



'Give me the job': Former star wants to coach

■ Bev Smith, arguably the best basketball player to ever wear an Oregon women's uniform, is the first to interview for the vacant women's basketball head coaching position

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

Nearly a quarter of a century ago, Oregon was recruiting Bev Smith. Now, Bev Smith is making a pitch to come back.

Smith, the former Oregon standout who is second on the school's all-time scoring list, met with Athletic Director Bill Moos Wednesday to discuss her interest in becoming the fifth women's basketball coach in the program's 28-year history.

Smith is the first person to be in-

terviewed for the head coaching position since Jody Runge resigned April 30.

Moos and Smith met Wednesday morning for more than an hour.

"To come full circle and come back into this community with the experiences I've had — to give back what they gave me when I left here — I don't think there's too many people in North America that would have that opportunity," Smith said. "I'm just very happy to be here."

"Give me the job."

For the last four years, the 41-year-old Smith has coached the Canadian national team, leading the team to a 10th-place finish at the Olympics last year.



SMITH

During her career at Oregon, from 1978 to 1982, Smith averaged 18.8 points per game and set school records for rebounds (12.4 rpg) and steals (3.2 spg) en route to being named a two-time all-American.

Smith helped lead the Ducks to their first NCAA Tournament in 1982, her senior season.

Whoever is chosen to be the Ducks' next coach will inherit a program from Runge that has made eight consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances and compiled a 160-73 record since the 1993-94 season.

Moos could not be reached for comment Tuesday, but has said that he expects to fill the vacancy by the beginning of June. He also anticipated receiving a large pool of applications by the May 21 deadline.

Several other candidates have reportedly shown interest in the position: Denver's Pam Tanner,

Florida State's Sue Semrau, Utah's Elaine Elliott, Pacific's Sherri Murrell, Xavier's Melanie Balcomb and Cheryl Burnett of Southwest Missouri State.

Moos is expected to interview several more applicants on campus in the next week.

Meanwhile, the women's basketball team is continuing its spring workouts under the guidance of interim coach Dan Muscatell.

Although he said there may be some distraction in the team because of the unknown future, Muscatell said the team is trying to focus only on getting prepared for next season.

"I'm sure there's some apprehension to turn to Smith, page 16



UP 'N' OVER

Junior Niki Reed will have perhaps her best shot ever at an NCAA title this postseason

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

When you pole vault over a 13-foot bar, the motion is the same each time.

Run up, launch, twist, go over the bar.

Sort of like Niki Reed's Oregon career.

Now, as Reed enters the postseason of her junior year, she has the expectations of a team and her own 14-foot standards — literally and figuratively — to live up to. It could be the last twist before she goes over the top of her career as a Duck and down into the real world.

The Newport native is the fourth-ranked vaulter in the nation this season. She is one of only 10 athletes nationwide to jump the NCAA automatic mark of 13 feet, 5 1/4 inches. That mark tied the school record — which she set last year.

The scary part is that Reed is only getting better.

"She's a lot stronger and faster now than she has been," senior vaulter Holly Speight said.

"I'm so proud of her," senior all-American vaulter Karina Elstrom said. "I think she can do really well [this postseason]."

Not only is Reed faster and stronger than she once was, but the junior has also developed as a leader.

"I'm trying to be someone for the young girls to look up to," Reed said. "I don't try and be like a coach to them."

Those younger pole vaulters — freshmen Kirsten Riley and Georgette Moyle — have both qualified for the Pacific-10 Conference Championship meet this year, meaning the pole vault squad will send five athletes to Berkeley this weekend for the league competition.

Before Reed emerged, it was Elstrom and Speight who were the queens of the Oregon vault.

"When I first came in, I was intimidated and amazed by both of them," Reed said. "As the years went on, I realized that they were just there to help."

Reed now has a chance to have her most successful season at Oregon. The junior finished second in the Pac-10 her freshman year, then was taken out of the hunt in 2000 because of injuries. She was able to come back for the NCAAs last year and finished 13th in the outdoor meet. Her most impressive finish, though, came at the NCAA Championships during her freshman year, where she finished fifth overall.

The important thing to note about all those finishes is that none of those vaults were over 13 feet high. This year, Reed may need to go above 14 feet to finish in the top-five at the NCAAs.

"I want to jump in the 14s, that's my goal," Reed said. "There are a lot of girls jumping over 14 right now."

If there's any place to do it, the NCAAs at Hayward Field May 30-June 2 could be the place. Reed describes Hayward as a "great place to jump." Her family comes to meets.

Turn to Reed, page 16

Niki Reed is the most successful pole vaulter in Oregon history, but still needs to add a national title to the list.

Tom Patterson Emerald