

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

Best Bet
MLB: San Francisco at Los Angeles
7 p.m., ESPN2



Wednesday, April 3, 2002

Dunking into tomorrow

The Oregon men's basketball players are both reflective of a successful past and contemplative of an uncertain future

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

Where to begin, when summing up this season of seasons for the Oregon men's basketball team?

We could start with the history, and how the Ducks took red ink to the archives, rewrote every book in every Oregon basketball library.

Or we could start with the future, and how it looks with the big holes left by Freddie Jones, Chris Christoffersen and Anthony Lever, among others.

Or we could start with the present.

"I'm disappointed that this team's over with," Luke Ridnour said. "I'm going to miss being around these guys."

The Oregon players, dejected after a loss to top-seeded Kansas in the Elite Eight of the NCAA Tournament, could only think afterwards of what it will feel like to be without their friends and teammates for the next few months. The words of the Ducks emphasized what head coach Ernie Kent said all season, that his team is more a family than a basketball team, much more of a group than a group of individuals.

"Experiencing what we have this season

has been something really special," forward Luke Jackson said. "I'm really going to miss all the guys on the team that are leaving."

And what of those guys leaving? Jones has only solidified his prospects to be a first-round NBA draft pick in recent weeks. On top of the 32 points he scored in the Elite Eight game and the game-winner he hit against Texas in the Sweet 16, Jones was the runner-up in the ESPN Slam Dunk contest at the Final Four on Saturday, led the NABC All-Stars with 15 points in an exhibition win over the Harlem Globetrotters on Friday and was named a Third-Team All-American by the Basketball Times last week.

But despite his exciting future, Jones said we won't forget his past.

"My teammates have made it real fun for me this year," Jones said. "They brought me back to the focus that this is a game and that we can have fun with it. That's the part I'm going to miss the most, just being around them and playing with them on a day-to-day basis."

Christoffersen could go in the NBA Draft because of his skill and his size. For Lever, Ben Lindquist, Mark Michaelis and Kristian Christensen, their basketball future is uncertain.

Kent gushed over his seniors to the point where he couldn't form complete sentences

any more.

"Just the character of Michaelis, Lindquist and Lever," Kent said, when asked what he'll miss the most about his seniors. "And I can't say enough about Freddie and Chris."

While it will be hard to replace the athleticism of Jones, the Ducks will get help in the post when Matt Short and Ian

Turn to Men's, page 12



Photo courtesy Geoff Thurner Oregon Media Services

Ducks defy expectations, now they must do it again next year

The first time your heart sank like a submarine —if you're an Oregon basketball fan —was somewhere around December 10, 2001.

That's when you watched the Ducks lose, on national television, in a nail-biter to Minnesota on the road, their third-straight loss to sub-par competition.

That's when you made your spring break plans, scoured the Internet for some Fiesta Bowl hype and wrote off another basketball season like a tax break.

Little did you know that the 2001-02 campaign would turn into an unexpected present, a gift from a team that will be written off only at the top of the Oregon record books.

Soon after the football smoke cleared, the basketball squad had swept Arizona, beat Stanford for the first time and was riding a wave of media hype to the very pinnacle of the Pacific-10 Conference. Road losses at Washington, California and Stanford tagged Oregon with the "road woes" label, but the



Peter Hockaday
Two minutes for crosschecking

cut down by last-minute wins at USC and UCLA that sealed the Ducks' first outright Pac-10 title since 1939.

Then came the NCAA Tournament run that began with the surprising revelation that the Ducks would be a No. 2 seed in the Big

Ducks would peel off that label later.

At home Oregon continued to dominate with a brand of play that previously existed only in poetry and fiction. Soaring dunks, laser-accurate treys, alley-oops that defied all of Newton's laws.

And when the season came to a close, the Ducks were winning the type of games they lost in the preseason, against teams far better than any piecemeal preseason foe.

The final doubters were

Dance. Oregon would dismantle No. 15 Montana, survive No. 7 Wake Forest and barely survive No. 6 Texas before running into a rebounding wall in top-seeded Kansas.

Now go into the Oregon locker room, deep within the bowels of the Kohl Center in Madison, Wis., after that game.

If at that moment you could step into Guy Pearce's Time Machine and set the clock for Dec. 10, 2001, you would see yourself sitting in front of the television with that worried look in your eye. You have your pen out, ready to write off the Ducks. But tell yourself that in a few months, Oregon will be Pac-10 Champs, Elite Eight participants and the undisputed best team West of Lawrence, Kansas.

You'd be ecstatic. But not the Ducks.

Turn to Hockaday, page 12

Oregon State's Hoffman hurls no-hitter in softball Civil War

By Chris Cabot
Oregon Daily Emerald

In its Pacific-10 Conference home opening game, the Oregon softball team was held hitless by an Oregon State squad ranked No. 14 in the country and a pitcher on top of her game. The Beavers won 1-0.

The no-hitter on Tuesday at Howe Field was the third of sophomore Monica Hoffman's career, tying her for first all-time at Oregon State. Hoffman, who has not allowed an earned run in her last 33 innings of work, has notched all three no-hitters this season.

The Ducks' record dipped to 18-12 overall and 0-3 in the Pac-10, while the Beavers improved their record to 30-9 overall (3-0 Pac-10).

Hoffman's no-hitter actually began on March 16 when the game was postponed due to snow. On that day, after the Beavers' top half of the first inning, Hoffman got Lynsey Haij to pop out to second, walked Amber Hutchison and then had Alyssa Laux with a 2-1 count

when the game was called due to the wintry conditions.

When the game resumed on Tuesday, Hoffman threw one pitch to Laux to record a strikeout and another to Andrea Vidlund that resulted in a groundout to second and the end of the first inning.

Hoffman allowed only one Oregon baserunner through the remainder of the game — catcher Jenn Poore walked in the fifth inning.

"Just a great pitching performance by Hoffman today," Oregon head coach Brent Rincon said. "There is a lot of credit that needs to go to her. She kept

us off-balance today. She was in command the whole time."

Oregon senior Connie McMurren kept the Ducks in the game with an outstanding pitching performance of her own, allowing only five hits and one run in a compete-game effort.

"We jumped on her early and got some big hits, but she settled in," Oregon State head coach Kirk Walker said. "She is a great pitcher. She always throws well against us."

The Beavers' lone run came in the second inning when shortstop Kelly

Turn to Softball, page 12

Silencing the Duck bats, Monica Hoffman threw her third no-hitter in a 1-0 win

