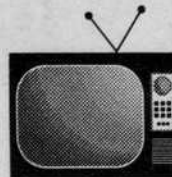


SPORTS

Sports Editor:
Adam Jude
adamjude@dailyemerald.com
Assistant Sports Editor:
Jeff Smith
jeffsmith@dailyemerald.com

Best Bet
Women's hoops:
Oregon vs. WSU
6:30 p.m., KEZI



Friday, March 1, 2002

'Incredible' win gives UO Pac-10 title

■ Oregon claims at least a share of the Pac-10 championship with a last-second win over USC

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

He wanted it. He got it. And he delivered. Senior Freddie Jones hit the biggest shot of his career Thursday night to give the Ducks their first conference championship in 57 years.

Jones' running, one-handed floater in the lane with one second left clinched No. 13 Oregon's 67-65 victory at No. 18 USC and at least a share of the Pacific-10 Conference title.

Jones' heroics also guaranteed the Ducks (21-7, 13-4) a No. 1 seed in the March 7-9 Pac-10 Tournament.

"During the timeout I told the team I wanted to make the play," Jones told KUGN radio. "When I got out there on the court, I looked at coach and he gave me the 'OK' to go and get it."

The reason Oregon was in the nail-biting situation to begin with was because of USC senior David Bluthenthal's clutch, long-range three-pointer that erased the Ducks' lead. Bluthenthal, who was just 1-of-11 from the field and 0-for-5 on threes before the shot, nailed a trey from the top of the key to even the score at 65 with 31 seconds left.

Then came the series of three timeouts to set up the game's final play. Oregon had the ball with 24.3 ticks left. Luke Jackson inbounded it to Luke Ridnour who passed it back to Jackson. Jackson then threw it over to James Davis, who put it back in the hands of Ridnour with 10 seconds left.

It was at this time that Jones displayed his senior leadership.

"Freddie wanted that ball," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "He looked at Rid and said, 'Give it to me.'"

Ridnour did just that and the game was in Jones' hands with five seconds remaining. Jones penetrated past Bluthenthal and found some room in the middle of the lane for a clean look at the basket.

"It seemed like they just opened a big wide lane for me to get to the paint, and once I got in the paint, I just elevated and shot a

little floater that I've been working on for I don't know how long," Jones said. "And finally it worked."

The ball sailed in and the Oregon bench went wild, but the victory wasn't official just yet. USC's Brandon Granville heaved a 60-foot shot at the buzzer that nearly sent the Trojans a shocking victory.

"Do you realize Granville's three almost went in?" Kent said. "I think I would have still been lying out there on that floor. Somebody would have had to give me mouth-to-mouth because I would have just been gone."

Instead, Granville's desperation heave bounced off the front of the rim and the Ducks all mobbed one another as the 11,505 at the L.A. Sports Arena made their way to the exits.

There the Ducks were, finally celebrating a close win on the road. Their last road trip consisted of two heartbreaking overtime defeats in the Bay Area that pushed their record in games-played away from McArthur Court to 4-7.

"This win is because of what happened in the Bay Area," Kent said. "We knew this was going to be the game. Incredible. Just incredible."

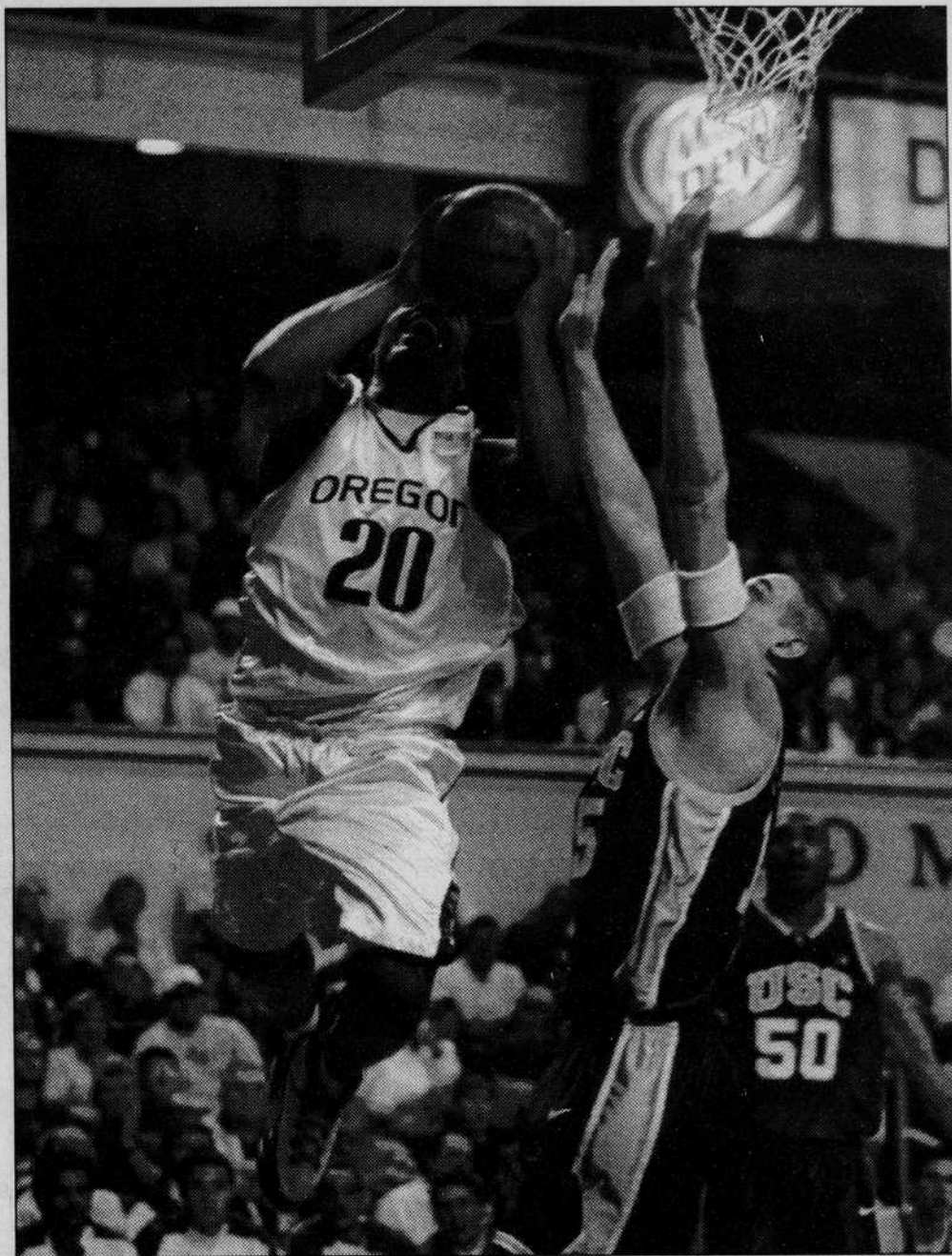
Ridnour led the scoring for the Ducks with 17, including five three-pointers, and Jackson contributed 12. Jones wasn't in his offensive flow for most of the game, missing all six three-point attempts, but still managed to record a double-double with 15 points and 10 rebounds.

As a team, Oregon shot just 42.3 percent from the field, committed 21 turnovers and got outrebounded 44-39. The Trojans appeared to be in control of the game when they took a 53-42 lead on an Erick Craven three-pointer at the 11:04 mark. But then USC's Sam Clancy, who led all scorers with 25, picked up his fourth foul and the momentum changed.

"We know we're never out of the game," Jones said.

Jackson, who was held scoreless for the first 28 minutes of the game, scored 11

Turn to Men's, page 12A



Adam Amato Emerald

Oregon senior guard Freddie Jones, seen here in a Feb. 2 game against the Trojans, scored the game-winner in the Ducks' 67-65 win Thursday night at USC that clinched Oregon's first Pac-10 championship since 1944-45.

Ducks open Pac-10 with WSU

■ The Pac-10 Tournament starts with the Ducks and Cougars, a rematch from Oregon's win last week

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

Brittney Hawks stands 6-foot-2, averages 12.9 points per game, and led the Pacific-10 Conference in double-doubles with 12.

In other words, the senior center is probably Washington State's only chance to complete an upset against the seventh-seeded Ducks tonight at McArthur Court.

"I'm an optimistic person and I think it's good that we have tournaments like these," Hawks said in reference to the Pac-10 Tournament, which begins at 6:30 tonight with the Ducks and Cougars at McArthur Court. "I think our team has totally improved in every game we've been playing in."

The first team in Pac-10 women's basketball history to finish without a win, the Cougars (2-26 overall) have not fared well against Oregon in their two games this season. The Ducks dominated at Mac Court, 76-47, in December, then did it again, 88-47, last week in Pullman, Wash.

However, Washington State knows that Oregon cannot overlook them. In a short tournament, any team can win.

"I don't believe Oregon is looking past us," Washington State guard Whitney Martindale said. "I think we've earned a

Turn to Women's, page 12A

Pac-10 Women's Hoops

Player of the Year:
Nicole Powell, Stanford

Freshman of the Year:
Dee-Dee Wheeler, Arizona

Coach of the Year:
Tara VanDerveer, Stanford

All-Pac-10 Team:
Ebony Hoffman, USC
Aisha Hollans, USC
Amanda Levens, ASU
Guliana Mendiola, UW
Loree Payne, UW
Elizabeth Pickey, Arizona
Nicole Powell, Stanford
Felicia Ragland, OSU
Shaquala Williams, Oregon
Lindsey Yamasaki, Stanford
All-Freshmen Team:
Kristen O'Neill, UW
Kelley Suminski, Stanford
T'Nae Thiel, Stanford
Rachel Woodward, USC
Dee-Dee Wheeler, Arizona

No. 23 Oregon wrestlers travel to Corvallis for Pac-10 Tournament

■ The Oregon wrestling team has high hopes of going to the NCAA Tournament with a strong effort this weekend

By Chris Cabot
Oregon Daily Emerald

The women's basketball team isn't the only Oregon team to be competing in a Pacific-10 Conference Tournament this weekend.

Wrestling's version of the Pac-10 championships begins Saturday at the Gill Coliseum in Corvallis at 11 a.m.

Oregon head coach Chuck Kearney and his team, which is 9-7 overall and 5-4 in the Pac-10 this year, are approaching the weekend with confidence and hope to continue on to the NCAA Tournament in Albany, N.Y.

"We look at the conference tournament as an extension of the national tournament," Kearney said. "If you don't do well at the conference, you don't go to the nationals. The better you do (in the conference tournament), you are on a positive roll and have an opportunity to get seeded at nationals."

The Ducks, who are ranked No. 23 in the country, won four of their last five dual meets, including an 18-14 win over Oregon State on Feb. 13. Other Pac-10 teams that hold a top-25 slot are the No. 25 Beavers and the No. 13 Arizona State Sun Devils.

The fifth and final Pac-10 poll appeared on Feb. 5 with Arizona State holding the top spot as it did throughout the season. Oregon State was No. 2 followed by No. 3 Boise State, No. 4 Oregon, No. 5 Cal Poly, No. 6 UC Davis, No. 7 Stanford, No. 8 Cal State Bakersfield, No. 9 Portland State and No. 10 Cal State Fullerton.

The Sun Devils finished the regular season with a 6-0 record against Pac-10 opponents, so they may be difficult to beat. Oregon was the last team to lose to the tournament favorite, a 30-11 decision on Feb. 3. Since then, Arizona State has lost three meets to No. 5 Iowa State, No. 24 Fresno State (whom Oregon defeated earlier this season) and No. 6 Oklahoma. Kearney is aware of the unpredictability of tournaments.

Turn to Wrestling, page 10A