

## Freshmen

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### Gunderson

It's not often a freshman gets the chance to outshine a senior. Gunderson had her moment last Saturday against Oregon State.

Gunderson found herself matched up with the Beavers' Felicia Ragland, the reigning Pacific-10 Conference Player of the Year who leads the league in scoring this year. Midway through the second half, with the

game close, Ragland blew past the Oregon freshman on her way to an easy layin — only it wasn't. As Ragland skied for the shot, the 6-foot Gunderson came from behind and swatted Ragland's shot out of bounds.

Gunderson bumped chests with a teammate and gave a little smirk on a job well done.

Ragland did not forget.

On Oregon's State's next possession, Ragland went right after Gunderson, sank a jumper in the lane and drew a foul on the freshman.

Welcome to Pac-10 basketball.

"It's been a big change going from high school basketball to the Pac-10 — everything changes," said Gunderson, who is averaging 3.4 points in 8.6 minutes this season. "I just need to take what I get and appreciate it."

### Parrish

At first, the 6-foot-2 Parrish seemed to be the one to fill the reserve hole in the middle, taking what is now Bill's reserve role.

Parrish was on the court for 15

minutes in the second game of the year, an 83-65 rout of Miami of Ohio on Nov. 18. She scored a season-high six points and grabbed five boards.

"The first couple of games, I was worn out and I got tired easily," Parrish said. "I just need to get into better shape."

Parrish's progress has been slowed by illness and injury. She had the flu for awhile and is now suffering back spasms, which sidelined her for the Oregon State game.

No worries, though. Parrish, too, is eager to see what the future holds.

"I think we're going to be good," she said. "We should be competing for nationals, hopefully by my junior year."

### Taylor

At 5-foot-8, Taylor may be the smallest freshman on the team, but her energy and enthusiasm

stand tall.

"I'm a pretty energetic person anyway, and I felt that if I could transfer my energy in a different way, that I could still have a positive impact on this team," she said. "Even being at the bottom... I just want to bring people together."

One of the top scorers in Washington state history in high school, Taylor was named by The Seattle Times as a "Player for the Next Century."

While the transition from high school to college doesn't always produce immediate success, Oregon fans won't have to wait a century to see Taylor and this year's freshmen class generate excitement at McArthur Court.

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but Iowa rebuffed them in their first NCAA Tournament game.

Without a crystal ball, it'll be tough to tell how this year's team will finish, but one thing is for sure: The Ducks (10-8 overall) believe in themselves.

"We've got to stay up," senior guard Jamie Craighead said. "There's still (nine) games left in the season, and we know we've dropped a few games we shouldn't have, but we're still in the hunt for things."

Southern California enters McArthur Court tonight for a 7 p.m. tipoff, fresh off a 19-point win over Arizona State last week. The win pushed the Trojans to 6-3 in conference play (10-8 overall), good enough for a share of second place.

Earlier this season, the Trojans handed Oregon its first conference loss, 83-73, on the strength of Ebony Hoffman's 27 points. The 6-foot-2 sophomore banged the Ducks inside for a majority of her points and gave some of the young Oregon players a taste of Pac-10 play.

But Oregon head coach Bev Smith doesn't see a need to focus on one particular USC player.

"I think before you look at any individuals, you have to look at USC (as a team)," Smith said. "Defensively, they're very aggressive and they challenge you. We have to take care of the ball and run our offense efficiently and effectively."

Against the Trojans earlier in the season, Oregon was without senior Ednisha Curry for most of the game due to an injured foot. Although she wasn't able to play much, Curry said

she noticed the need to keep USC from getting out early and establishing their type of game.

"They're a quick, athletic team," Curry said. "They are a real up-tempo team. They like to run a transition offense, and their guards rebound exceptionally well."

Coming off this season's early win, the Trojans have taken four of the last five contests against the Ducks, including the last two games at the Pit. Oregon has lost four games this season at Mac Court, the most since the 1992-93 season, which was also the team's last losing year.

"With USC coming in, they're playing fairly well," Smith said. "We look at this game as a great opportunity for a win."

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"I'll just have to go out and get another one," Jackson said.

Jackson will get his shot tonight when the Ducks face the Huskies in front of the Husky fans — and likely many more Oregon fans than usual, thanks to the little border town named Blaine.

"Our sport is different from football, where fans will make the trip to Washington," Oregon head

coach Ernie Kent said. "In basketball, even if it's only 300 to 400 people, you will get the sense that there are some Oregon people there, and that will give you confidence."

Oregon will take on Washington at 7 p.m. tonight and Washington State at 3 p.m. Saturday. Tonight's game will be broadcast on the Oregon Sports Network, while Saturday's game will be on Fox Sports Net.

E-mail reporter Peter Hockaday at [peterhockaday@dailymerald.com](mailto:peterhockaday@dailymerald.com).

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