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# Beavers' backs against wall

■ Oregon State praises the play of the Pac-10's leading Ducks

By Jeff Smith  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Not much went right for the Oregon State men on Saturday — not in Eugene or in Seattle.

The Beavers were run out of McArthur Court in a 91-62 loss to No. 17 Oregon that puts them on the brink of having a non-winning record for the 12th straight season.

Oregon State (10-14, 3-11) also ended the night clinging to eighth place after Washington upset California, 75-60, to move within a half-game of the Beavers.

Only the top eight teams in the Pacific-10 Conference standings advance on to the Pac-10 Tournament so there's no time to waste for the Beavers, especially with the Huskies visiting Gill Coliseum on Thursday.

"We'll bounce back," Oregon State head coach Ritchie McKay said. "I'm hoping to get some guys back to 100 percent health."

One of those players not at full strength is forward Brian Jackson, who scored eight points in 17 minutes Saturday despite playing with an abdominal strain. Oregon State needs Jackson healthy to take some of the pressure off Philip Ricci's shoulders.

Ricci led the Beavers with 20 points, while Floyd North III scored 11.

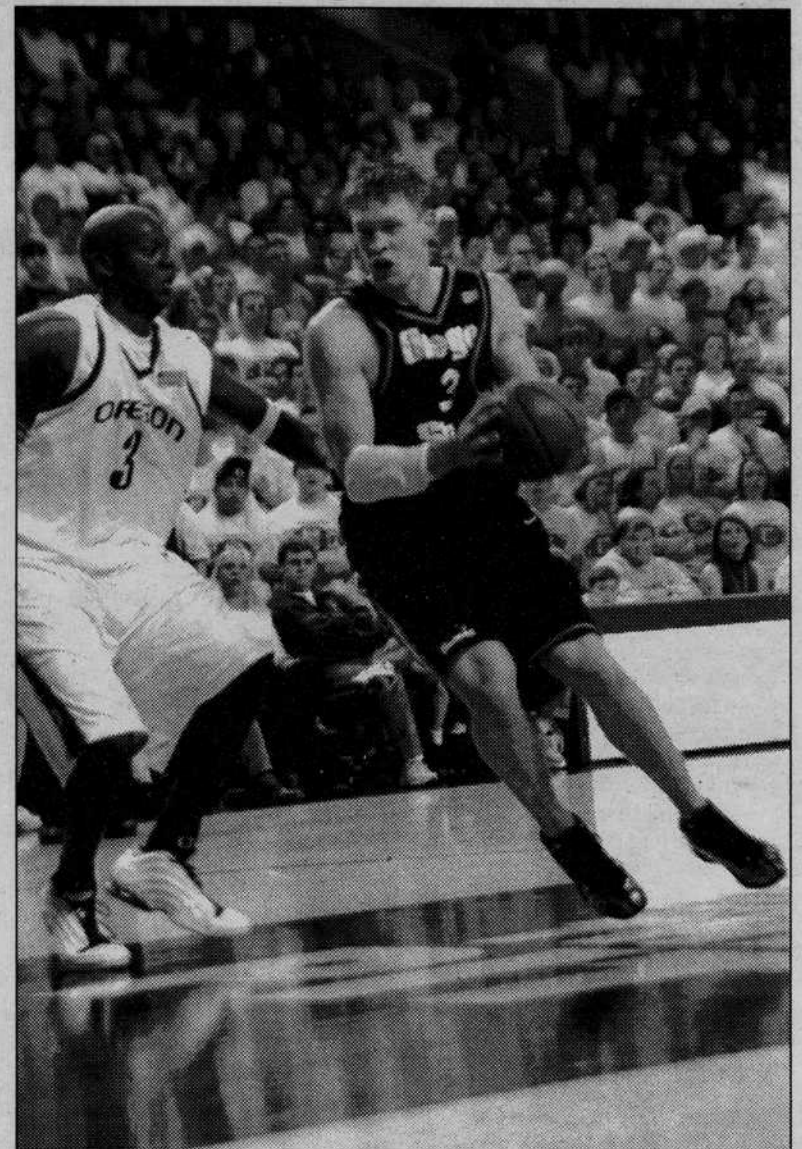
The play of those two helped bring Oregon State to within 28-25 with 6:10 to play in the first half, but then the Ducks connected on three three-pointers in a 17-2 run that the Beavers could never recover from.

"They hit some big shots to keep their crowd in it," Ricci said. "They have a great home-court advantage."

"When they get that crowd going, it's tough," McKay said. "It's a challenging environment. You have to be really tough mentally to overcome that."

More so than the atmosphere at Mac Court, though, McKay was simply impressed with the play of the Ducks. The second-year Beaver coach has now lost all four games against Oregon, but knows that this year's version has the ability to become something special.

"They're as good a team as I've seen in my seven years coaching," McKay said. "Oregon has a good



Thomas Patterson Emerald

Oregon State will need a healthy Brian Jackson if it is going to secure a berth in the Pac-10 Tournament. Jackson is currently playing with an abdominal strain.

chance to advance deep into the NCAA Tournament."

The Beavers played the Ducks much tougher during a 63-51 loss in Corvallis on Jan. 19 where the style of play was slowed down with much of the offense taking place in the halfcourt.

McKay said he can see the difference in Oregon from its road play to its fast-paced tone at home and believes that will be the difference for the Ducks in the Big Dance.

"It's a great team and if they play at their level of consistency on a neutral floor they'll be a great representative of this conference in the NCAA Tournament," McKay said.

An invitation to March Madness

is but a dream to the Beavers, but for that dream to even still be thought of, they must hold off the Washington schools in the standings.

Should they do that, they'd finish eighth and qualify for the Pac-10 Tournament, which grants an automatic berth into the NCAAs to the team that wins it.

"Oregon State is a good basketball team," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "When the game is close, they can really take it to you with their style of play."

But Saturday's contest wasn't close, ending a day that didn't treat the Beavers kindly.

E-mail assistant sports editor Jeff Smith at [jeffsmith@dailyemerald.com](mailto:jeffsmith@dailyemerald.com).

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