



Mark McCambridge Emerald

Head coach Ernie Kent said at Thursday's media day that this year's Ducks are more athletic than last year's, when they reached the Elite Eight.

Men's

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handful of guards, including sharpshooting junior James Davis. But junior college transfer Andre Joseph, who averaged 22.3 points last season at Lee Junior College in Baytown, Texas, is expected to make major contributions at shooting guard.

"Those are some big shoes to fill, and I'm trying to replace him as best as I can," Joseph said of Jones, who was a first-round draft pick of the Indiana Pacers.

Jordan Kent, a basketball and track star at Eugene's Churchill High, and fellow freshman Brandon Lincoln of Portland will also see some time at shooting guard.

"This is the most talented team I've ever been on," Joseph said.

Senior Robert Johnson, who Kent said is capable of putting up a double-double every night, will manage the power forward spot.

Replacing Christoffersen in the post is senior Brian Helquist, who lost more than 20 pounds during the offseason and said it has helped his endurance.

"He looks great. He's even inspired

me to lose weight," Kent said. Redshirt freshman Ian Crosswhite, a native Australian, gives the Ducks a versatile backup at center.

"This is the most talented team I've ever been on."

Andre Joseph
Junior guard

The Ducks, ranked in the top 20 in many preseason publications, have what Kent calls the school's toughest schedule in at least 25 years. The preseason schedule includes Cincinnati, Minnesota, Pepperdine and Kansas, the team that knocked the Ducks out of the NCAA Tournament last year and is No. 1 according to many publications this season.

"That's what college basketball's all about," Jackson said of the schedule. "We're excited to be in the national spotlight. We want to show that we're no fluke. We want to show that we're a national power."

Contact the senior sports reporter at adamjude@dailyemerald.com.

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