

No fighting seen in this war

■ The men's basketball Civil War has been peaceful over the past few seasons

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

This is the Civil War, but "war" might as well be taken out of the equation.

During the last seven years, the Oregon in-state men's basketball rivalry has been more "civil" than "war."

Since the 1994-95 season, the Ducks have taken 17 of 18 games from the Beavers. On Saturday night, Oregon posted an easy 91-62 victory at McArthur Court, ensuring a season sweep of the series unless the two teams meet again in the season-ending Pacific-10 Conference Tournament.

The 29-point spread was the Ducks' largest margin of victory over Oregon State since a 30-21 win in 1929. "Oregon is as good a team as I have seen as a head coach," Oregon State coach Ritchie McKay said after Saturday's contest.

This is the language of a Civil War that is perhaps currently the most lopsided of any of the multiple rivalry games played between Oregon and Oregon State; the coaches and players are cordial, the games "fun"

(according to Oregon State's Philip Ricci) and hard-fought, but hardly close on the scoreboard.

"It's a rivalry, but it's not a bitter rivalry at all," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "It's one that maybe the fans put more into it than we do, but they're still important games for us to play, important games for us to win."

The basketball Civil War is a far cry from the football version, which has seen four bitter battles in the past four years. It is different from the women's basketball version, which had been lopsided in the Ducks' favor until this season, when Oregon State won in Eugene and Oregon needed overtime to win at Gill Coliseum on Saturday.

Kent's ninth win as a coach in the series may have finally erased the demons from his one loss, when Oregon's Terik Brown missed a potential game-tying three-pointer in the dying seconds of a 48-45 loss in Corvallis in 1999. Kent has won seven Civil Wars by an average of 16 points since then.

Continuing the peacefulness of the rivalry, Kent tried to analyze why Oregon State has struggled in recent years.

Coach McKay "is struggling now because he's still a new coach in one of the toughest conferences in the

country," Kent said. "It takes time to put the pieces together, to get that continuity into your program."

McKay himself also believes that the Beavers will turn things around.

"I'm a believer that in order to win a lot, you've got to win a little bit," McKay said.

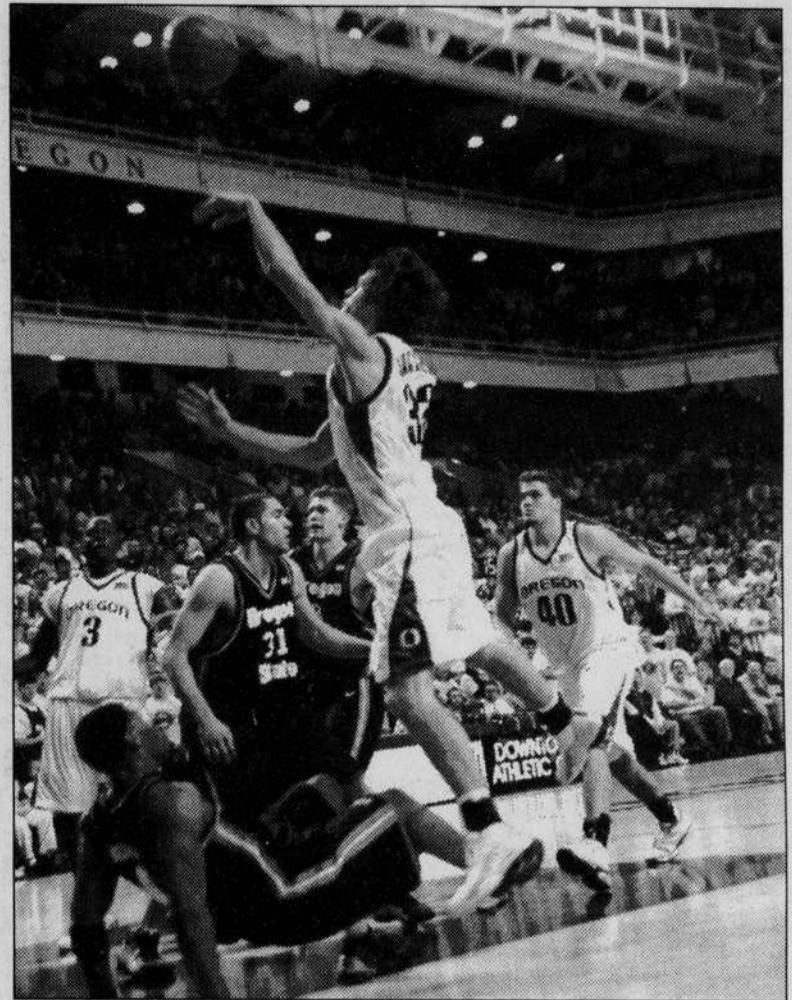
For Oregon State, winning a little bit means getting to the Pac-10 Tournament this season. The Beavers are tentatively holding onto the conference's eighth and final tournament berth, with Washington only a half-game behind. Oregon State will face Washington on Saturday in Corvallis.

The Ducks, meanwhile, are at the opposite end of the spectrum, hoping that home wins over the Washington schools can propel them into sole possession of first place in the conference, which they now share with Stanford and Southern California.

If the two Oregon schools can hang on to their positions over the season's final weeks, it could mean a rematch in the conference tournament in Los Angeles.

It would just be another installment of the men's basketball "Civil Peace."

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Thomas Patterson Emerald

Oregon's Luke Jackson (33) scored 19 points Saturday in a 29-point blowout Civil War victory that continued the trend of the Ducks beating up on the Beavers.

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Oregon State had closed to within 28-25 with 6:10 to play in the half after the Ducks had taken an 18-4 lead to open the game.

"They just wanted it more," said OSU forward Philip Ricci, who led the Beavers with 20 points. "They really dominate at home."

Oregon's victory improved its record to 14-0 at Mac Court, which extended its best home record since the Ducks went 16-0 in 1937-38.

In the second half, even with the game reaching blowout status, the Ducks continued to give the sold out crowd of 9,087 something to cheer about.

The Beavers began the half by closing the margin to 15, but that would be the closest they would get the rest of the way.

Oregon proceeded to take leads of 60-32, 73-39 and reached 82-45 after an Anthony Lever three-pointer at the 6:35 mark, which represented the largest lead of the game.

Oregon also outrebounded the Beavers, 36-28, and committed only nine turnovers to OSU's 17.

"There was some concern about our team bouncing back from two tough losses last week, but we played at a very high intensity level tonight," Kent said.

The Ducks knew that this three-game homestand was critical in their quest to win the Pac-10 title. They

were given time to rest earlier in the week after losing two heartbreaking overtime games in the Bay Area.

So after a refreshed Oregon team took care of the Beavers, it now turns its attention to the cellar-dwelling Washington schools this week in the season's final games at the Pit.

Should the Ducks win those, they'd be no worse than tied for first heading into a two-game road trip to Los Angeles in the final weekend of the regular season.


"We're in control of our destiny," Ridnour said. "We just need to keep winning, especially at home. Our No. 1 goal is to win the Pac-10, and we believe we can do it."

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