

## SPORTS

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**Best Bet**  
NBA: San Antonio at Toronto  
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# Bellotti signs biggest recruit in Oregon history



BELLOTTI

■ Haloti Ngata, the top defensive player in the country, joins 20 other recruits who signed with the Ducks

**By Adam Jude**  
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Ducks were able to get their revenge on Nebraska after all.

Among the five junior college transfers and 16 high school seniors to sign with the Ducks on Tuesday was defensive tackle Haloti Ngata, whom Ore-

gon head coach Bellotti said is "the biggest signing in the history of Oregon football."

In December, Ngata made a verbal agreement with Nebraska — the team that was chosen over Oregon to play Miami in the national championship game in January — but changed his mind twice before choosing Oregon. Ngata, a Salt Lake City native who also made a verbal commitment to Brigham Young, is ranked by many publications as the nation's best defensive recruit.

"I had written him down on my list two weeks ago and most of my coaches thought I was crazy," Bellotti said. "I felt a kinship with him and his parents, and I felt very good about our relationship. I think we were honest with him and his family."

Bellotti said the 6-foot-4, 324-pound Ngata will battle for a starting spot as a true freshman.

"He possesses the physical tools to play right now," Bellotti said. "He's a great young man, and I sense a maturity

and a leadership that will put him in position to play very early on in his career."

After his freshman year, Bellotti said that Ngata is considering taking a two-year Mormon mission, and Bellotti said he is "very comfortable with that."

However, after two years, an athlete becomes a "free agent and can go anywhere," Bellotti said.

Ngata will be joined on the defensive line by three other signees next year, including Chris Solomon, a transfer

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## Enjoying Eugene

■ Senior wrestler Eugene Harris is putting together a spectacular season, but his focus is on each moment and each match

**By Chris Cabot**  
Oregon Daily Emerald

One of the best individual seasons in the history of Oregon wrestling is unfolding this year, but Eugene Harris will be the last person to tell you about it.

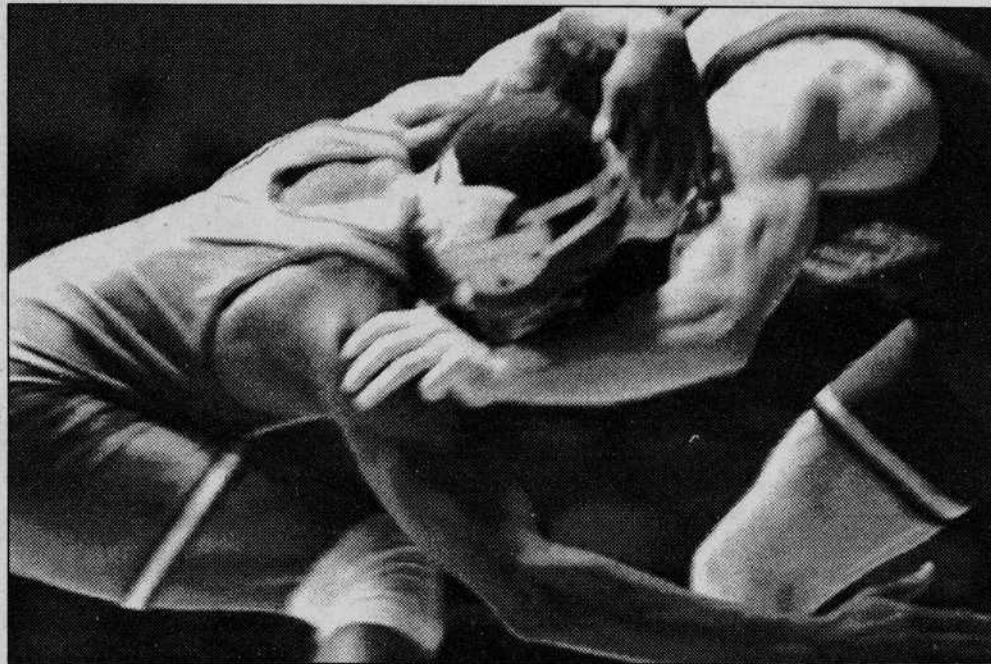
In his senior campaign for the Ducks, Harris has amassed 22 wins and just two losses, with five dual meets remaining on the schedule. This winning percentage of .916 places Harris sixth on the all-time Oregon list. The Las Vegas native is ranked No. 5 in the country at the 165-pound weight class.

Harris tries to avoid the subject of winning a national championship or achieving one of the best winning percentages in school history.

"I don't really want to think about that," he said. "I just try to stay focused on each match."

Oregon head coach Chuck Kearney and the rest of his coaching staff have tried to instill in Harris the concept of focusing on the present.

"I guess very few times in life the advice is to live in the moment and take care of right now, but that's what we want him to do," Kearney said. "When his career is done, and he's looking back on it all, he can say 'I did have a great record. I did have a great run at Oregon.' I hope



Adam Amato Emerald

Senior Eugene Harris (left) has been a leader for the Duck wrestling team this year. His 22-2 record is one of the best in Oregon history, and he is currently ranked No. 5 in the country at the 165-pound weight class.

that he can sit there with a national championship trophy in his lap, but right now we want him to live in the moment and focus on the process and the journey as opposed to the rewards or the destination."

Not an outwardly vocal leader, Harris heads the wrestling squad by the example he sets in all aspects of the game. Whenever a member

of the team is struggling or down, Harris is the first one to come to his aid, Kearney said.

"When you have a guy that sincerely cares about each and every member of the program, that makes him a very powerful force in our room," Kearney said. "He's not the kind of guy who will jump up front and lead a charge; he

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## Desperate for win, Ducks host Stanford

■ Trying to stay alive for the NCAA Tournament, Oregon meets No. 2 Stanford, which has lost three straight games at McArthur Court

**By Hank Hager**  
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Stanford women have just about everything.

The No. 2 Cardinal are 22-1 overall, and 12-0 in Pacific-10 Conference play. The team has won its last 14 games since a 68-62 loss to then-No. 2 Tennessee on Dec. 16.

And the team's top two players — Lindsey Yamasaki and Nicole Powell — are in the top 10 in the conference in scoring.

Just about the only thing Stanford doesn't have is a win at McArthur Court since 1998.

"I think we play better as an underdog," Oregon senior Jamie Craighead said. "They come in and they haven't won here in three years, so we kind of have our own streak going. We're just

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## UO men prepared to finally win at Stanford

■ The Ducks haven't beat the Cardinal on the road in 16 years, but the streak could end tonight

**By Peter Hockaday**  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Maples Pavilion is a tough place to play for any team.

But for the No. 13 Oregon men's basketball team, which hasn't won there since 1986, it's a death trap. The Ducks have come close to beating the Cardinal at Maples in those 16 years, losing by two points in 1990 and five points in 1993, but mostly Oregon has been blown out of Palo Alto like a row boat in a hurricane.

"We have not had much success down there, so it's a big game for us to hopefully get over that hurdle with our program," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said.

Oregon and Stanford will square off at 7 p.m. tonight. The game will not be televised because of Fox Sports Net national games, but fans can listen to the game locally on radio station KUGN.

Maples is small, old, and loud, and the students sit courtside. Remind you of a certain Eugene basketball arena?

"It's a real tough place to play," Oregon guard Luke Ridnour said of Maples. "The fans are on you. The student section is right there on the floor, like here, and they know everything about you. So they're going to be on us, but we're looking forward to it."

Maples Pavilion, as well as California's Haas Pavilion on Saturday, will be the venues of Oregon's redemption if they can prove to national doubters that they can win on the road. The Ducks are a perfect 13-0 at home, but have lost close games and hold a 4-5 overall record away from McArthur Court.

But the Ducks could be ready to break that pattern. Coming off two huge wins against conference contenders UCLA and USC, the Ducks

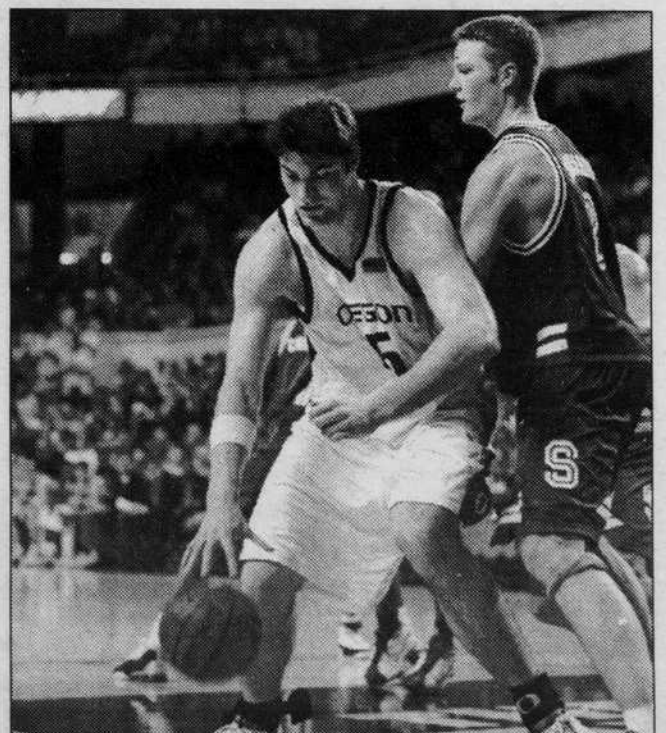
have added confidence from a win earlier this season over the Cardinal, albeit in Eugene.

"It certainly gives you a comfort zone of knowing you can play with them," Kent said of Oregon's 87-79 win over Stanford on Jan. 12. "In the past, they have just been so dominant of a team with our program."

The game is big for Stanford as well, which is mired in the middle of the conference race and has struggled to be consistent all season. The Cardinal are ranked at No. 20, but have the worst overall record (13-6) of any of the six Pacific-10 Conference teams that are likely headed for the tournament.

Everyone knows about Stanford star Casey Jacobsen, an All-American last year who recently dropped 49 points on the unsuspecting Arizona State Sun Devils. But the Cardinal's most important player could be Curtis Borchardt, the 7-foot center who averages 16 points and 11 rebounds per game. The versatile Borchardt

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Adam Amato Emerald

Big men Chris Christoffersen (left) and Curtis Borchardt will battle in Palo Alto tonight. Borchardt had 29 points in Eugene in January.

