

SPORTS

Best bet
Pac-10 Tournament:
Oregon vs. Arizona State
3:30 p.m., Fox Sports

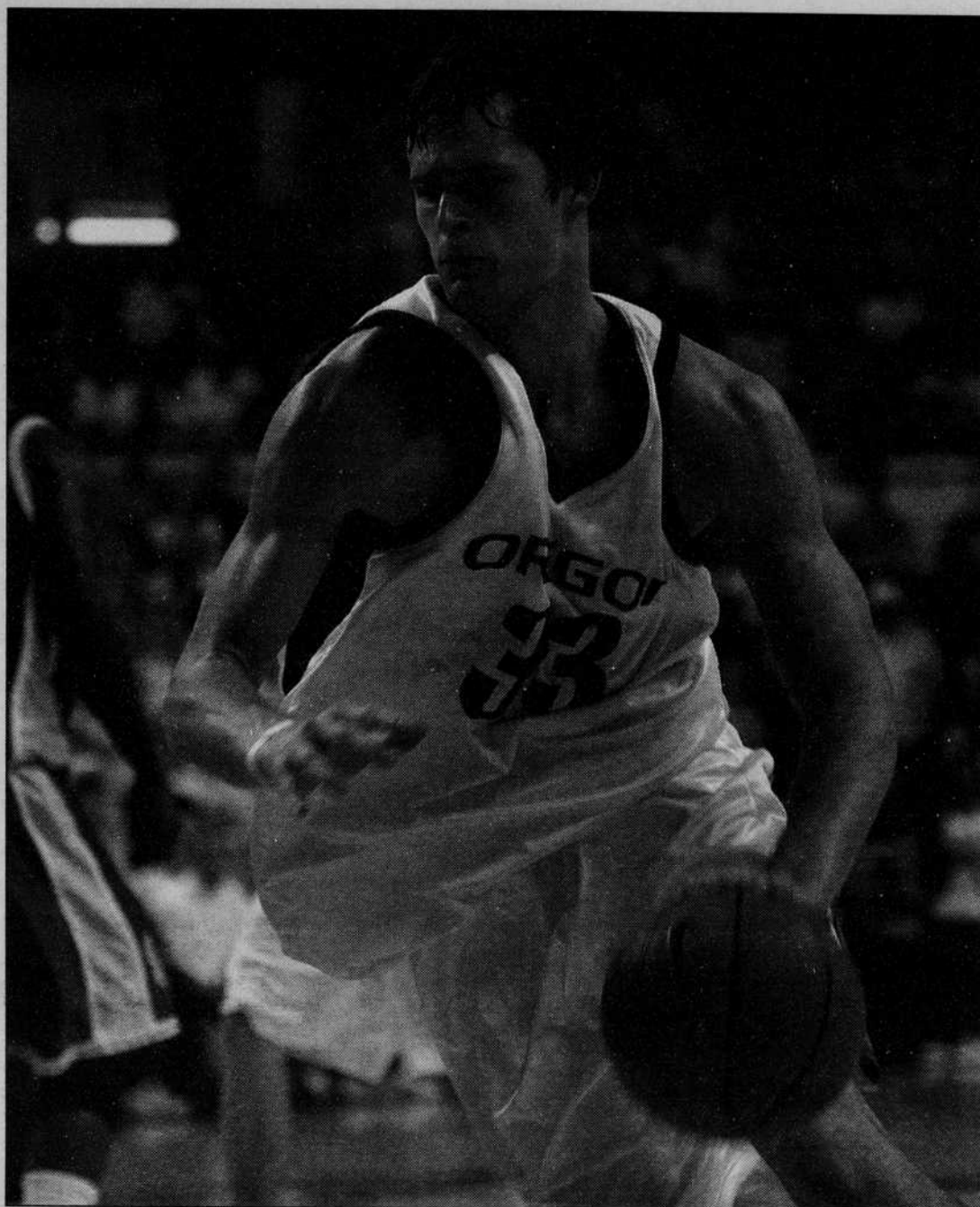
Thursday, March 13, 2003

UO, ASU face off
with NCAA tonesThe Ducks face the Sun Devils
in the first round of the Pac-10
Tournament, a rematch
of last week's game in the desert

Men's basketball

Adam Jude

Senior Sports Reporter

*"Two roads diverged in a wood
And I took the one less traveled by
And that has made all the difference."
— Robert Frost*If Oregon had a choice, it wouldn't travel
at all. It would play every game at home.But the Ducks don't have a choice.
They're on a road often traveled, a road
that has led them to a 3-6 conference
record, but a road they hope will lead them
to the NCAA Tournament next week.Oregon (20-9 overall, 10-8 Pacific-10
Conference) heads to the Staples Center
in Los Angeles today for its first-round
game in the Pac-10 Tournament, a
rematch with Arizona State at 3:50 p.m. The
game will be televised on Fox Sports Net.The Ducks' three conference road
wins this season were against Washing-
ton State, Oregon State and UCLA in
overtime. Officially, today's game is at a
neutral site, but even in those situa-
tions, the Ducks haven't fared well this
season. Granted, they did defeat Kansas
at the Rose Garden, but that was essen-
tially a home game.In their only true neutral environment
this season — at the Continental Airlines
Arena in East Rutherford, N.J. — the
Ducks were blown out by Cincinnati, 77-
52, in front of a national ESPN audience.Fast forward to last week, when Ore-
gon closed out the regular season bygetting swept in the desert by Arizona
and Arizona State."We're glad there is a Pac-10 Tourna-
ment right now," junior guard James
Davis said. "All our games are big games
at this point. We need to get another win.
Mentally, we need a win."Both Oregon and Arizona State (19-10,
11-7) need a victory to quiet critics and bol-
ster their standing with the NCAA selection
committee. A loss could mean the NIT."I haven't allowed myself to go there
yet," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said
of the NIT. "If we can get another win, if
we can do our job (today), we can take it
out of (the committee's) hands."The key for Oregon is controlling the
key. But with Pac-10 Freshman of the Year
Ike Diogu roaming the paint for Arizona
State, the Ducks will have their hands full.Diogu posted 17 points and 14 rebounds
in the Sun Devils' 91-77 win in Tempe
a week ago, and had 27 points in Oregon's
Jan. 4 win over ASU at McArthur Court."Diogu is going to get his points, you
just try to keep him from having a mon-
ster game," Kent said.But containing Diogu does not guaran-
tee victory. Case in point: Tommy Smith
(24 points, 11 rebounds) and Curtis Mill-
age (27 points) both had big games last
week against the Ducks."If you focus on Diogu, those other
guys will kill you," Kent said. "It's kind of
like pick your poison with them. Each
time we had a breakdown, they made us
pay for our mistakes."The Ducks led Arizona State and Arizona
at halftime, but collapsed in the second half."We know we haven't been closing out
games like we should," Davis said.Oregon point guard Luke Ridnour had
20 points in the first half against ASU lastTurn to **Men's**, page 10

Adam Amato Emerald

Luke Jackson and the Ducks face a rematch with ASU, but this one has implications for the NCAA Tournament.

Senior wrestler
hopes to take
last NCAA stepCasey Hunt can finish a strong Oregon career with a
good showing in the March 20 national tournament

Wrestling

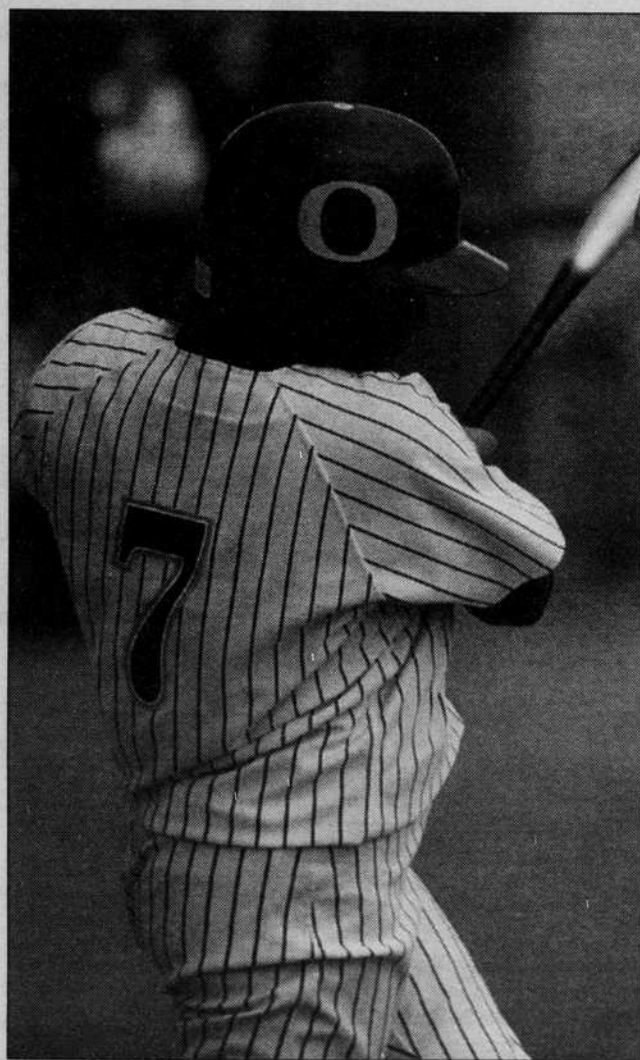
Mindi Rice

Freelance Sports Reporter

Casey Hunt took the Pacific-10 Conference one step at a time.

After wrestling four matches during his first season, Hunt
went 13-14 in his sophomore year. Toward the end of the
season the Pendleton High School graduate overcame in-
juries to finish fifth in the Pac-10 tournament by pinning
his opponent.Last season, Hunt qualified for the NCAA tournament
with a fourth-place finish in the Pac-10 at 149. He then lost
in the first round at nationals.Now in his senior campaign, Hunt moved up the Pac-10
one more step with a third-place finish at the conference
tournament, going 3-1 at 141. He finished the regular
season with a 14-9 record, including his first collegiate ma-
jor decision.Now Hunt will try to take one big step by placing in the
national tournament in his last season as a Duck.

In-state rivals

Oregon State had eight wrestlers place in the top six for their
weight class, while three Portland State wrestlers earned a place
in the top six.Beaver wrestler Jed Pennell took second at 184. Three
Beavers — Matt Ellis at 165, Jake Huffman at 174 and AndyTurn to **Wrestling**, page 12

Emerald

Rachel Tommasini and the Ducks are looking to build from the success
of the preseason in their regular-season opener against PSU today.Ducks, Vikings
battle in Howe
home openerOregon opens the regular season with
a doubleheader against Portland State

Softball

Mindi Rice

Freelance Sports Reporter

After six consecutive weekends on the road, Oregon's soft-
ball team is finally playing on its home field.The Ducks take on Portland State in a doubleheader at
Howe Field beginning at 1 p.m. today."We are so ready to play at home," head coach Kathy
Arendsen said.No. 22 Oregon (16-6) is coming off its last weekend of
tournament play. The Ducks went 4-1 over the weekend, with
their only loss against defending national champions Cali-
fornia in the tournament's title game.The Ducks have been on the road the past six weekends,
playing tournaments in California, Florida and Texas. They
also had a tournament scheduled in Utah that was canceled
because of weather after the team had arrived.Of the five tournaments Oregon has played in, the team
won three tournament titles and finished second in another."We've played well," Arendsen said. "They have worked
hard and competed hard."Portland State (4-10) has played in three preseason tour-
naments. The Vikings finished the first two tournaments
with a 1-4 record in each, and split the four games during
their third tournament.Turn to **Softball**, page 12