

Short

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twosome, they watch movies. Comedies, mostly. And they memorize the lines.

"I've actually got to try to remember (lines)," Short says. "(Jay) doesn't need to remember them, they just pop into his head."

"We watch 'Meet the Parents' probably twice a week," Anderson says.

It goes back to the small-town thing. Anderson is from Faribault, Minn., Ridnour from Blaine, Wash., and Short from Yreka. The three towns have a combined population of 31,878.

"A certain type of people come from small towns," Short says. "People are a little more relaxed in small towns; they're real friendly, and that's the kind of player that coach (Ernie Kent) recruits."

So the small-town boys travel in a pack. They do classes together. Church on Sundays. And, of course, the movies.

"We have a humor that a lot of people don't understand," Short says. "Me, Jay and Rid are together 24-7 almost, and you'd think we'd get more sick of each other than we do. But we just do everything together, know everything, almost, about each other."

"Meet the Roommates."

"Excuse me," the young girl asks Short, shyly, in the middle of a crowded airport. "Can I, um, ask how tall you are?"

"Seven feet," he says, smiling, knowing exactly where this is going.

"Oh. Do you, um, play basketball somewhere?"

"Yes, the University of Oregon."

"Oh. What's your name? Maybe I'll see you on TV or something."

"Matt Short."

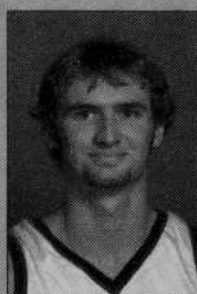
And the young girl's jaw drops off

Matt Short file

Born: Matthew Gregory Short on Dec. 13, 1982 in Kirkland, Wash.

High School: Three-time All-Northern Athletic League selection in three years on the varsity squad at Yreka High School in Yreka, Calif. Also named team MVP three times. Named as the fifth-ranked center in the West by PacWest Hoops coming out of Yreka. Helped Team USA/Texas win the bronze medal at the 2001 Global Games in Dallas.

Oregon: Reshirted 2001-02 season. A contributor to Coach Ernie Kent's big-man rotation, Short has averaged 2.9 points this year. Scored a career-high eight points in his first-ever start at Stanford Jan. 11.



Short

her face. Then she starts laughing.

It's happened so much, Short says as he recounts this particular tale, he wouldn't know what to do if someone *didn't* comment on the name. College coaches used it in recruiting letters. The headline writers at the Siskiyou Daily News had the best four years of their lives coming up with new headlines.

"Short in name only."

"In Short, it's Oregon," when he signed with the Ducks.

He gets it. He's tall. His name is Short. Ha ha.

But secretly, he likes it. His parents and siblings are average height, so he likes to call himself "the tallest Short."

"It's different, and I kind of like it," he says. "It looks good on the back of the uniform."

It sure is Short enough to fit. Sorry.

Short really does stand tall on the Oregon basketball team. As a player. As a person.

When others talk about Short, their sentences are littered with words like "hustle," "hard work" and "energy." From these words,

"He's just running out of control, after every rebound and every loose ball. He just plays as hard as he can until he gets tired, then we take him out."

Jay Anderson
Oregon center

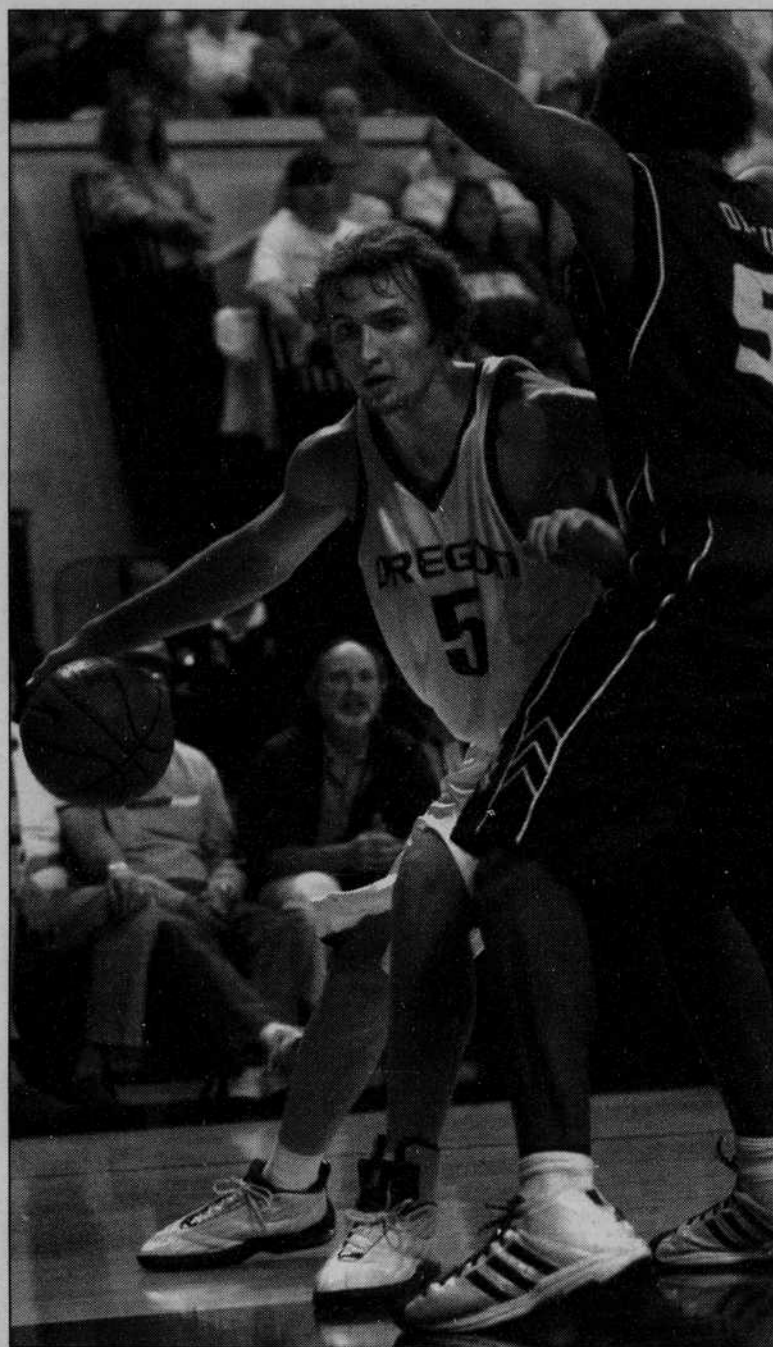
you get the picture of a typical Duck basketball player. All heart. Leaves it on the floor.

Goes hard until he's tired. Then they take him out.

Maybe that was born on the floor of the Yreka YMCA. Maybe it came when he was sitting out last year, or when he started for the first time on a Maples Pavilion floor that held the memories of many junior games.

Whenever or however it was born, one thing is for certain. He really is a big man.

Contact the sports editor at peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com.



Adam Amato Emerald

Short and roommates Jay Anderson and Luke Ridnour watch too many comedies.

Women

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Ducks stopped Washington in its tracks more than once last year. The Ducks knocked the Huskies from the second round of the Pacific-10 Conference Tournament in Eugene and in the quarterfinals of the Women's National Invitation Tournament at Seattle.

But Oregon (6-10, 2-5 Pac-10) has lost four of its last five games and is off to its worst start in conference play since the 1992-93 season. As for Washington (13-3, 5-2 Pac-10), the Huskies recently lost to top-ranked Stanford but prior to that, defeated both Cal and Arizona as the Dawgs rank third in Pac-10 standings.

"We are pretty motivated, and we have been more mentally focused," Duck junior Kayla Steen said. "If we become a lot more physical against UW, then we will be fine."

After the war is waged in Seattle, the Ducks will travel to Pullman to face the struggling Cougars.

"We have been more mentally focused. If we become a lot more physical against UW, then we will be fine."

Kayla Steen
Oregon guard

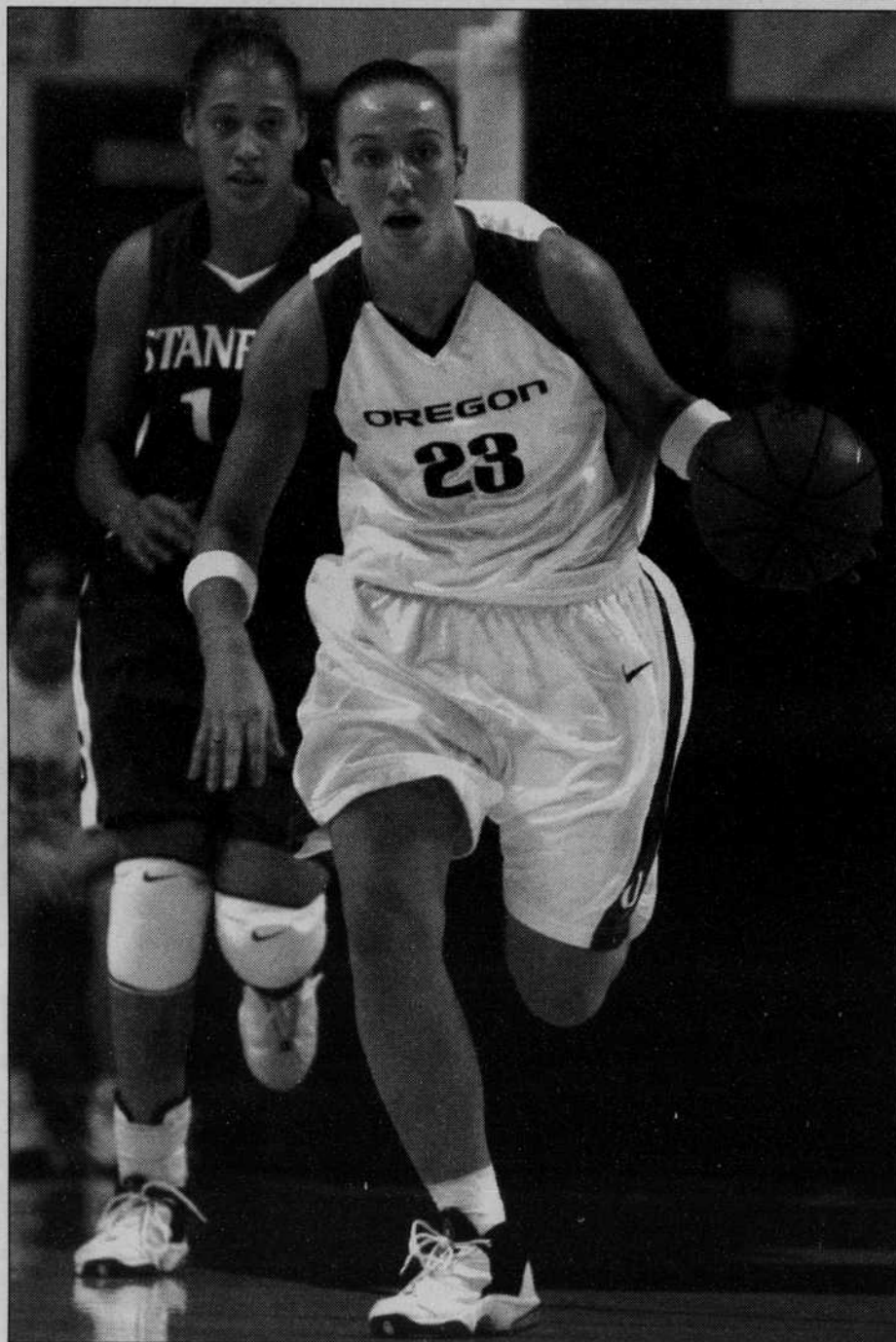
Washington State (0-15, 0-7 Pac-10) is a team that is hungry for its first win and looks to each new opponent as the perfect opportunity. The Cougars really have nothing to lose, and Oregon is aware of this.

"They are very, very close to winning a game," Smith said. "This is a team that is very competitive, and if you go up there thinking about their history, they are going to make you their history."

So as Oregon trudges forward into the second half of the season, they continue with a young squad and only nine players to fight the battles.

After the Ducks face off with the Washington schools, they will have faced every conference opponent. From there, Oregon has nine Pac-10 games left, with a chance to face each conference team again and a chance to change the tides.

Contact the sports reporter at jessethomas@dailyemerald.com.



Adam Amato Emerald

Kedzie Gunderson and Oregon beat Washington in both the Pac-10 Tournament and WNIT last year.

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hesitant on how to answer.

As for our Oregon athletics and how the teams have fared thus far this year, one word comes to mind: adversity. Webster's Third New International Dictionary describes it as "a condition of suffering, destitution or affliction often implying previous prosperity or well-being." Sound familiar?

The men's and women's basketball teams have had their share of hardship from preseason expectations. The football team went from second in the nation one year ago to, well, you know how it goes.

And teams such as women's soccer and volleyball have not had an easy breeze through victory lane, either.

And through it all, some of you have stood strong. You are the hard-core fans. And I give you my utmost gratitude and highest praises. Hats off to you.

As for others of you, you don't understand why anyone would go to such an extreme as described in any one of the questions. You are the fair-weather fans, and couldn't possibly understand the hardship these teams and their fans have had to go through together.

In all honesty, you should be ashamed of yourselves. When the going gets tough, that's your time to ship out. You know who you are.

Fans are more than they seem — they are friends. Someone a suffering team looks to in its utmost time of need for a shoulder to lean on and to be there, no matter what.

For people such as the members of the Pit Crew, and the diehards who stand strong regardless of the weather or circumstances: as Budweiser would put it, you are "true."

True to your team, true to your cause, true as a fan and friend. And trust me, the athletes are grateful — I speak from experience.

For the rest, you are not a "true" fan. And for your sake, think about what you are doing — and hope that the same is not done to you.

Contact the sports reporter at jessethomas@dailyemerald.com. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.