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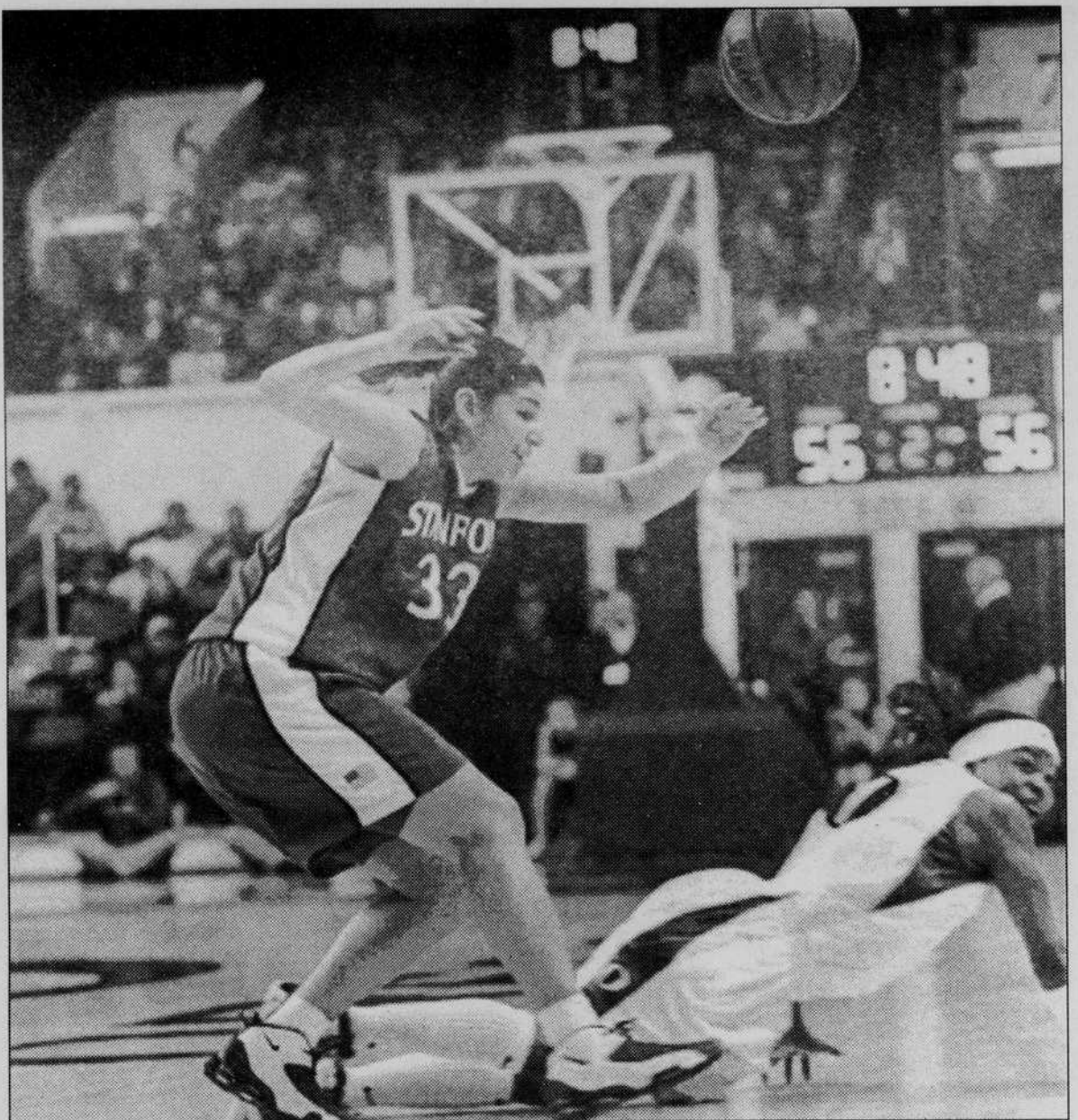
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Adam Amato Emerald

Stanford guard Sebnem Kimyacioglu knocks Oregon's Edniesha Curry to the floor while hustling for a loose ball at McArthur Court. The Ducks led by as much as six points in the second half on Feb. 7, but the Cardinal fought back to win 77-72, their closest victory of the year.

Stanford pushes way to top, seeks No. 1 seed in NCAAs

■ After going 18-0 in the regular season, the Stanford Cardinal are the undisputed favorites to win Pac-10 Tournament

By Adam Jude
 Oregon Daily Emerald

As Oregon guard Shaquala Williams put it, "Nobody's afraid of Stanford."

Then again, nobody really wants to play Stanford — at least not in the early rounds.

As the first-ever Pacific-10 Conference women's basketball tournament begins today, Stanford is the outright favorite to win it all — and rightly so.

The Cardinal (28-1 overall, 18-0 Pac-10), ranked No. 2 in the country, have won their conference games by an average margin of more than 20 points. Stanford's only loss of the season came to then-No. 2 Tennessee.

Even more impressive, Stanford is the only team, men's or women's, to ever finish Pac-10 play without a blemish — and the Cardinal have done it four times since women's hoops became a Pac-10 sponsored sport in 1986.

"We're just going to come out and keep on doing what we've been doing," said head coach Tara VanDerveer, who led Stanford to NCAA titles in 1990 and 1992 and has been to the Final Four five times.

"We know that it's one-and-done, so I think you'll see our team playing better."

One-and-done — if that were the case in the regular season, Stanford wouldn't have anybody to play this weekend. But all 10 teams are looking at the Pac-10 Tournament as a



Adam Amato Emerald

Stanford guard Lindsey Yamasaki shoots over Oregon's Cathrine Kraayeveld. Yamasaki, an Oregon City, native who led the Cardinal in scoring, will not play this weekend.

new season and a new opportunity to upset the almighty Stanford.

Any team considering an upset of Stanford will have to figure out how to stop sophomore sensation Nicole Powell, the league's top player. A 6-foot-2 point guard who can play every position, she gives many teams matchup problems. Against Oregon on Jan. 13, Powell set a school record with 21 rebounds.

"She is a future Olympian and a future WNBA All-Star," VanDerveer told the San Francisco Chronicle. "I don't see anything

getting in her way."

One less obstacle that will get in Stanford's opponents' way is senior Lindsey Yamasaki, the Cardinal's leading scorer who will miss the conference tournament because of appendicitis; however, Stanford's deep bench has been its key this season, which includes three-point threat Lauren St. Clair and 6-foot-7 backup center Cori Enghusen — both of whom would likely be starters on any other team.

With the season essentially Turn to Stanford, page 7B