

SPORTS

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Best Bet
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Oregon enters top-10 for first time in 27 years

■ The Ducks jump into the top 10 but will be without their back-up center for an unknown length of time

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

More historic numbers keep popping up in regards to the banner season the Oregon men's basketball team is having.

The Ducks captured their first league championship since 1944-45 and first outright title since 1939.

They beat UCLA at Pauley Pavilion for the first time since 1984.

They finished the Pacific-10 Conference schedule with a 14-4 record, which was their best league mark since that '39 championship squad went 14-2 in the Pacific Coast Conference.

And now they can add an Associated Press top-10 ranking to the list. Oregon vaulted into the No. 9 spot in Monday's AP writer's poll for the first time since being ranked eighth on Feb. 4, 1975.

The 1974-75 Ducks reached the top 10 after starting out 15-2, but then lost six straight to fall out. Both Oregon head coach Ernie Kent and assistant coach Greg Graham were players on that Oregon team and realize the magnitude of bringing the Ducks back to the elite level and winning the Pac-10 title.

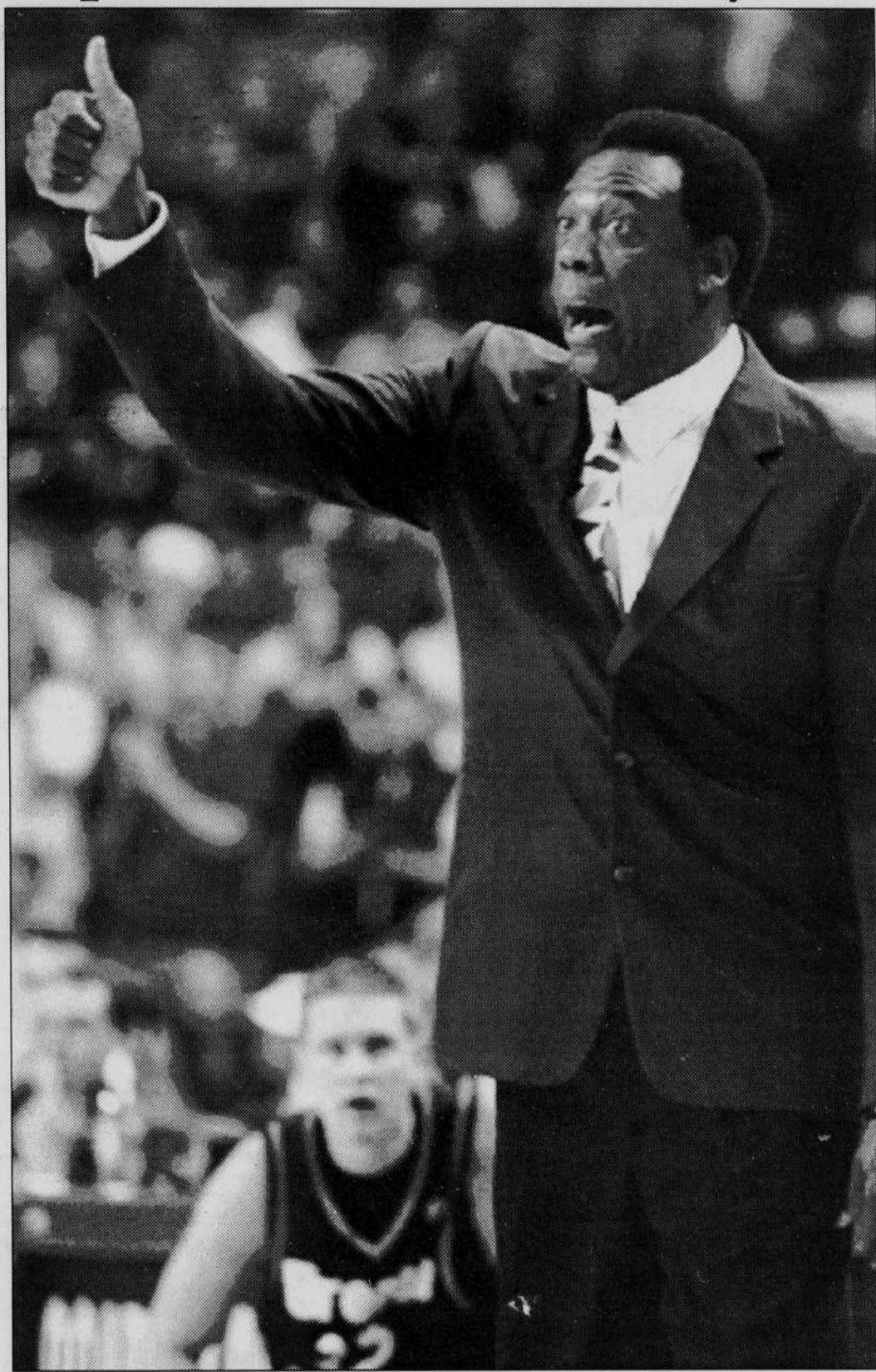
"Ernie and I have been waiting for this for about 30 years," Graham said. "We've been here a long time. It's been neat to have a bunch of ex-players calling us and giving us encouragement and telling how much it means to them. "So it's double special for us."

The news wasn't all good out of the Oregon camp Monday, though. Junior center Brian Helquist will miss this week's Pac-10 Tournament with a strained right knee, and it's questionable whether he will return for the NCAA Tournament.

Helquist suffered the injury in Oregon's win at USC last Thursday, scoring two points in 11 minutes. He sat out Saturday's UCLA game and had his knee checked out Sunday.

Because he didn't tear any ligaments, the Ducks are hopeful of his return — most likely in the Sweet 16 if Oregon were to make it past the first weekend with two wins. But nothing will be known for sure until Helquist goes

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Adam Amato Emerald

Oregon coach Ernie Kent was a player for the Ducks the last time the program cracked its way into the Top-10 back in 1975.

Williams named to All-America team for second time

■ The junior guard averaged 17.7 points per game this season

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

After leading the Oregon women's basketball team to its ninth straight winning season, junior guard Shaquala Williams was named to the Kodak District VIII All-America team Monday.

The 5-foot-6 Portland native ranked second in the Pacific-10 Conference with 17.7 points per game this season and led Oregon (17-13 overall, 10-8 Pac-10) with 4.1 assists a game. Williams is also on pace to set a Pac-10 record for free-throw percentage, currently shooting 91 percent from the charity stripe.

Williams was named the Kodak All-

American for the second time in her career. She joins Nicole Powell and Lindsey Yamasaki of Stanford, Felicia Ragland (Oregon State), Kayte Christensen (UC-Santa Barbara) and Jerkisha Dotsy (St. Mary's) on the West Coast team.

Williams was named Pac-10 Player of the Year in 2000 and Freshman of the Year in 1999. Last year, she sat out the season after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in her knee.

Forty-eight finalists from eight districts were named All-Americans. The Women's Basketball Coaches Association will select 10 players for the All-American team later this month at the Final Four of the NCAA Tournament.

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Adam Amato Emerald

Shaquala Williams (3), hugged here by Edniesha Curry, was selected as a Kodak All-American after averaging almost 18 points per game.

ASU stops Stanford in Pac-10 title game

■ Arizona State upsets top-seeded Stanford to claim Pac-10 crown

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

Turns out someone was able to stop Stanford.

Sparked by another second-half charge from Amanda Levens, Arizona State ended Stanford's 22-game winning streak Monday night to capture the crown at the inaugural Pacific-10 Conference women's basketball tournament at McArthur Court.

With the 70-63 win, the third-seeded Sun Devils (24-8) secured the Pac-10's automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament.

"I fully expected to be playing for the championship," Arizona State head coach Charli Turner Thorne said. "I'm very proud of our kids. This is the toughest group I've ever had."

Stanford, the No. 2 team in the country, who swept all 18 Pac-10 games in the regular season, lost for the first time since Dec. 16, when it lost to Tennessee. The Cardinal (30-2) are still a likely No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament.

"I don't really care — we're going to the NCAA Tournament," said Stanford's Nicole Powell, the Pac-10 Player of the Year and tournament MVP who had 19 points and 10 rebounds against ASU. "We're more determined, and we're going to be ready."

Melody Johnson and Cian Carvalho each added 13 points for the Sun Devils. Stanford's Enjoli Izidor scored a season-high 20 points.

Levens, an all-tournament selection, scored 17 of her 22 points in the second half to lead Arizona State's comeback — much like she did in Sunday's win over Oregon.

Trailing 35-31 at the break, Levens scored 11 points in the first nine minutes of the second half. Her free throw with 12:24 left gave the Sun Devils a 43-42 lead, and they never trailed again.

"I've never beaten Stanford since I've been at ASU, so this is nice," Levens said. "People were saying they weren't sure we were going to get an at-large bid (to the NCAA Tournament), so we wanted to go ahead and decide ourselves."

The game was not decided until the closing minute, when the Sun Devils sank 7-of-10 free throws. Stanford had cut a six-point Arizona State lead down to 55-53 with 5:06 left but could not get any closer.

Much like they did in a 64-58 win over Oregon on Sunday, the Sun Devils' tenacious defense held Stanford to 36 percent shooting in the second half while forcing the Cardinal to commit 21 turnovers (to ASU's 14).

"Arizona State just played a great game — they were very aggressive,"

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