

Men's

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defensively," Kent said.

Offense — Grade: A

Kent said the biggest help to his offense has been the emergence of several key players off the Oregon bench and the general improvement of all his offensive components.

"There's been so much growth on this team," Kent said.

That growth has turned Oregon into an offensive force to be reckoned with this season. The Ducks lead the Pac-10 in scoring average (85.8 points per game), scoring margin (+16.7 points per game), field goal percentage (49 percent) and 3-point percentage (42 percent).

The Ducks, arguably, are the best offensive team in the Pac-10.

Defense — Grade: B

Anthony Lever is one of the veterans on this year's squad, which gives him a unique view on the Ducks' sordid defensive history.

But he is still a college student. "What is this, class?" Lever said about ranking Oregon's 2002 defense.

All joking aside, the senior guard spoke of the suddenly-strong Oregon defensive system.

"With coach Litz, any time we have any slippage on the defensive end, he's there to correct us," Lever said.

Coach Litz is Fred Litzenberger, a noted defensive specialist who brought his style over from the women's team. The switch worked for the men, who have held opponents to 69.2 points per game and 41 percent shooting from the floor.

But the Ducks have allowed certain players to "go off," as guard James Davis put it. Which is why Davis gives the Duck guard corps a ...

The guards — Grade: B

"We've got a long way to go, defensively," Davis said. "We let (Casey) Jacobsen go off, we let the Washington guards go off. We can't let those big-name guys have big games."

"We" refers to Oregon's guards, who have given up big offensive nights, including 32 points to Stanford's Jacobsen, 32 to Washington's Doug Wrenn and 35 to Washington State's Marcus Moore.

But other than those blemishes, the Oregon guards have been consistently dominant. Starting guards Freddie Jones and Luke Ridnour average 16.4 and 14.9 points per game, respectively, while forward/guard Luke Jackson weighs in with 15.5 points per contest.

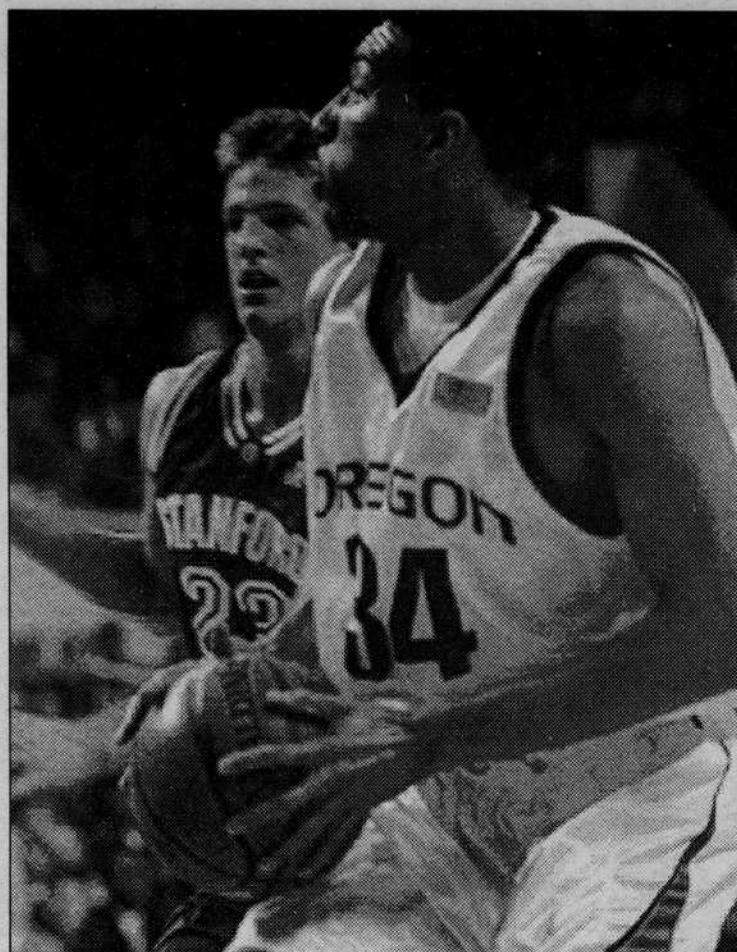
The posts — Grade: C+/B-

Chris Christoffersen has come a long way in four years as a Duck, but for The Big Guy there is always more room to grow. Not physically, of course, because he is already 7-foot-2 and 300 pounds.

"I'm always a pessimist," Christoffersen said, explaining the low grade he gave himself. "I know that I can always become better, and there are still a lot of things about the game that I need to learn."

Despite his pessimism, Christoffersen has improved this season.

He bumped his average to 8.8 points per game and is shooting



Adam Amato Emerald

While reluctant to grade Oregon's play, senior guard Anthony Lever said the team's defense has improved, "With coach Litz (the defensive specialist), anytime we have any slippage on the defensive end, he's there to correct us."

53 percent from the floor.

Christoffersen's supporting cast has improved to the point where the load is taken off The Big Guy's huge shoulders.

Robert Johnson has been a welcome addition at forward, and Brian Helquist has been a super substitute off the bench.

Just a couple examples of improvement on a team that is rightfully leading the Pac-10 halfway through the season. They can only hope the final report card is as good.

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Wrestling

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wrestled some of the best guys in the country at his weight class when Overstake has been out. He goes out there and every single time, regardless of the caliber of his opponent, he fights and gets after it. Every team needs to have some people like that in it, and Michael has done a real good job for us."

Missing weigh-in

On the way to Friday's weigh-ins, freshman Elias Soto's truck broke down, Kearney said.

Because he missed the weigh-in time, Soto (184 pounds) could not compete in either of the meets, causing a considerable shake-up to Kearney's lineup.

To fill Soto's slot, freshman Shane Webster was bumped up one class from his typical 174 pounds. Harris, who usually wrestles in the 165-pound slot, competed at 174 where Webster was scheduled. Finally, Overstake and Badicke each competed at 165 against Pacific and Central Washington, respectively.

Harris continues to shine

Heading into the Pac-10 portion of the season, the senior from Las Vegas is now 20-2 overall and 7-1 in duals. Harris seems to be getting stronger as the season progresses, and now has two pins.

"Eugene wrestled extremely well and has continued to put big points up on the board and doing the things he is capable of doing," Kearney said after the last meets.

As of the last polls to come out, Harris was ranked No. 6 in the nation. Shaun Williams (125 pounds) is No. 13 in his class and heavyweight Eric Webb is now at No. 16.

E-mail sports reporter Chris Cabot at chriscabot@dailyemerald.com.

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