



Look past football



TWO MINUTES FOR CROSSCHECKING

PETER HOCKADAY

This fall, the Oregon women's volleyball team had a 10-19 record, failed to win more than two games in the Pacific-10 Conference and came about seven wins short of the NCAA Tournament.

But hey, the Ducks' football squad went to the Holiday Bowl, where they mopped the grass with a traditional football school, Texas.

The Oregon men's basketball team finished with a 14-14 record, sixth in the Pac-10, and missed a chance to return to March Madness after a miracle season in 1999-2000. They even missed out on the NIT, where they made the Final Four in 1999.

Hey, the Ducks went to the Holiday Bowl.

The Oregon women's basketball team made the NCAA Tournament, barely, but lost in the first round. Toward the end of the season, turmoil engulfed the team when players expressed contempt for Coach Jody Runge. That turmoil still continues, as not all of the details of a report by an independent law firm have been released; the athletic department continues to withhold information about 31 NCAA violations uncovered by the law firm.

The Ducks went to a bowl game.

The Oregon women's soccer team finished 4-15-1. The softball team went 28-40 overall, 1-20 in the Pac-10. The wrestling team failed to send any individuals to final NCAA Championships competition. The men's and women's golf and tennis teams all missed the NCAA Championships. The women's track team finished 60th at the NCAA meet, which the Ducks hosted at Hayward Field.

Bowl game?

Some day, without a doubt, the Oregon athletic department will see the "trickle-down" effect from the football program. When Autzen Stadium is expanded, more revenue will flood the department, and more sports will receive more scholarships. More quality players will join UO teams, and the Ducks will be feared on all their playing fields, not just on the hostile new Autzen NeXturf.

Don't get too excited, though, because you won't be here to see it.

Go Ducks? While it's easy to get drunk and cheer on the Oregon football team, that alcohol can't drown the fact that every other team sport is suffering.

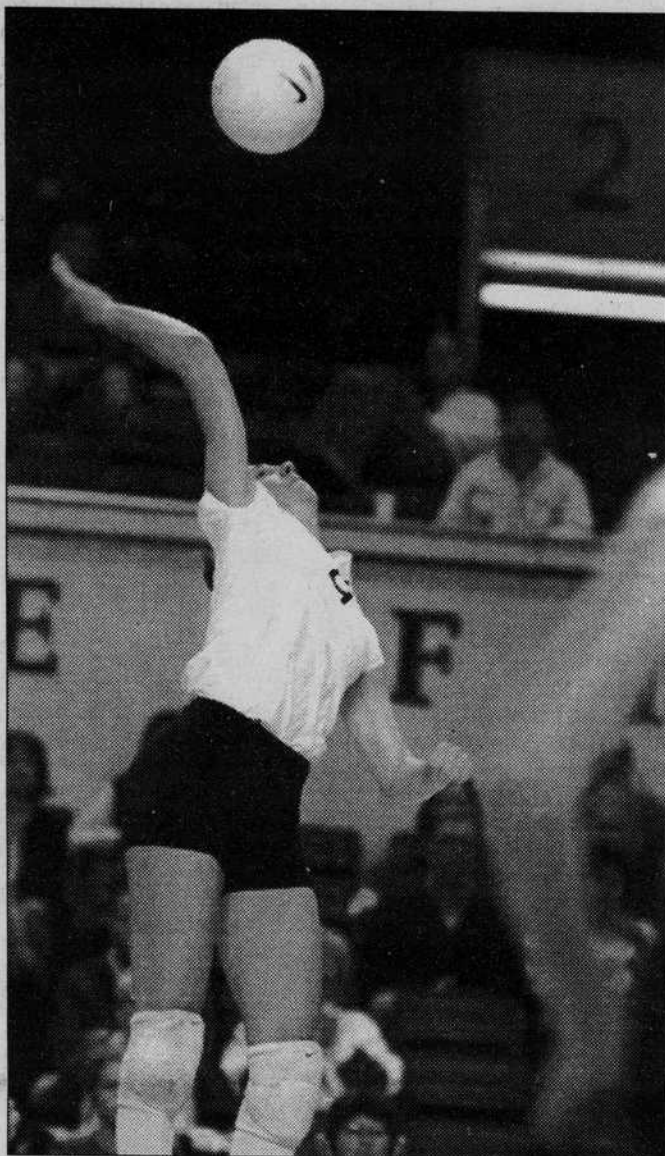
But hey, who cares how good other sports are, when your football team is ripping apart opponents? Who cares that the softball team always finds a way to lose, or that the women's hoops squad is being torn open by controversy?

You should.

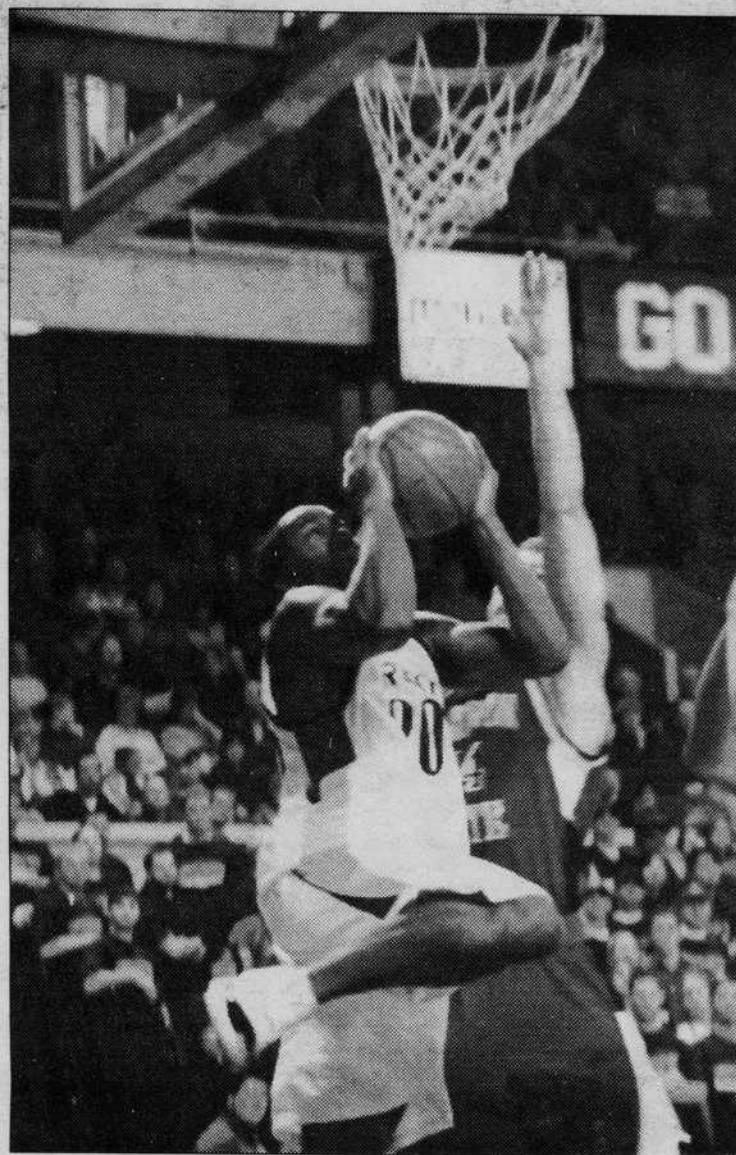
Wouldn't it be nice to see the Duck volleyball team spike all over Stanford at Mac Court on a blustery fall day? Wouldn't it be cool to see a soccer game that featured two top teams duking it out instead of one team piling the goals on the Ducks?

For now, all you can do is go cheer on the football team. Maybe, someday, your kids will be able to see a top-ranked Oregon wrestling team or a No. 2 men's tennis squad.

Until then, there's always the Holiday Bowl.



Monique Tobbagi always made her presence felt on the volleyball court. Emerald



No player could bring down the house like Freddie Jones with his thunderous jams. Adam Tamato Emerald

Honoring the best of UO athletics

After a year full of Oregon sports, it's time to look back and recognize those that stood out above the rest

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

Bigger than the Oscars. More prestigious than the Grammys. More important than the ESPY's.

It's time (cue drum roll) for the second annual, in-your-face, bigger-than-a-sumo-wrestler Oregon Daily Emerald Emmie Awards. Last year we started a tradition of honoring those athletes and coaches we work with day-in and day-out. They give to us all year long, and now it's time to give back.

Without further ado, let's get to the awards, which are all voted by the sports staff. With that said, our first award was actually decided by, well, you.

People's Choice Award: Through the Internet, we are now able to poll our readers on their sporting opinions, and we love it. Last week, we asked you who you thought was the most valuable Oregon athlete in 2000-01.

The winner was an obvious choice. He's the Ducks' most well-known quarterback, Joey Harrington. The junior signal-caller led Oregon to a 10-2 record and a Holiday Bowl victory over Texas. He received a remarkable 56.8 percent of the vote, despite facing three other athletes. Now, back to your regularly scheduled awards.

Most Entertaining Female Athlete: It must be tough to play against Monique Tobbagi, Oregon's junior outside hitter for the volleyball squad. She has scary power, not much control and a whole lot of flash. One point, she'll spike the ball 10 feet wide of the line, then come back the next to smash it in your face. That unpredictability makes her our

most entertaining female.

Most Entertaining Male Athlete: Freddie Jones runs the court on the fast break, but there's one defender back to meet him. As Jones elevates, the defender goes up with him. No problem for Freddie, who seemingly reaches from somewhere near the opposing team's bench to slam the ball home.

Alex who? Jones easily replaced flashy Alex Scales with a high-flying act of his own this season. He was the man that UCLA coach Steve Lavin compared to Batman. Freddie Jones is our most entertaining male.

Best Play: There were no Darius Wright buzzer-beaters this year, but those football "cardiac kids" had some big plays of their own. The best play was undoubtedly in the Holiday Bowl, when the Ducks were up 7-0 in the first quarter. Harrington handed off to Keenan Howry — a high school quarterback himself — who tossed it back to a wide-open Harrington 10 yards from the end zone. The actual signal-caller stumbled, nearly lost his balance, but fell in the end zone to give Oregon a 14-0 lead. How 'bout them apples?

Best Athlete Nobody Knows About, But Should: He was an All-American his freshman season at Oregon. He is the star of a Duck team that is otherwise starless. Because of him, Oregon may recruit better players in the immediate future.

Still don't know who we're talking about? That's why we have the award. He is Oded Teig, the Ducks' top tennis player, who is poised to land on the top 10 list of Oregon victories next year — as a junior. He ended the season with a 21-17 record, and a few top up-sets to go with it.

Biggest Heart: There's no doubt that Lindsey Dion has heart. The Oregon women's basketball senior played through injuries, team turmoil and a rocky schedule, and kept her

cool the entire time. And every time she stepped on the basketball court, she was greeted with rousing cheers as Oregon's fan favorite. Hats off to Lindsey, for being a bright light in a dark program.

Best Interview: This is a category close to our hearts, because we interact with athletes almost every day. Our pick for best interview was another women's basketball star, Angelina Wolvert. Wolvert was always open and candid, and still had no problem getting a reporter to smile.

Worst Interview: Joey, we love you, you're a great quarterback and a greater person, but you stink at interviewing, man. Seriously. You never take the credit, always take the blame, and never offer a fresh quote no matter the situation.

Like a comic whose show has been running for too many years, Joey Harrington is too polished, too unemotional and just too darn nice to make a good interviewee. Sorry, buddy, but you take the loss on this one.

Best Senior Class: The women's basketball team will be an entirely different squad next year. Not only will it have a new coach, but it will try to replace four key seniors who notched a lot of minutes and a lot of points. Wolvert. Mowe. Meharry. Dion. All four departed, even emotional leader Camber Ellingson was lost to graduation. We toast those five with a special best seniors award. Congratulations.

Best Game: Last year brought us the "Miracle at Mac," this year it was the "Miracle at Sun Devil Stadium." The Oregon football squad was down by 14 points three different times, once with four minutes left in the game. Game over?

The Ducks drove downfield after pulling within seven, but tight end Justin Peele was stopped at the one-yard line on a fourth-and-