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#### Smith

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ever Wake Forest in the second round of the NCAA Tournament deserves to be kept. It deserves to be stored in our ever-expanding attic that holds all those memorable Ducks sporting events.

We won't need to go through the contents of the box right away, especially with Friday's Sweet 16 appearance to look forward to.

But at some point, this box should be looked through and cherished.

The contents inside can be enjoyed separately or together as one, as they're all a part of one splendid day of March Madness.

Inside the box, we'll find the grandeur of back-and-forth NCAA Tournament basketball.

We'll find the Demon Deacons scoring 14 straight points to take a 36-25 lead with 7:39 to play in the first half.

We'll find Oregon's Luke Ridnour respond to that run by pulling up and swishing through back-to-back three-pointers.

We'll find future NFL quarterback Joey Harrington constantly hopping up and down from his seat in the stands, throwing his hands up in frustration at the officials, or thunderously applauding a basket by his alma mater.

We'll find Luke Jackson convert a floater in the lane to cut the Ducks' deficit to 48-46 at halftime.

We'll find Wake Forest jumping out to a 56-48 lead after Craig Dawson nailed two treys. And then find the Ducks close to 67-66 after Ridnour amazingly drilled two more back-to-back trifectas.

We'll find the tragic emotion of Dawson, Wake Forest's clutch senior, gripping his left shoulder in agony after separating it and simply walking off the floor with still 7:45 to play and his team leading, 78-73.

We'll find Freddie Jones sky through the lane, rebound a Jackson missed three-pointer and slam it down to tie it up at 78 and send a bolt of energy through the arena.

We'll find the Ducks scoring nine straight points, capped by a Jones steal and fast break layin, to take their first lead since a 25-24 advantage.

We'll find Oregon leading by just two with less than a minute remaining.

We'll find some of the players on both benches leaning forward, then back, then forward, then back, all the while clutching white towels over some faces, not wanting to witness a potential loss.

We'll find retired Navy Admiral John Dick, Oregon's leading scorer in its 1939 NCAA Championship victory, clapping to the school's fight song and yelling his approval from his fourth-row aisle seat.

We'll find Oregon hitting 7-of-8 free throws in the last 33.1 seconds to clinch a berth in the Sweet 16 and ignite a mini-celebration.

We'll find the Demon Deacons coming to grips with the sudden end to their season, best exemplified by those solitary tears streaming down some of their faces.

We'll find a final box score that shows Ridnour, Jackson and Jones scoring 81 of the Ducks' 92 points, leading Wake Forest head coach Skip Prosser to say that "those three guys could have played for the Kings," which, of course, is the NBA team that usually runs up and down the Arco Arena floor.

We'll find the ESPN camera crew follow Oregon into its jubilant locker room — the same camera crew that has been with the Ducks everywhere all week, including the moment Friday where they taped Anthony Lever taking his Business 317 final exam before practice. ("As if I wasn't nervous enough already," Lever said.)

We'll find Oregon head coach Ernie Kent breathe a deep sigh of satisfaction after the game and say, "I want to go home and watch the game. What a great, entertaining game."

tertaining game."
We'll find a jam-packed Oregon locker room with cameras and scribes everywhere. And find Robert Johnson attempting to join the media frenzy by grabbing an ESPN microphone and jokingly stick it in Lever's face.

We'll find Chris Christoffersen raising his arms at the sight of himself on TV raising his arms. And find him then saying with a hearty chuckle, "Who's that big dork?" We'll find Brian Helquist sitting,

We'll find Brian Helquist sitting, staring and smiling at the images of his team beating Wake Forest in highlights on CBS and find him still pinching himself, unable to believe that he is a part of the Big Dance that he has dreamt about since childhood.

We'll find Jones making the statement that, "The Sweet 16 was one of our goals, but we're not at all satisfied. We're trying to make the Final Four."

And we'll find Oregon students in places such as Sacramento, Eugene, Maine and London all brought together through a common bond of Ducks fever that began with the football team's unprecedented fall and has continued with the basketball team's historic winter.

The chapters that have filled this storybook 2001-02 Oregon athletics season have indeed been memorable and may get even more so as the madness of March continues.

But no matter how this story finally ends, we'll always have the collection of images and sounds stashed away in this box to help preserve the drama of one special Saturday in Sacramento.

A day where some windows of opportunity were slammed shut and others were flung wide open.

E-mail assistant sports editor Jeff Smith at jeffsmith@dailvemerald.com.

# Late injury hampers Wake Forest's chances of upsetting No. 2 Oregon

■ Wake Forest came close to an upset but couldn't overcome an injury to a key player late in the game

By Jeff Smith Oregon Daily Emera

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Suddenly, the game changed.

Wake Forest senior Craig Dawson was setting a pick on Oregon senior Freddie Jones when Jones fought his way through it.

There was contact made, and Jones could recognize pain in Dawson's voice.

"I don't know exactly what happened," Jones said. "I just heard him scream that he was hurt. My feelings go out to him."

Dawson, who had 20 points at the time, suffered a dislocated left shoulder and immediately walked off the court. He did not return. The incident occurred with Wake Forest leading Oregon, 78-73, with eight minutes to play.

The moment Dawson left the court, Oregon's Luke Jackson drilled a three that was followed by an emphatic two-hand rebound slam from Jones.

Those two plays sent energy throughout the Arco Arena crowd as the Ducks went on to beat the Demon Deacons, 92-87, Saturday to advance to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament.

"Losing Craig was hard," Wake Forest guard Taron Downey said. "He is a great outside shooter."

Dawson was lights out for much of the game. He connected on 5-of-8 three-pointers and played a big part in Wake Forest's 14-0 first half run that put the Demon Deacons on top, 36-25.

"I don't know exactly what happened. I just heard him scream that he was hurt. My feelings go out to him."

> Freddie Jones Oregon senior

Not having Dawson at the end of the game was obviously a big blow, but the Demon Deacons (21-13) never went away down the stretch. Wake Forest trailed for the first time, 80-78, since a 25-24 first half lead. The Demon Deacons reclaimed the advantage after Jamaal Levy scored two of his 10 points for the slim 83-82 lead, but that would be the last time Wake Forest would have the advantage.

On the next play down, Oregon's Luke Ridnour stopped, popped, shot and scored a threepointer to take a two-point lead.

Wake Forest had a relatively easy look at the basket to tie in the final minute, but Darius Songaila missed a contested layin, and the Demon Deacons were forced to play the free throw game from there on out in a losing effort.

"I give all the credit to Oregon," Wake Forest head coach Skip Prosser said. "We played well, but Oregon played better."

In addition to Dawson, other scoring contributors included Songaila with 19 points, Antwan Scott with 13 and Downey with 11.

But one of the real keys in this game was Wake Forest's inability to contain the Oregon perimeter game. Jackson scored a game-high 29, Ridnour scored a career-high 28 and Jones finished up with 24.

"Those three kids — we couldn't slow them down, much less stop them," Prosser said.

Oregon had a tough time stopping Dawson until the shoulder separation forced the senior to walk off the court for the last time as a Demon Deacon.

"Craig does a lot for that team," Jones said. "I'm sure once he left the floor, it kind of took a little out of them. They did not have him to go to."

Dawson's absence certainly had a pivotal effect on the game and was probably the deciding factor on his team earning a trip to Madison, Wis., for the Sweet 16, or one back home to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, with its season now complete.

"Some games you run out of time," Prosser said. "To a degree in this game, we ran out of players."

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