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Tennis in the trenches

Oded Teig is approaching Oregon's singles-match record, which he could tie soon in Eugene

Ryan Heath
Freelance Sports Reporter

When senior Oded Teig first came to Oregon, some of his teammates asked him if he was unhappy with the small dorm rooms on campus.

Teig didn't mind the size of his new dwelling because the tent he occupied during his three years of service in the Israeli army was significantly smaller.

"We could tell Oded would bring a lot of experience, both on and off the court, to our program," head coach Chris Russell said. "He's been through more than most people."

Balancing academics and athletics while leading a young team through a tough tennis schedule would be stressful for anyone. Add to that the anxiety of approaching Oregon's career record in singles victories while taking on some of the nation's best players — well, that might be too much to ask.

Unless, of course, Teig is handling the situation. Teig began the season with 60 career wins, five shy of the record, and has fought through difficult matches at the No. 1 spot to put

himself in a position to rank as one of the best in Oregon men's tennis history.

That's a lot of pressure. Even for a man with Teig's maturity.

But somehow, when you've taken responsibility for the lives of 15 of your fellow countrymen as lieutenant commander of an artillery unit, it takes a lot more than tennis to be overwhelmed.

"It was a tough experience," Teig said about going into the army. "But, nevertheless, I'm really happy that I did it."

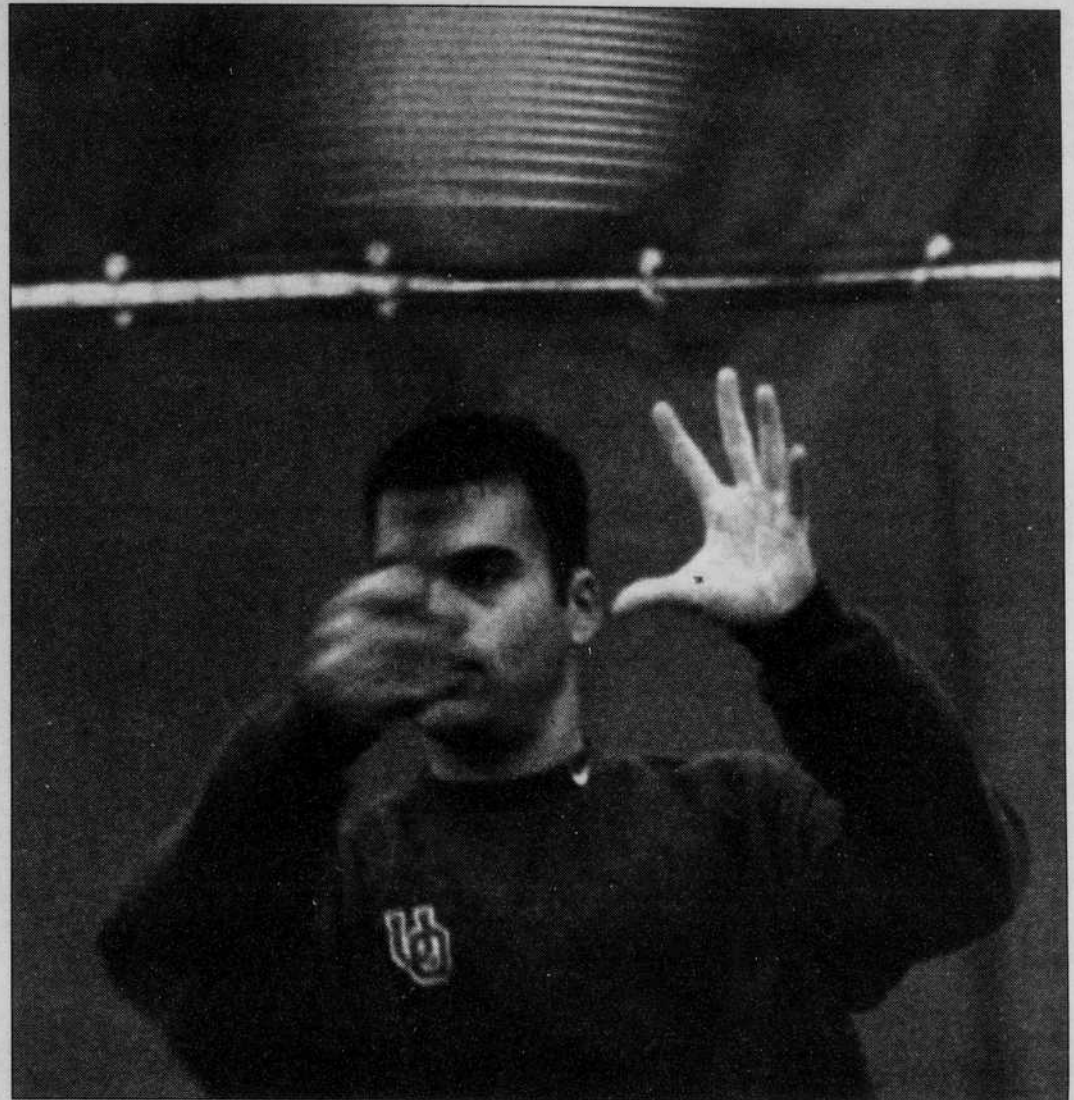
In fact, Teig's biggest regret after three years of serving his country was that he didn't get to play tennis, the game he's loved since his father introduced him to it at the age of seven.

"I gained weight, I was out of shape," Teig said about returning to tennis. "It took a while to get back into it."

It didn't take quite as long to get back to the form that earned him a No. 4 ranking in the Israeli 18-and-under division.

He took the Pacific-10 Conference by storm, going 22-11 in singles play from the No. 3 position his freshman

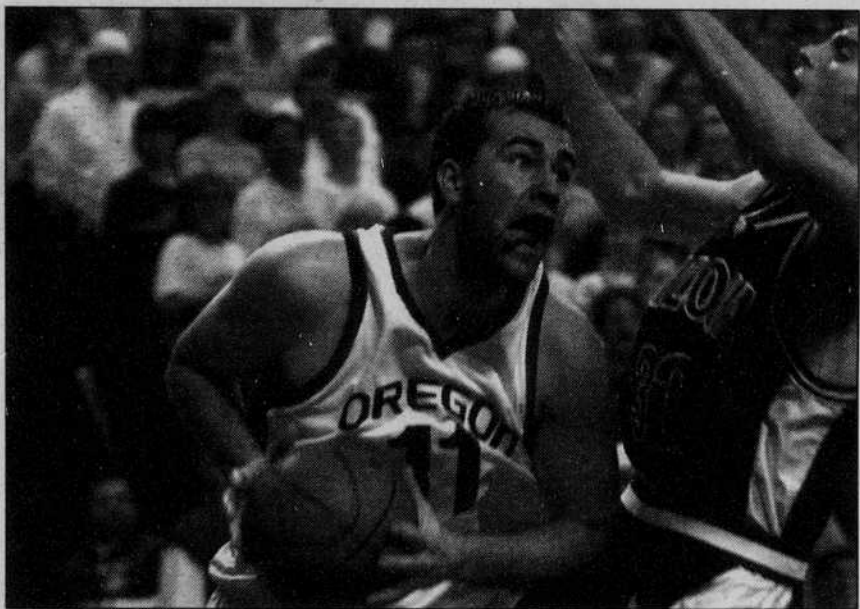
Turn to **Teig**, page 10



Adam Amato Emerald

Oded Teig spent three years as a lieutenant commander in the Israeli army before coming to Eugene.

Crosswhite searches for consistency in Pac-10



Adam Amato Emerald

As Ian Crosswhite (11) goes, so go the Ducks. But the big man says the team needs to step up.

When the redshirt freshman scores in double figures, Oregon is 12-0

Men's basketball notes

Adam Jude
Senior Sports Reporter

There's no doubt that this is the Lukes' team — without Ridnour and Jackson, the Ducks, well, they're Washington State.

But it's no secret that much of the Oregon men's basketball team's success this season has come when its post players play well. The Ducks are 15-0 when their big guys combine to score at least 22 points.

And, although it's not necessarily fair to point fingers, the Ducks (16-6 overall, 6-5 Pacific-10 Conference) are 12-0 when Ian Crosswhite scores at least 10 points.

Consider that the Ducks have won six of their last eight games, but in those two losses — to USC and California — Crosswhite was held to four points in each game. And during a five-game winning streak last month, Crosswhite averaged

15.4 points, including a 22-point, 12-rebound performance against UCLA.

But Crosswhite is not taking the team's inconsistent Pac-10 play personally.

"If I play well, fine. If we win, even better," said Crosswhite, who averages 8.4 points and 3.8 rebounds per game. "I haven't really looked at the stats or anything."

"It's not just me, everybody needs to step up. Different guys need to step up on different nights. I try my best, but hey..."

But... he is a redshirt freshman playing in his first season of Division I basketball. And adjusting to that level of play has taken some time for the 6-foot-11-inch forward/center from Australia.

"It's taken me a little while to realize how tough you have to play in this league," Crosswhite said. "It's true, when the big guys have let-downs, it makes it a lot harder, and it works vice versa. We need to make plays inside so it opens up the outside."

Oregon's play, and its record, certainly

Turn to **Men's**, page 12

UO's Kraayeveld may return sooner than expected

The Oregon forward might see playing time at McArthur Court before the season is over

Women's basketball

Hank Hager
Sports Reporter

Cathrine Kraayeveld, out since late December due to a staph infection in her right knee, may not have to sit out the rest of the season, as was originally reported.

The 6-foot-4-inch forward returned to the court recently, and

said she has felt less pain in the knee while working out with the team.

"It's pretty good," she said of the knee. "It may get a little bit sore, but it's been feeling pretty good. It's mostly my endurance, being able to do everything and not have to come out. But I think I've been doing pretty well, considering I haven't done very much."

It had been reported in early January that it would be unlikely Kraayeveld would be able to return to the court in a game this season, whether it came during the Pacific-10 Conference's regular season or tournament.

But because Oregon doctors have never had to rehabilitate an athlete with Kraayeveld's type of injury — according to head coach Bev Smith — the team is unaware of whether she is behind or on schedule in her recovery.

"We think that she's doing very well, and based on what she's showing us, we're quite happy with her progress," Smith said.

The Ducks have just three games remaining at McArthur Court this season, including Saturday's Civil War contest against Oregon State.

Oregon has a 5-4 record at the venue this season, including a 3-3

ledger in Pac-10 games.

Kraayeveld said she would love to return and play at Mac Court this season, even if it is just for a few minutes per game.

"I would hope so," she said. "I think I'm doing pretty good. I'd love that, to see a few minutes here and there."

"That could be a possibility, and I think it's just playing it by ear," Smith said. "Certainly, we don't want to accelerate things and rush things, and put her in a position where she's going to be vulnerable, like an injury. We'll base it on her and our medical staff's opinion."

With the Pac-10 Tournament

looming large — scheduled for March 7 through 10 in San Jose, Calif. — Kraayeveld's possible return to the Ducks (5-8 Pac-10) could be important to the team.

"For what she's been through, I think she looks great," Smith said. "She's a great athlete, an athlete that's kind of like poetry in motion. So when you see her out there, I think she's given us all a big lift because of the fact she's been out there and able to contribute."

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