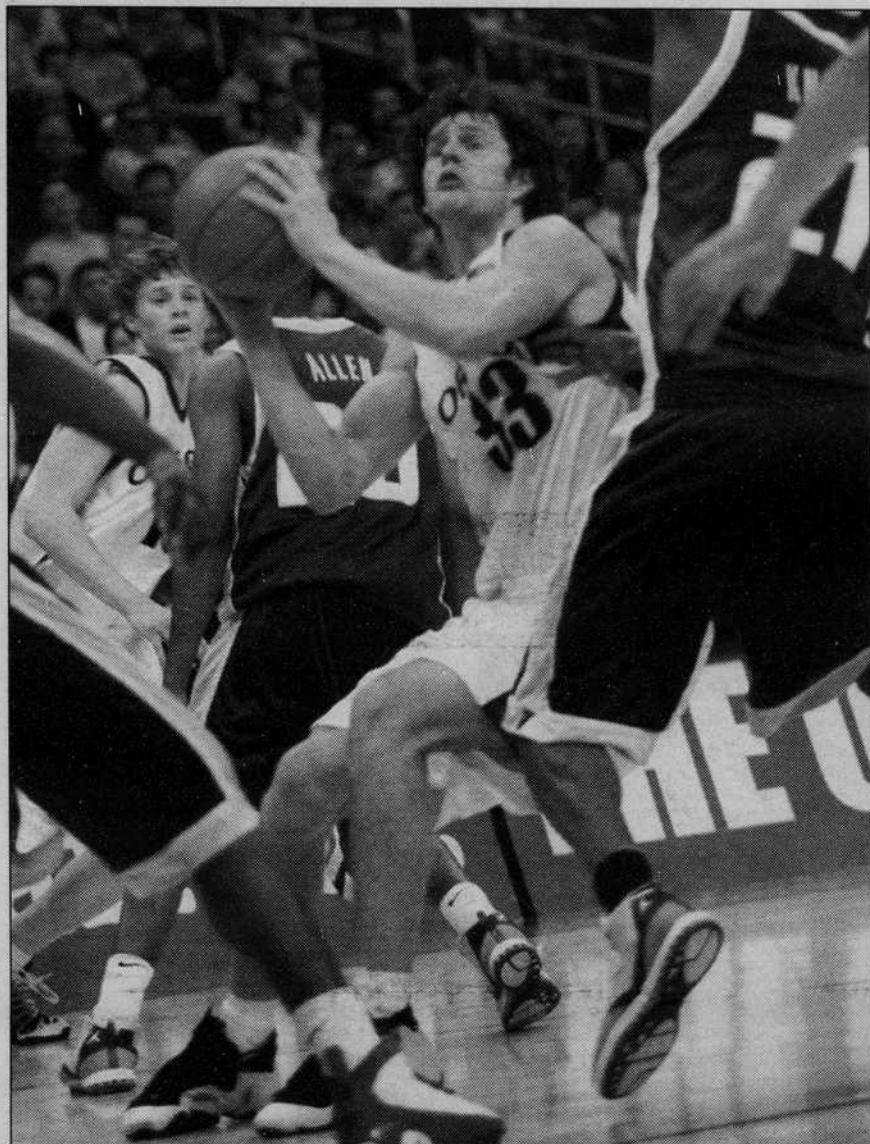


Friday, October 11, 2002

## Basketball bus rumbles toward season



Adam Amato Emerald

After reaching the Elite Eight last year, junior forward Luke Jackson (33) and junior point guard Luke Ridnour (left) will anchor Oregon's up-tempo offense again this season.

The Oregon men's hoops team is looking forward to another season of success

## Men's basketball

Adam Jude  
Senior Sports Reporter

As it traveled throughout the country and across international borders, Oregon's bus of basketball madness made a few pit stops during the summer.

A few folks' tickets expired, so they were booted, gracefully, from the ride. And a few stragglers were picked up along the way.

The bus stopped again Thursday at McArthur Court so the riders could say hello to the media and talk about their excitement and anticipation and expectations for another season.

But it's easy to sense that the bus, after making its way to the Elite Eight last season, wants to just keep rollin'.

"We're going to be a different team, but we're going to be really good," junior forward Luke Jackson said at the men's basketball media day Thursday.

For one, another Kent has surfaced on the Oregon men's basketball team, joining three other freshmen and one junior college transfer as the rookies on the Ducks' roster.

Those five newcomers look to help replace the loss of starters Freddie Jones and Chris Christofersen, who combined for almost 27 points and 11 rebounds per game during the Ducks' Pacific-10 Conference championship season last year.

Head coach Ernie Kent, who coached the U.S. Junior National Team in Venezuela this summer, said the Ducks should continue where they left off in March.

"It was a great season last year, and we don't want to forget that," said Kent, who now has two sons, Marcus and Jordan, on his roster. "The continuity is in place. We're not rebuilding, we're reloading.

"To experience March Madness ... I think that immensely helped our program. Hopefully, we'll get back there."

While there are new names and new jersey numbers to learn, Mac Court did have a sense of familiarity Thursday, namely with the return of

the mop tops.

The Lukes, Ridnour and Jackson, showed off the raggy 'dos that made them famous last season. Well, at least helped make them famous. Their play didn't hurt their popularity.

With the loss of Jones, the team's leading scorer last year, the Lukes will be the focal point of Oregon's up-tempo offense.

"We feel we can pick up right where we left off," said Ridnour, a junior who enters his third season as Oregon's starting point guard. "I just gotta do what I gotta do to help out the team. If that means scoring more, I'll score more."

During the 2001-02 campaign, Ridnour averaged 15.5 points and a team-high five assists per game en route to being named to the all-Pac-10 first team. His name partner, Jackson, an honorable mention all-league selection, averaged 16.7 points, 5.4 rebounds and 3.3 assists.

During the summer, Jackson was a counselor at Michael Jordan's high-school basketball camp in Santa Barbara, Calif. Jackson, a 6-foot-7 forward, said he matched up against the NBA legend in pick-up games, and held his own.

"He's 39 years old, so I'm a bit quicker than him. But he still has a decent shot," Jackson said with a straight face. "It's something I'll never forget."

Jordan called out Jackson at the camp one morning, challenging the Oregon star to hit a round of three-pointers in a row. If Jackson did so, everyone at the camp would get a new pair of shoes.

"I went all the way across and back and was on my second-to-last shot before I missed," Jackson said. "But it was a lot of pressure, especially with Michael talking to you the whole time."

Jackson and the Ducks are hoping that they don't miss much else this season. In fact, coach Kent says they won't. He says his team is more athletic this season, despite the loss of Jones, who was known for his posterizing dunks.

"There's no way we're going to replace the spectacular flair of Freddie Jones," the coach said. "(But) we're more athletic than last year. We understand how to run even better."

Replacing Jones and his athleticism will be up to a

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## Volleyball heads south in search of streak-ender

The Ducks will look to end their Pac-10 futility against UCLA and No. 1 USC this weekend

## Volleyball

Hank Hager  
Sports Reporter

The Oregon volleyball players have said all season that if they play up to their potential, they will have an opportunity to win their first Pacific-10 Conference match of the season.

Two things stand in the Ducks' way: No. 13 UCLA on Friday, followed Saturday by the No. 1 team in the nation, USC.

If history has anything to say about it, the Ducks won't know what hit them.

Oregon has beaten UCLA just once — in 1987 — en route to a 17-11 season for the Ducks. Since then, the Bruins have earned a 28-match winning streak against the Ducks, an impressive streak considering it has spanned 14 seasons and three Oregon head coaches.

Then there's USC. The Trojans have been just as unforgiving to the Ducks in recent years, defeating Oregon in 23-straight contests. Overall, Oregon has handled USC better than they have UCLA, although the Ducks still trail in the series, 29-6.

But with a new season comes a new sense of optimism for ending the 26-match conference losing streak that has plagued the Ducks. Oregon has the Bruins and Trojans well within its sights.

"We're looking to play hard and bring back the fire that this team controls," senior Lindsay Closs said.

At the core of Oregon's resurgence in energy and vigor stands the team's freshmen — Kelly Russell, Jodi Bell, Dariam Acevedo and Jaclyn Jones. The group has provided an offensive spark to a team that lacked the essentials to be successful in the past.

"They're phenomenal," head coach Carl Ferreira said. "Part

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## Ducks dive into Pac-10 play

Oregon begins conference play this weekend against Washington and Washington State

## Soccer

Jesse Thomas  
Sports Reporter

The Oregon women's soccer team will get the chance to start over this weekend.

A chance to forget the past and wipe the slate clean.

The Ducks get that chance as conference play begins against Washington, today at 7 p.m., and Washington State, Sunday at 1 p.m. Both games will be home at Papé Field.

Oregon is off to its worst start ever at 1-7-1 and is currently last in the Pac-10.

The Ducks have not won since a tournament win on Sept. 22 against Wisconsin-Green Bay in Corvallis. Oregon has lost its last three games and may be due for a win, but Washington won't make it easy.

The No. 19 Huskies are winless in their last three games, all on the road. All three matches were against top-10 ranked teams, which complicates things for Oregon.

"They are really going to try and come after us as hard as they can," Oregon assistant coach Jon Kiester said.

Oregon had its best Pac-10 performance against Washington last season in Seattle, an intense battle that ended in a 1-1 tie after overtime. The Ducks were very excited about the performance last year and want to prove themselves now that the Huskies are coming to Papé Field.

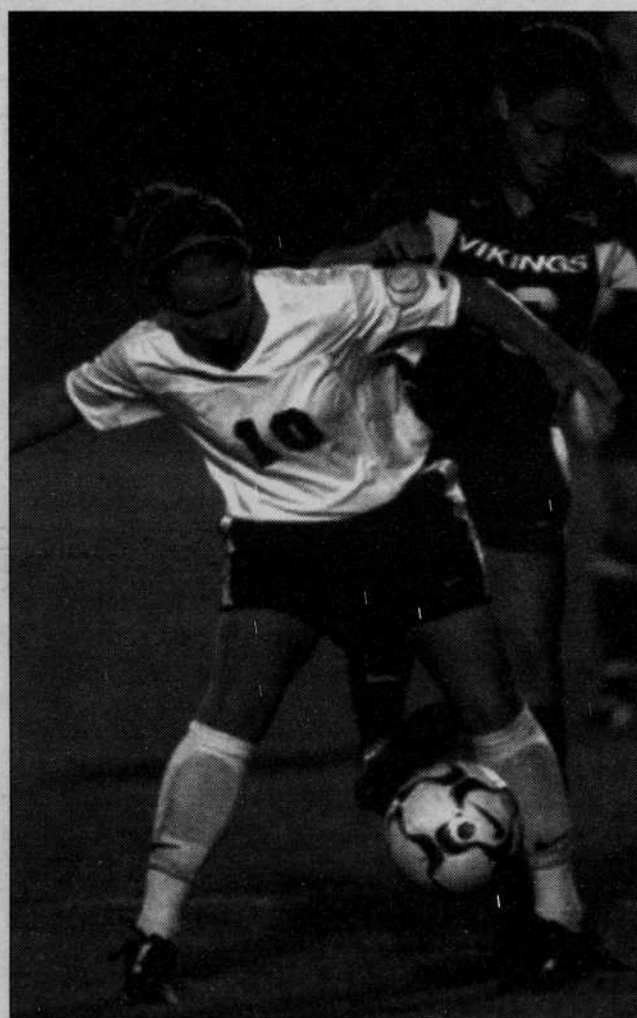
"We want to play better than that at home," senior forward Sarah Denner said. "We are focusing on what we need to do to be our best."

Prior to the 2001 matchup, Oregon had lost to the Huskies five times from 1996-99. But with Washington struggling on the road and the Ducks talking about having something to prove, it could be anyone's game.

Less than 48 hours after the Huskies game, the Ducks will face off with Washington State on Sunday at Papé Field.

The Ducks-Cougars matchup proves favorable for Oregon

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Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Sarah Denner (10) said the Ducks hope to use their home field advantage this weekend in matches with Washington and WSU.