

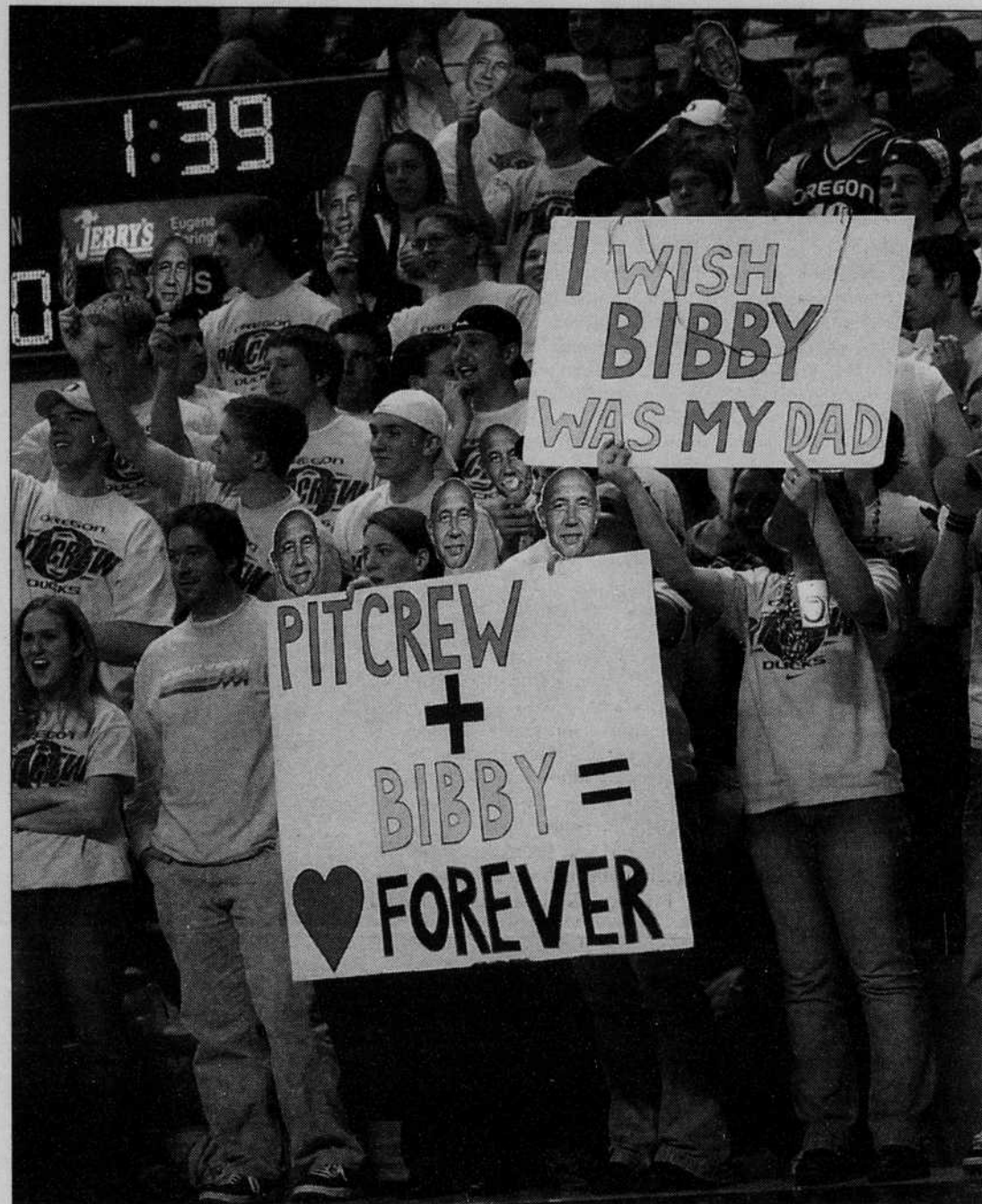
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SPORTS

Best bet
NCAA men's basketball:
Arizona at Stanford
4 p.m. Saturday, ABC

Friday, February 28, 2003

Love fest at The Pit turns into UO win



Adam Amato Emerald

Fans show their love for Henry Bibby with signs and masks as he walks onto the court for the first time Thursday.

The Ducks pay back USC with a 13-point win and pay back coach Henry Bibby with some 'affection'

Men's basketball

Peter Hockaday
Sports Editor

Valentine's Day was 14 days ago, but there was a whole lotta love at McArthur Court on Thursday night.

There was love for USC head coach Henry Bibby (one sign asked Bibby "Will you marry me?"), love for Luke Ridnour (fans chanted "One more year" at the possible NBA draftee) and, finally, love for the Ducks as a team. In a rousing effort, Oregon topped USC 79-66 in front of a sold-out Mac Court crowd. The win gave Oregon 19 victories on the season, and took the Ducks one step closer to the March Madness golden number of 20.

And they couldn't have done without the love of the fans.

"It was awesome out there," Ridnour said with a smile after the game. "The fans just gave us that extra boost to get going."

That boost came late in the first half, after Oregon went down early to a USC squad that came out firing. Trojan junior Desmon Farmer connected on four-straight three-pointers to start the game, and USC played aggressive defense on Oregon to keep the lead throughout the first 14 minutes.

But with 5:58 left and the score 39-27, Luke Jackson hit a lay-up to cut the Trojan lead to 10. Robert Johnson added a put-back lay-in on a miss. On the next possession, Ridnour led a fast break and found Jackson, who threw down a thunderous dunk to bring the crowd to its feet for the first time in a while.

"That's the kind of basketball I love to play," Jackson said. "Physical, up and down the floor, and shooting a lot of shots."

Soon after Jackson's dunk, Ridnour led another fast break, but this time the junior guard pulled up and hit a three-pointer to tie the score at 42. Ridnour was visibly pumped as he ran back on defense, and the Pit Crew broke into the "One more year" chant.

"We gotta show emotion, get everyone going, because we need these games more than anything," Ridnour said. "If it's yelling after you hit the shot, whatever it is, we just need to get the team going to get it done."

That run was enough to give Oregon the momentum and, eventually, the game. The teams battled early in the second half, and USC held leads at 56-54 and 58-56, but the Ducks used another emotional run like the one in the first half to put the Trojans away midway through the second frame.

Ridnour led all scorers with 23 points and Jackson followed with 22. Oregon's two seniors played well — Robert Johnson had 12 points and seven rebounds while Brian Helquist added six boards — and the Ducks adequately made up for the absence of suspended guard Andre Joseph.

Ridnour matched USC's physical game play with his own brand of tough-guy basketball, hitting the floor often for loose balls and flying through Trojan double-teams.

"He's be the first guy in the cold whirlpool tonight," head coach Ernie Kent said.

Ridnour set the tone with only three turnovers in the game. The Ducks, who committed 26 turnovers in their 91-76 loss at USC on Feb. 2, had only 11 Thursday.

But, with the end of the season and the NCAA Tournament looming, the most important statistic for Oregon on Thursday night was the little "x" in the win column.

"It was just a tremendous victory," Jackson said.

The Ducks moved into a tie for fourth in the Pac-10 with Arizona

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Major Overstake

Senior Tony Overstake leads the Oregon wrestling squad into Sunday's Pac-10 tournament with a record of 18-8 this season, including eight major decisions

Wrestling

Mindi Rice

Freelance Sports Reporter

As the first wrestler Oregon head coach Chuck Kearney recruited, Tony Overstake was the beginning of Oregon's bright wrestling future.

Kearney knew Overstake was the kind of wrestler he wanted in the program, and Overstake knew Oregon had a lot to offer.

"He's been the heart and soul of what we've been trying to do here," Kearney said.

Overstake, now a redshirt senior, leads the Ducks into the Pacific-10 Conference Tournament, which begins Sunday.

"He's a success story," Kearney said. "Each year he has worked real hard and made big gains."

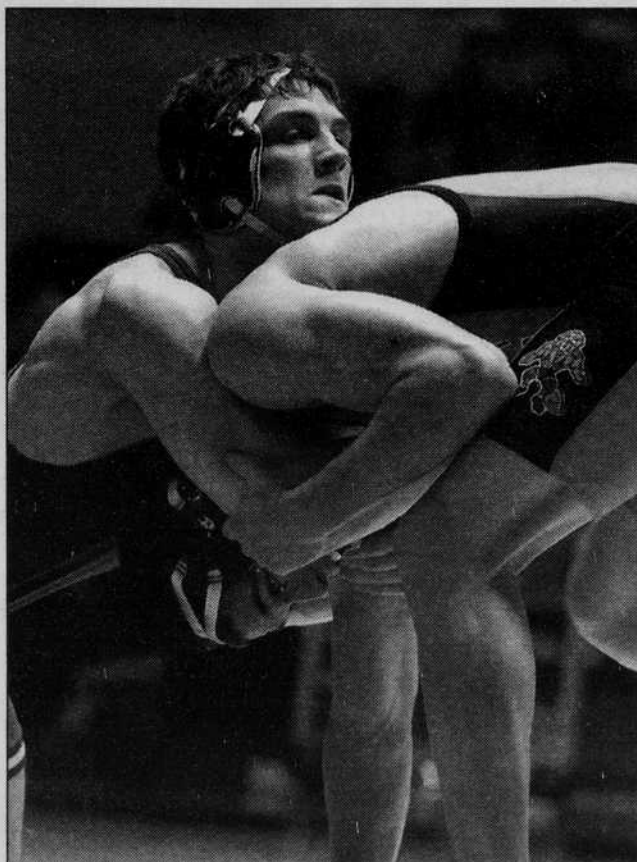
Overstake began his final collegiate dual meet season with the dual resting on his match. The meet against Oregon State was tied at 15, after the Ducks came back from a 12-point deficit to tie the Beavers.

"I was pretty confident he could pull out the win," Kearney said that night.

Overstake's match went like the meet — he was down early, came back, and finally dominated. Overstake won the 149 match 9-3, giving the Ducks the 18-15 victory in front of a home crowd of 939.

"It was exciting (being the deciding match)," Overstake said that night. "The pressure's on me to get the job done."

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Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Tony Overstake (left) has Oregon's best record heading into Pac-10s.

Oregon's victory over USC clouds Pac-10 picture

The women beat USC, making Saturday's game against UCLA much more important for postseason posturing

Women's basketball

Hank Hager

Sports Reporter

What a wild and wacky season it has become for the Oregon women's basketball team.

And with just one game left in the Pacific-10 Conference season, it seems to be at just the tip of the iceberg.

The Ducks got 19 points from junior Cathrine Kraayeveld to narrowly defeat USC, 75-70, in front of a paltry 547 fans Thursday at the Los Angeles Sports Arena.

The win gives Oregon four in its last five games, but more importantly, pushes the Ducks into a fifth-place tie with Oregon State. The Beavers were 81-72 losers to UCLA on Thursday.

"It's a tremendous victory," Oregon head coach Bev Smith told KSCR-AM. "We had a good game plan, and our players stuck to it."

As mentioned, the Oregon win now muddles the middle of the Pac-10.

The Ducks (12-14 overall, 8-9 Pac-10) stepped closer to at least a sixth-place finish with the win, even though they are currently tied for fifth. If Oregon and Oregon State both win or lose Saturday — the Ducks against UCLA and the Beavers against the Trojans — Oregon State would win the tiebreaker.

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