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Oregon Daily Emerald

Women's

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of playing in her last game, Craig-head should be on target.

"I've been here for a long time, and it's nice to know it's not quite over yet," she said. "We've still got some things to say. Hopefully we'll come back with a WNIT championship."

Ice bags, flu medicine

The Ducks will have a full squad for Wednesday's game against the Gaels, even though the team has suffered some bumps and bruises along the way.

The most notable bruises belong to senior Edniesha Curry and sophomore Cathrine Kraayeveld. Curry missed three games in December and January due to a foot injury, but Kraayeveld has failed to sit out so far.

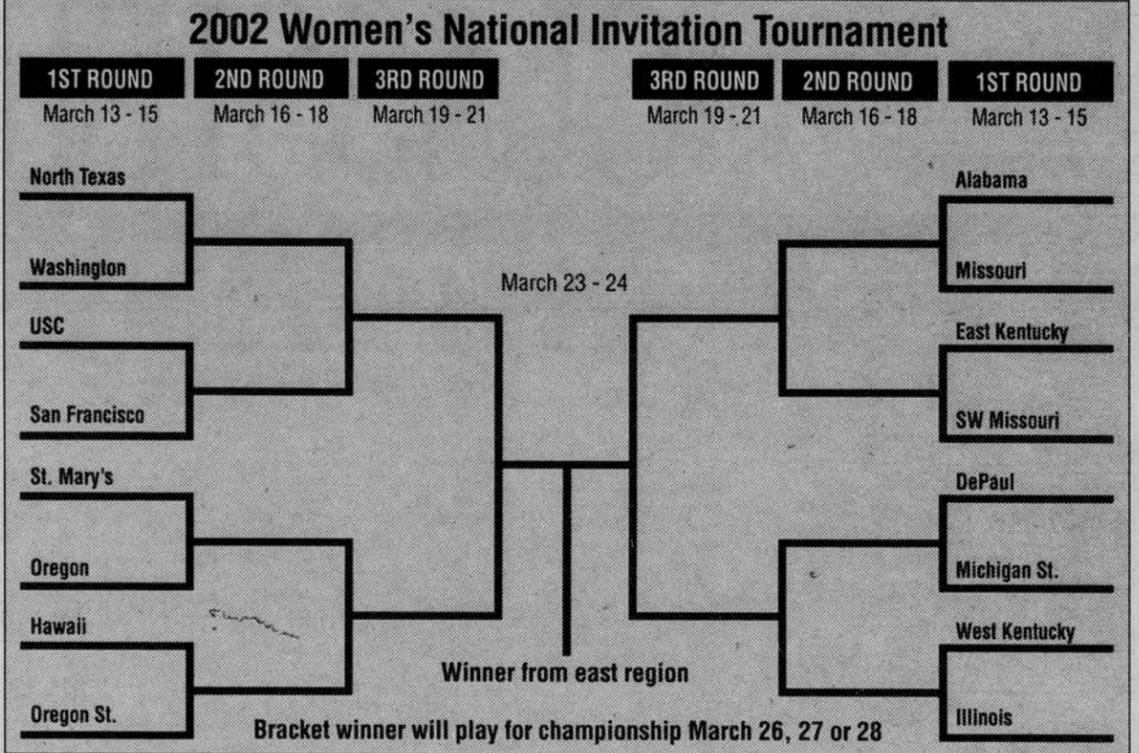
"We've had some people who have had some wear and tear injuries and are a bit sore from the (Pac-10) Tournament," head coach Bev Smith said. "A couple of people were down with the flu last week, kind of normal after a real stressful weekend. But everybody is fine and everybody will be at full strength."

Curry was unable to practice last week because of those bumps and bruises but said she is feeling much better this week.

"The days off really helped me," she said. "I should be feeling fine come Wednesday for the game."

Welcome back

The WNIT berth is not the first in Oregon's 29-year history of women's basketball.



In fact, one could make an argument that the Ducks are one of the more successful programs in the WNIT.

However, it is a tournament that has undergone some changes.

Originally, the tournament only had 16 teams compete, paralleling it with the NCAA Tournament's Sweet 16. The postseason National Women's Invitation Tournament, as it was called then, was held solely in Amarillo, Texas.

In 1979, the Ducks' first season in the postseason, the Bev Smith-

led squad placed third in the competition. Oregon defeated Northern Kentucky, 81-72, in the consolation game.

Ten years later, under the same guidelines, Oregon made it one step further, defeating San Diego State, 67-64, to win its first championship of any kind. The Ducks also defeated Toledo and DePaul en route to the final game.

Since the Ducks last appeared in the postseason tournament 13 years ago, the competition has undergone

a few changes. In 1998, the name changed to the WNIT, it added 16 teams to make an even 32 in the tournament and it now allows schools to host games.

Unlike the men's version, the championship game will also be held on a school site, which raises a possibility. If the Ducks are able to make it that far, wouldn't McArthur Court be a natural choice to host?

E-mail sports reporter Hank Hager at hankhager@dailymerald.com.

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