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SPORTS

Best bet
NCAA men's basketball:
Maryland at Duke
6 p.m., ESPN

Wednesday, February 19, 2003

Keep war protests away from Mac Court

I witnessed something at McArthur Court on Saturday that I thought I would never see.

Or maybe, it was something I hoped I would never see.

During the National Anthem of the women's basketball game against Oregon State, a large chunk of fans at the game held up signs protesting the possible war with Iraq. I'm not going to say what the phrases said, for the main reason that I don't want to give these people press.

Suffice it to say, though, everyone who was holding up something was looking for "Peace" in the Middle East.

Does anybody else see something wrong with the picture I just painted here?

The fact that a sporting contest featuring college-aged athletes was turned into a semi-protest is a disturbing thought. And the fact that some people held these signs up for most of the game disappoints me even more.

Why buy a ticket for \$5 just to protest something on the other side of the world that has nothing to do with women's college basketball in Eugene?

So, yeah, OK, it was the 70th Civil War between the two teams. I'm not going to lie and say that I love that title for any sport. I grew up in the Bay Area, watching games between Stanford and California denoted the "Big Game," probably a more appropriate title for collegiate contests.

But "Civil War" still doesn't conjure up anything more than a game between Oregon and Oregon State. Why there are those who think that it denotes anything more is beyond me.

Of course, I can see where the protesters were coming from. Protesting the Civil War is innovative, don't get me wrong, but something that is way out of line. Where were these people in the 1980s when the term became useful for Oregon women's basketball?

So Oregon is a liberal university. I can see that, and for that reason, I know why the protests started at games here. That's not a surprise.

And I don't know what's happening at other places around the country. But if it's happening here, that's all I care about.

If I was a fan at that game, and for whatever reason had a sign placed in front of me that protested the war, I would've been upset. I was at press row and especially didn't like what I saw from that vantage point.

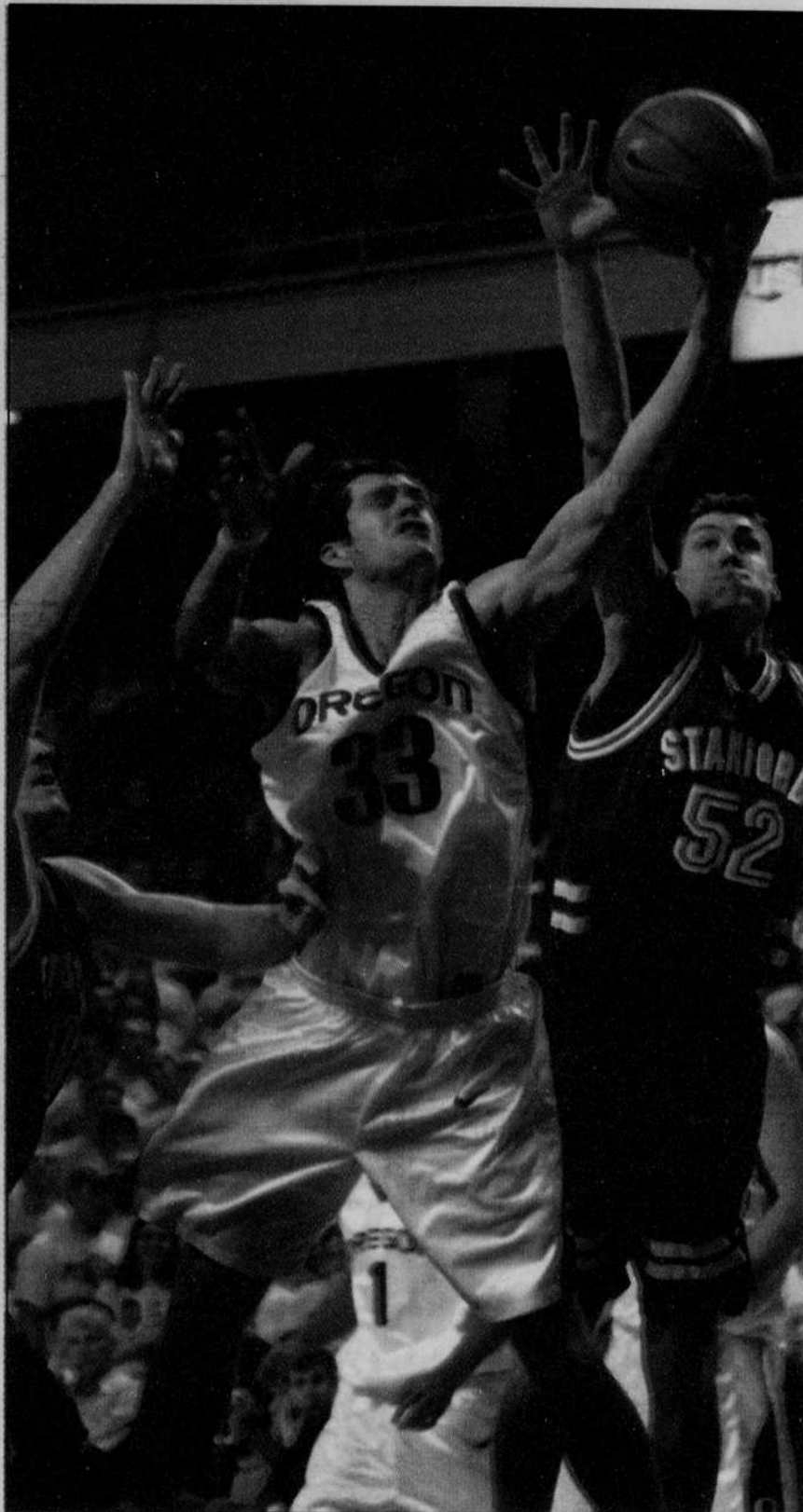
Personally, though, I don't see this as a problem for the fans. It's the athletes who shouldn't be subjected to this.

The main problem I see is that it places too much on the athletes themselves. Protesting professional games shouldn't matter. When you're making \$10 million to shoot a ball into the basket, what happens on the sideline shouldn't be any kind of distraction.

But when you're on scholarship —



Hank Hager
Behind the dish



Adam Amato Emerald

Luke Jackson practiced without his finger bandaged Tuesday, for the first time since his injury.

UO shoots for sweep in Washington

The Ducks have swept Washington State and Washington on the road just three times since 1975

Men's basketball notes

Adam Jude

Senior Sports Reporter

Suddenly, the Oregon men's basketball team is thinking like television producers: In February, it's all about sweeps.

With six games remaining, the Ducks (17-6 overall, 7-5 Pacific-10 Conference) are role-playing with the stars of "Malcolm in the Middle" as they sit alone in fifth place in the Pac-10, but are primed to make a leap in the ratings with a road sweep of Washington State and Washington this weekend.

Getting that sweep, though, could be as rare as a compliment from Simon Cowell on "American Idol." Oregon has swept the Washington road trip just three times since 1975.

"This is a huge week for us," Oregon point guard Luke Ridnour said.

Saturday's matchup against Washington should provide all the thrills of "Must See TV" as Oregon looks to avenge a 97-92 loss in Seattle last year. Despite their eighth-place conference standing, the Huskies (8-14, 3-10) pushed No. 1 Arizona to overtime two weeks ago in Seattle, and played Cal and Stanford close on the road last week, but lost all three games.

"If you're a smart coach, and a smart team, you don't look at Washington or Washington State's record because they have played everyone tough," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said.

Consistent with their recent struggles in Pullman, Wash., the Ducks are not looking past Thursday's 7 p.m. bout with the lowly Cougars (5-17, 0-13), who have lost 20 consecutive Pac-10 games. In five trips to the Palouse, Kent is 4-1, but has won those four games by a total margin of 14 points.

"Washington State is a very, very big game for us right now," Kent said. "Our mindset is just to take it one game at a time."

The Ducks lost at Washington State, 63-62, in 2001, and needed overtime to pull out a one-point win in 2000 and three overtimes to win in 1999.

"Playing in Pullman is always tough," Ridnour said. "There's not a lot of fans there, it's cold, and it's a long way up there. The Washington teams always play well against us, so we have to be prepared."

Jackson: Finger healed

Oregon forward Luke Jackson practiced Tuesday without his right hand wrapped for the first time since injuring his non-shooting hand Jan. 23. Jackson needed 13 stitches to repair a cut to his right ring finger that occurred in Oregon's win over Washington, but he said Tuesday that the cut is completely healed.

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Ducks end Pac-10 duals in Portland

Oregon heads north to close the dual meet season in style against the Vikings tonight in the Rose City

Wrestling

Mindi Rice

Freelance Sports Reporter

Oregon has another opportunity to spoil a Senior Night tonight at seven, as the wrestling squad travels to Portland State.

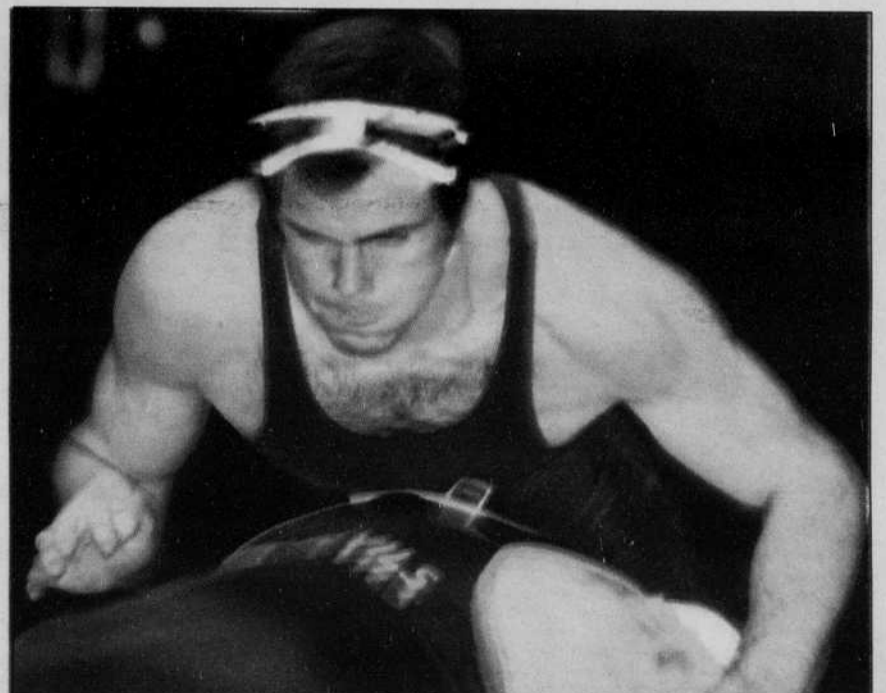
The Ducks (7-11 overall, 5-4 Pacific-10 Conference) will face a Viking squad which has not earned a Pac-10 victory since a 26-21 win over California-State Bakersfield in February of 2002.

The Vikings are led by seniors Quinn Collett and Eric Arbogast. Collett leads the Viking squad with a 16-10 overall record. Collett, who wrestles at 174, has won his last seven matches, including two decisions over Boise State's Pat Owens.

Arbogast, at 165, had an 11-match win streak on the line Saturday when Portland State wrestled Wyoming. Arbogast lost the Wyoming match, but joins Collett as the Vikings' only two members with winning records. Arbogast is 12-11 on the season.

Portland State (4-15, 0-8) is coming off four-straight losses, most recently a 35-9 loss at Wyoming.

Oregon ventures north again after losing 27-13 at Oregon State on Sunday.



Adam Amato Emerald

Shane Webster won his Civil War match and will look to lead the Ducks against Portland State.

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