

## SPORTS

**Best bet**  
NCAA basketball:  
Texas at Kansas  
6 p.m., ESPN

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## Five athletes leave UO volleyball squad

Oregon will return just six players next season from a squad that finished 1-17 in fall 2002 Pac-10 play

### Volleyball

**Hank Hager**  
Sports Reporter

Five players from the Oregon volleyball team have transferred or left the team for personal reasons, the Emerald learned Friday.

Heather Gilmore, Lindsay Mur-

phy, Diana Blank and Erika Widmark — all currently juniors — as well as sophomore Alisa Nelson, have all left the team. According to senior Amanda Porter, Gilmore has decided to transfer to Idaho State, where her sister, Kylie, is currently a sophomore.

Gilmore declined to discuss the specifics of her decision, but did release a prepared statement through Idaho State regarding the move.

"I'm happy to be in Pocatello," she said. "I'm looking forward to competing with my sister at Idaho State. I think this will be a great move for

me. I enjoyed my time at Oregon and will cherish the memories I have from there."

Derek Smolik, assistant director of sports information for the Bengals, said Gilmore has already enrolled in classes at Idaho State.

Murphy has also decided to transfer, and will attend Eastern Washington next season.

"She'll start for us, for sure," Eastern Washington head coach Wade Benson said. "In my opinion, she's one of the best ball-control players in the nation.

"We're really excited that she's

coming. We think she's going to be a big factor for us. Lindsay fits into our system extremely well."

Benson added that Murphy will attend Eastern Washington in the spring because she "wanted a chance to say goodbye to everybody."

Blank has decided not to transfer, but left the team for her own "happiness."

"It was a very personal decision," she said. "I needed to do what was best for me. I needed to make sure I was doing this for my own happiness. It wouldn't be fair to go out there and not give 100 percent each day."

Nelson's and Widmark's reasons for leaving the team are still unknown. Neither could be reached for comment.

"I think it was all for the best," Porter said. "Everybody made personal choices. Everybody is happy."

Gilmore was sixth on the team last season with 93 kills, while Murphy, who primarily played the libero position, easily led the team with 321 digs. Blank played in a career-high 82 games and posted 12 service aces.

Nelson was felled by a leg injury  
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## Ridnour rescues Oregon in absence of other Luke

The junior guard scores 24 points in the second half to lead the Ducks to a victory

### Men's basketball

**Peter Hockaday**  
Sports Editor

He isn't faster than a speeding bullet. Or stronger than a freight train.

But Luke Ridnour is Oregon's Superman.

With "the other" Luke — Luke Jackson — on the bench with a severely lacerated finger, Ridnour scored 24 of the Ducks' final 34 points to rescue Oregon from a loss to lowly Washington State. The Ducks trailed 32-31 at halftime, but thanks in large part to Ridnour, they buried the Cougars in the second half and won the game 76-66 in front of a sold-out McArthur Court crowd.

"With about 30 seconds left in halftime, I called (Ridnour) over to the sidelines and told him to take over the game," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "I felt, as a team, we were a little stagnant; we needed a little more leadership out there. He needed to be a little bit more forceful with things."

Ridnour was forceful with the ball in the second frame. With a little more than seven minutes on the clock and the score tied at 51, Ridnour drove the lane, hit a runner and was fouled. He completed the three-point play to spark a 15-5 run that broke the game open. Ridnour scored 11 of those 15 points.

Ridnour finished the game with 28 points to lead all scorers, and added seven assists. Ian Crosswhite continued to wield a hot hand, scoring 14 points. Andre Joseph, subbing into the starting lineup for the injured Jackson, had 11 points, including a spectacular dunk at the end of the game. Joseph, on a break, bounced the ball to himself and slammed it home, causing Kent to call him over to the sideline.

"We had a parenting moment," Kent said of the conversation between him and Joseph. "Any of you who have children will understand what a parenting moment is."

It doesn't take a child to see that the Cougars — who haven't won a Pacific-10 Conference game since Jan. 31, 2002 — weren't the best team to walk into Mac Court this season. Washington State's one conference victory last year was a two-point win over Washington, and then the Cougars lost their top returning scorer, Marcus Moore, for the season to an injury.

That's why the halftime standings were distressing to some Ducks.

"We took them lightly; we didn't think they would be as good as they were," Joseph said. "When we came out of halftime, we got our composure together."

Joseph seemed nervous stepping in for Jackson at first, but warmed up as the game went on. He went 0-for-4 from the field in the first half, but went 4-for-7 in the second frame.

The Ducks all agreed that the game was good because it allowed them to adjust to Jackson's absence before hitting the road next week to play UCLA and USC.

Oregon will have to play those two games on the road, where the Ducks have been shaky this season. Oregon is 2-3 on the road, not including its win over Kansas in the Papé Jam, which was played at the Rose Garden in Portland.

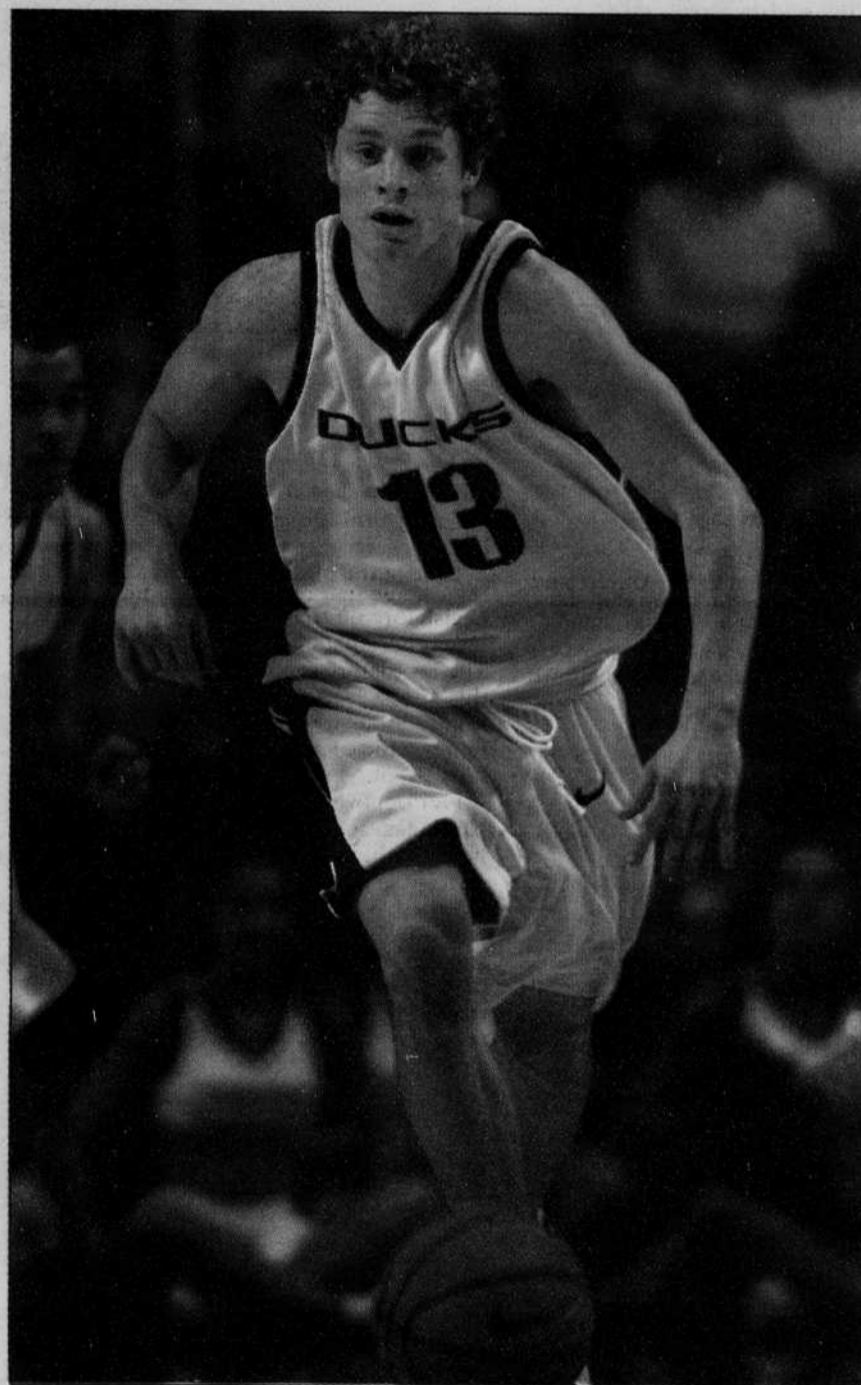
"We have to understand that (going on the road) isn't a vacation," Oregon guard James Davis said. "It's not just a chance to eat dinner and stay in nice hotels."

The last time Oregon went on the road was a disastrous trip to the Bay Area, where the Ducks were blown out by a combined 40 points at California and Stanford. But the Oregon players say they've put that behind them, and, after winning four straight, look to turn their road woes around in Southern California.

"Our goal was to come back here and win all four of these games," Ridnour said. "Now we have to regroup and hope for the best."

Oregon's game against UCLA on Thursday will be televised on Fox Sports Net. Tipoff is scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

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Adam Amato Emerald

Luke Ridnour had 24 of Oregon's final 34 points in their 76-66 win Saturday night.

## Men adjust, offense struggles in life without Luke

Washington State hangs close as the Ducks miss one of their stars

**Adam Jude**  
Senior Sports Reporter

You don't really know what you have until it's gone. The 23rd-ranked Oregon men's basketball team learned that quickly Saturday.

After perhaps the bloodiest injury in Oregon basketball history, Luke Jackson needed 13 stitches on his right index finger (non-shooting hand) after suffering a laceration in a win Thursday over Washington. With his hand wrapped, Jackson watched from the McArthur

Court bench Saturday as the Ducks faced Washington State; it was the first time Jackson sat out a game since his sophomore year at Creswell High School.

The only Pac-10 player ranked in the top-10 in points, rebounds, assists and steals per game, Jackson will miss Oregon's next two games at UCLA and USC, and perhaps more.

"It's more or less going to week-by-week than day-by-day," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said of Jackson's return. "We'll see what happens when we get back from the L.A. trip (next week)."

The Ducks (14-4 overall, 4-3 Pacific-10 Conference) clearly missed their second-

leading scorer and top rebounder against the lowly Cougars — at least initially. Washington State (5-12, 0-8) hit 13-of-26 shots in the first half and held a surprising 32-31 lead at the break.

"You don't realize how many little things you miss," Oregon point guard Luke Ridnour said of Jackson. "It's tough to adjust (to his absence) right away. All you can ask for is everyone to play hard."

Andre Joseph started in Jackson's place, but was 0-for-4 from the field in the first half.

"There was a difference without him out there," Joseph said. "He's such a

good all-around player. It takes awhile to adjust."

Yes, it certainly took some time, but the Ducks figured out how to win without Jackson. Ridnour, who played all 40 minutes, scored 24 of his 28 points in the second half as Oregon held on for a 76-66 win over the Cougs in front of a sold-out Mac Court crowd.

The Ducks had just four turnovers in the second half (13 total) and used a harassing defense to nab 14 steals, including a career-high five steals by Joseph.

"Obviously we missed Luke Jackson out there, but I thought it was a good

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Jackson