@yahoo.com, but may not take suggestions or criticism seriously.

UO expects more from future

■ A disappointing women's tennis season has the Ducks hungry for the 2002 season

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

All of the pieces of the puzzle were there: experience, youth, desire and the beginning of a winning tradition.

But all those pieces didn't quite fit for the Oregon women's tennis team this season.

After losing only one senior off an 8-14 NCAA qualifying team, Oregon head coach Jack Griffin added two of



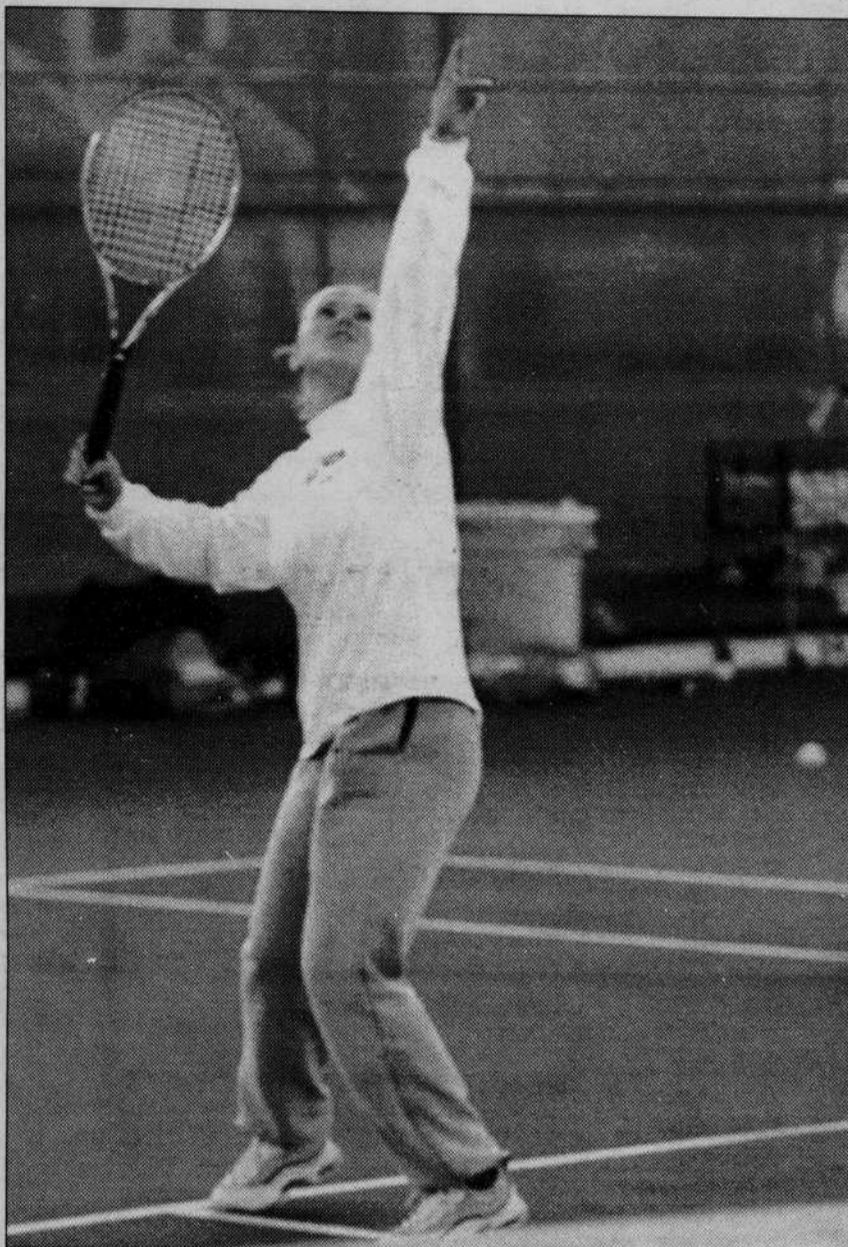
the Pacific-10 Conference's top freshmen and a junior transfer to an already stacked roster. Coupled with the completion of the Ducks' new indoor tennis facility, the 2001 season looked to be one of Oregon's best ever.

Two injuries and 17 losses later, though, the Ducks capped a frustrating season and missed the NCAA Tournament for the first time in two years.

"It was a frustrating season for us," Griffin said. "But hopefully we're going to learn some important lessons from this season."

A 3-2 start at home with respectable showings against Stanford and California had the Ducks optimistic — until Oregon left for a nine-match road trip and its top two players went down with injuries.

Sophomore Monika Geiczys, the top returning player and honorable mention Pac-10 selection as a freshman, suffered a wrist injury and



Sophomore Monika Geiczys' wrist injury kept her out of several matches this season.

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Ducks miss NCAAs, still see positives

■ The Oregon women's golf team looks forward to next season after not qualifying for the 2001 NCAAs

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

How would you describe a season that ends seven strokes shy of the NCAA Championships? What words would you use when thinking about a campaign that never quite reached its potential, then came so close in the team's final tournament?

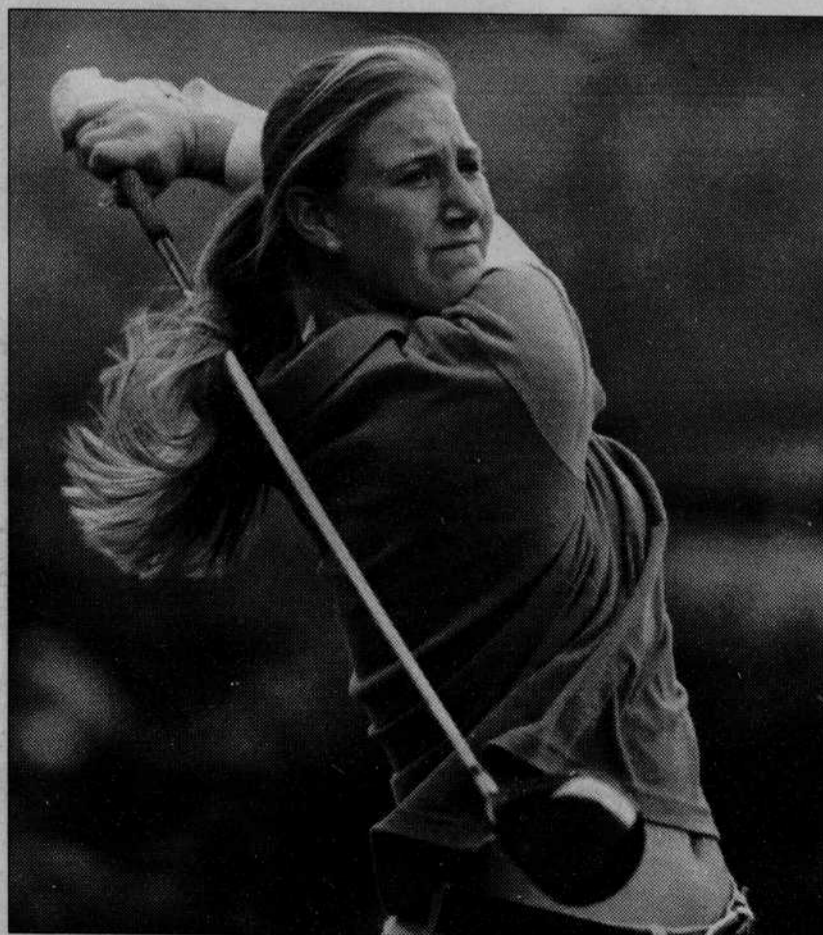
How about "successful," or "positive?"

Those were the words used by Oregon women's golf head coach Shannon Rouillard, whose team finished seven strokes behind eighth-place Southern California and a berth in the NCAA Championships.

Hesitant to use the word "rebuild," Rouillard nonetheless described the 2000-01 season as a foundation laid for the future.

"All our returnees will have that experience [of the NCAA regional tournament] under their belts now," Rouillard said. "I think we'll definitely be back at the regional tournament next year, and probably even at nationals."

Rouillard had to essentially replace a



R. Ashley Smith Emerald

Oregon standout Jerilyn White finished her season two strokes short of the NCAAs.

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