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**Best Bet**  
College Hoops:  
Oklahoma at Arkansas  
5:00 pm, ESPN



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Oregon stadium announcer Don Essig (left) chats with student Jennifer Price (right) at a luncheon in 2000. Essig speaks at many events around Eugene.

Emerald

## The VOICE of Reason

■ Oregon stadium announcer Don Essig lives a life rooted in Eugene, even if he is a Beaver

By Peter Hockaday  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Like a wounded gladiator, Don Essig forced himself to sit in front of the microphone.

As his voice cracked and splintered, he fought the invisible enemy. With 46,000 fans waiting breathlessly, he struggled through the words that have become a mantra for the Duck faithful.

"We all know... it never rains at Autzen Stadium!"

Essig, the stadium voice of Oregon football and men's basketball, would not back down from his enemy — a nasty cold — as the Ducks hosted Arizona State on Nov. 3.

"One of the guys came into the restroom at halftime when I was in there, and he said, 'We've got a pool going down there on when you're going to die,'" Essig said with a deep, hearty chuckle Wednesday. "I said, 'Well, put five bucks in for me.'"

Essig is a faceless voice during football season, a visible presence in the winter for basketball games. Always quick with statistics and even quicker with a verbal jab, Essig has sat behind the Oregon microphone

for more than 32 years. In that span, he has missed only one game, in 1984, when he had neck surgery and couldn't hold his own head up.

The irony is that the Duck announcer is a Beaver.

Essig graduated from Oregon State in 1960 with an elementary education degree. In Corvallis, Essig used his booming voice to lead the Beaver faithful in chants during football games as the Oregon State "rally king."

After his college days, Essig moved on to teaching and announcing. He spent 30 years in the Eugene

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## After first loss, Ducks look for win at Portland

■ After a loss at Massachusetts, the men's hoopsters are back on the West Coast ready to face the Pilots

By Jeff Smith  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Saturday's football Civil War between the Ducks and Beavers is anticipated by many — Oregon men's basketball coach Ernie Kent included.

Kent expects a few of his players to attend the game and cheer on their fellow athletes. But once Sunday rolls around, the focus will be back to basketball as Oregon (4-1 overall) travels to Portland's Chiles Center to take on the Pilots at 3 p.m. Oregon has won the last 20 meetings with Portland; their last loss came in 1964.

Kent said he hopes the excitement generated by the football team this fall will roll over into the basketball team.

"Football's done their part, and now it's our turn," Kent said. "They'll still have the bowl game after Saturday, but we'll have a lot of big games in between, especially with our Pac-10 season starting earlier this year."

Indeed, on Dec. 20 and 22, the Arizona schools will visit McArthur Court to open up the always-tough Pacific-10 Conference. But Kent has made the point of emphasizing the challenging non-league games that Oregon has on its schedule.

For example, remember that Western Michigan team that the Ducks beat 91-48 on Nov. 16? Well, that same team turned around and beat the Michigan Wolverines, 79-73, a week later.

And Kent took notice of Pepperdine's upset win at UCLA on Wednesday, as Pepperdine will be visiting The Pit on Dec. 14.

"It shows people that we put together a tough schedule," Kent said.

The Ducks looked impressive over Rick Pitino-coached Louisville in a 90-63 victory, but then stumbled on the road Tuesday against Massachusetts.

The game was close throughout, but the Minutemen made all the right plays in the end to come away with the four-point win.

"We needed a game like U. Mass," Kent said. "We learned from it and we know there's a lot of basketball left. We're a little fatigued from all the travel."

Because of the East Coast trip and the impending finals next week, the Ducks took Wednesday and Thursday off

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## Road challenge will test Oregon women

■ On their first road trip, the Ducks hope to make up for Monday's loss

By Hank Hager  
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Civil War is not the only Oregon athletic event happening this weekend.

Hoping to come back strong after a 72-65 loss to Texas Tech at McArthur Court on Monday, Oregon women's basketball takes to the road for the first time this season, traveling to Lawrence, Kan., to compete in the Holiday Inn Jayhawk Classic. In the opening game, the Ducks (2-3 overall) will take on St. John's (1-4) today at 3 p.m.

Against the No. 9 Raiders, Oregon surrendered 48 rebounds and shot just 3-of-14 from beyond the three-point line. With a new coach and four new starters, the team is still learning how to play with each other.

"We were disappointed that we lost," sophomore forward Cathrine Kraayeveld said. "But we know we've

come a long way, and we're starting to really pick it up and play well with each other."

Oregon's opponent tonight, St. John's, defeated St. Francis on Wednesday for its first win of the season. In its previous four games, the team had lost each by at least 13 points.

But the Ducks are not overlooking anybody. Against Texas Tech, the team was void of its ability to shoot from beyond the three-point line and was pushed around inside the paint by the more active Raiders offense.

"If we allow them to get 20 offensive rebounds, it's tough to win," head coach Bev Smith said. "But I thought we played very good defense."

Because the Ducks have never played St. John's, they really don't know what to expect. For that reason, Oregon needs to enter Kansas Fieldhouse and give it everything it has.

"We have to go in and play hard," Kraayeveld said. "We have to get the little things done, especially on the road."

Key to the Ducks' offense this weekend will be the play of their guards,

junior Shaquala Williams and senior Edniesha Curry. Curry is averaging 13.6 points per game, while Williams leads the team with 17.6.

The duo combined for a below-average 27 points against the Lady Raiders, but each played for more than 30 minutes in the loss.

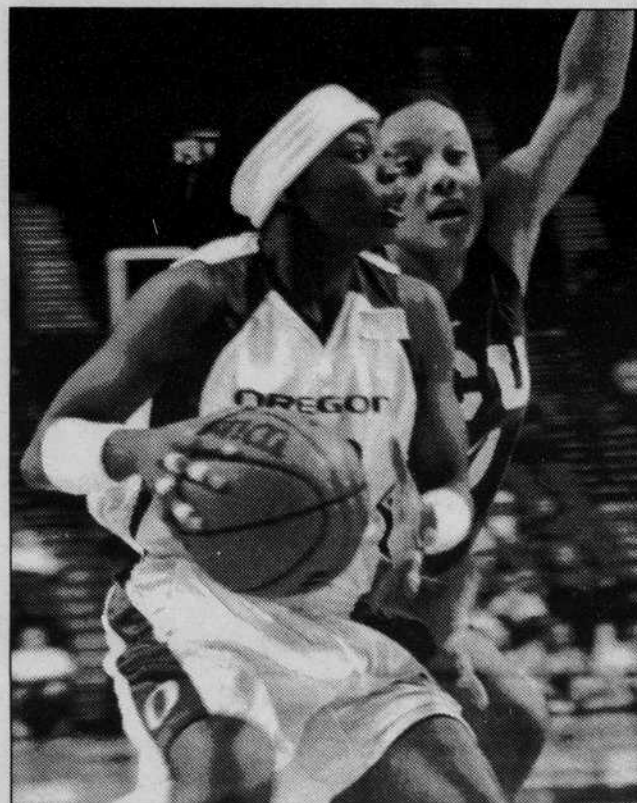
"Regardless of whether they score 40 points a game between them, we still need to get some balanced scoring from the inside," Smith said.

The Ducks will need to establish their inside early and often, mostly because the team is not as big in the past. But forcing the Red Storm to focus on the paint will give Williams, Curry and senior Jamie Craighead some open looks.

"We have some team goals, and it is not only important to reach those goals, but also in how we strive for them," Smith said.

The Ducks will play against either Kansas or Alabama State Saturday, depending on Friday's results.

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Thomas Patterson Emerald

Senior guard Edniesha Curry, seen here against Texas Christian, is Oregon's second-leading scorer with 13.6 points per game.