

SPORTS

Sports Editor:
Adam Jude
adamjude@dailymerald.com
Assistant Sports Editor:
Jeff Smith
jeffsmith@dailymerald.com

Best Bet
NBA: Washington at Atlanta,
5 p.m., TNT



Thursday, November 1, 2001

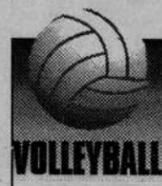
Ducks search for first win

■ Oregon returns home to the friendly confines of McArthur Court looking for its first conference win of the season

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

There are ivy-covered walls, seats so close to the floor players can hear the fans breathe, and an atmosphere unrivaled in the Pacific-10 Conference.

Those are just a few of the things the Oregon volleyball team will have in mind when it takes on the California Golden Bears tonight at 7. The Ducks (8-14 overall, 0-11 Pac-10) play at McArthur Court for the first time in two weeks and look forward to playing in front of the home crowd.



"We want to create an atmosphere here where it is the most difficult to play at in the conference," head coach Carl Ferreira said. "This is purely a magical venue and I think our players are ready to grasp the moment."

Coupled with the fact the match will be tape-delayed and shown on Fox Sports Net on Saturday, the Ducks should have no problem getting up to play.

This is the second match of the season the Ducks will play, with California (7-12, 2-9) coming out on top in the first one at Haas Pavilion in Berkeley, Calif., in early October. The Golden Bears jumped out to a quick 2-0 game lead, but saw the Ducks fight back in the third, only to lose, 32-30. Since then, Cal has 2-7 overall, including an impressive win over then-No. 19 Santa Clara last week. The Golden Bears, however, have not looked strong in conference play.

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Oregon Volleyball

vs. California Golden Bears



WHEN: 7 p.m. tonight
WHERE: McArthur Court
BROADCAST: Fox Sports Net (delayed)

In addition, the squad has been ravaged by injuries recently. Star freshman Mia Jerkov sat out last week's matches against the Broncos and Stanford with a strained tendon in her left foot, but should be ready to go against the Ducks. Senior setter Candace McNamee has also been injured of late, but has played with a sprained ankle.

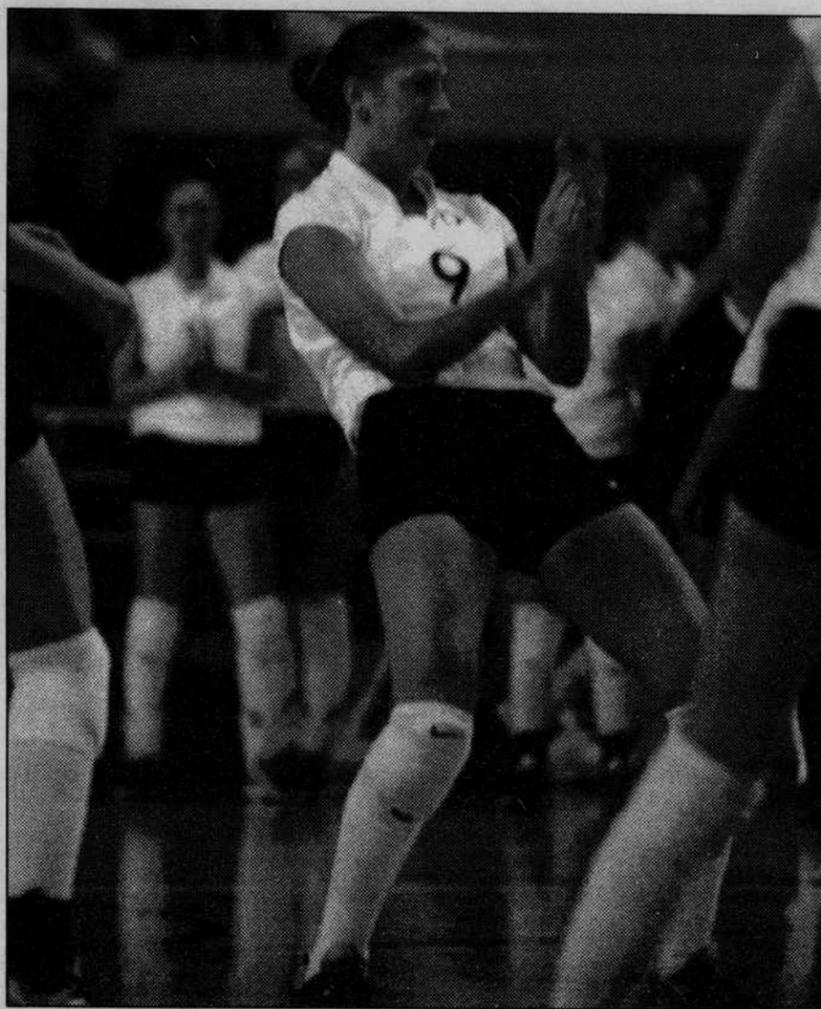
Despite the mounting injuries, the Golden Bears look to have a full but physically depleted squad at McArthur Court. The Ducks will look to take advantage.

"We want to draw blood," Ferreira said. "We want to be rewarded for our efforts. It's an enormous weekend for us and an easy weekend for us to be really motivated about what you're trying to do."

Senior outside hitter Monique Tobbagi has been one of those players who has been focused on her play recently, and it has begun to show. Her 42 kills and 33 digs last week against Gonzaga, Washington State and Washington paced the squad, and her play of late has improved after a disappointing first half, at least by her standards.

But Tobbagi is only one component of the big three. Juniors Lindsay Closs and Stephanie Martin have also come up big in recent matches and look to continue their strong play against Cal. But it will

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Jonathan House Emerald

Senior outside hitter Monique Tobbagi will have more to cheer about if the Ducks can pull off a win against the Golden Bears tonight. California won the first match of the season, 3-0, on Oct. 5.

Men's hoops set to embark on new year

■ With a talented and deep backcourt, the men's basketball team is looking to get back to the NCAA Tournament this year

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

The leaves fall from the trees. The trick-or-treaters roam the neighborhoods. The rain falls in buckets instead of Dixie cups.

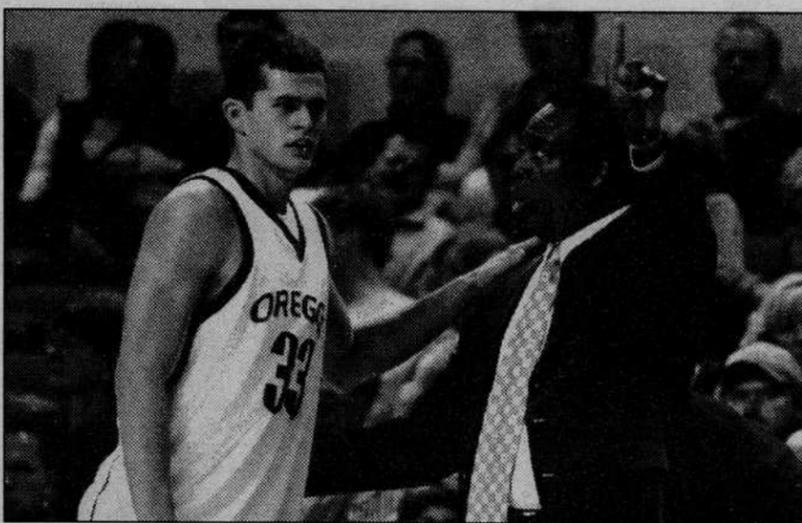
Freddie Jones rains dunks.

It's fall in the state of Oregon, and that means the return of men's basketball. The Ducks are less than a week away from the start of the exhibition season, and only two weeks from the start of the regular season.

Oregon will open the regular season at home against the Basketball Travelers on Tuesday. The Ducks will face Global Sports on Nov. 11, then open the regular season with the America's Youth Classic at McArthur Court Nov. 15-17.

"Our goal in the preseason is definitely to get some 'Ws,'" said senior guard Anthony Lever, who was formerly Anthony Norwood until he changed his name this summer. "The mood of the team is positive. We're looking to have a good year this year."

Lever leads a backcourt battery of guards that should be Oregon's strength this season. Sophomore point guard Luke Ridnour was last season's Pacific-10 Conference Freshman of the Year, sophomore Luke Jackson was named to the Pac-10's All-Freshman team, and senior guard Jones was the team's sec-



Emerald

Sophomore forward Luke Jackson and head coach Ernie Kent hope to bring Oregon back to postseason play this year. Jackson was named to the Pac-10 all-freshman team last season.

ond-leading scorer last season. Jones averaged 14.8 points per game.

"We have a lot to prove," Lever said of the Ducks' backcourt.

Scrimmage scramble

Jones and Jackson made a statement already this season, in Oregon's first open scrimmage Saturday at Mac Court. In three 20-minute periods, Jackson led all scorers with 21 points and also grabbed eight rebounds, while Jones scored 20 points.

Several new team members made their first public appearances in Saturday's scrimmage. Robert Johnson, a junior transfer from Santa Rosa Junior College, snagged nine rebounds. Junior transfer Brian Helquist grabbed six boards. Ian Crosswhite, a 6-foot-11 forward from Australia, did not play because of a nagging ankle injury.

The Kent connection

When Churchill High School stand-out Jordan Kent announced his intent to attend the University of Oregon — where his father, Ernie, coaches the Ducks' basketball team — a proud family member beamed from the seat next to Jordan.

Yes, Ernie was there, but the proudest family member that day was Marcus Kent, Jordan's older brother and the Oregon basketball team's newest walk-on.

"It's amazing," Marcus said of Jordan's announcement. "I always hoped he would come here. I sort of knew he would, but I just really hoped he would."

Marcus, now a freshman, could get a chance to "live a dream" of playing with his brother while being coached by his father. Marcus will

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Trainers optimistic of Morris' return

■ Oregon's starting tailback has not practiced, but Bellotti is 'encouraged' he will return Saturday

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

Senior tailback Maurice Morris has not practiced this week, and his status for Saturday's game against Arizona State is uncertain. Morris injured his left hamstring in the third quarter of Oregon's 24-17 win over Washington State in Pullman, Wash., Saturday.

"Mo had a pool workout (Tuesday), and both he and the trainers are optimistic that he will be back (Saturday)," head coach Mike Bellotti said. "I will wait and see, but I'm encouraged at this point."

If Morris, who rushed for 138 yards against the Cougars, is not able to play, sophomore Onterio Smith will get the nod.

Smith rushed for a school-record 285 yards on 26 carries and gained a school-record 343 all-purpose yards Saturday.

"There's no telling how many carries I'll get this week," Smith said. "But I'll do whatever I have to do."

A November to remember?

At 7-1 overall (4-1 Pacific-10 Conference), the Ducks are off to their best start in school history. But the final three games of the regular season will of course determine how this team is remembered.

The Ducks are in good hands, though. Under Bellotti, Oregon is 15-3 in November. Two of those losses were to Oregon State in 1998 and 2000, the other occurring to this week's opponent, Arizona State (1997).

O-mazing performance

The Oregon offensive line has not allowed a quarterback sack in five consecutive games and leads the Pac-10 in fewest sacks allowed with six.

In fact, the Ducks' O-line has led the conference in fewest sacks allowed in each of the last two years.

Smith gave his blockers the credit for his record-setting performance and the Ducks' 446 total yards on the ground against Washington State, also a school record.

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