

Monday, March 31, 2003

One Luke ...or two? Only they know now

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Like a town sandbagging against a flood, Oregon is bracing for Luke Ridnour's departure to the NBA. This is a trust fall, and we're not going to catch Rid on his way to the hard floor of the pros. Unless he wants to be caught, in which case we'll not only catch him, we'll throw rose petals in his every footstep and feed him grapes until he's full and all that.



Peter Hockaday
Two minutes for crosschecking

But what about the other square in "Luke Squared"?

What about Luke Jackson?

After Oregon's loss to Utah in the first round of the NCAA Tournament, Jackson said, "For me personally, I just need to look at where I'm at and make a decision. I feel like I had a good year."

With sure-fire first-rounder Ridnour, we plead "please don't go." With Jackson, we wonder "what the what?"

Luke Ridnour *could* not go to the NBA. Luke Jackson *should* not go to the NBA.

We present evidence.

Last year, 42 underclassmen and high schoolers declared themselves eligible for the NBA Draft. Exactly half didn't get drafted. Most of those were from schools like Shelton State or Brown Mackie JC (yes, those are actual schools, and yes, their basketball players were stupid enough to think they'd be drafted).

But then there's the case of Adam Turn to **Hockaday**, page 14

Men exit Madness early to Utah

The Ducks lose in the first round of the NCAA Tournament, ending their season at the hands of the Utes

Men's basketball

Adam Jude

Senior Sports Reporter

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — In the end, the bottom line is all that matters.

The shots didn't fall. Oregon lost. Season over. That's basketball, as they say. And it stings.

James Davis, the Pacific-10 Conference's top three-point shooter, missed two potential game-winning shots in the final five seconds as the Ducks were knocked out of the NCAA Tournament in the first round with a 60-58 loss to Utah on March 21.

"It's real tough knowing how hard you worked to get here, and all of a sudden it's over," said Oregon point guard Luke Ridnour, who played what many speculate will be his final game in an Oregon uniform.

As they sat in the locker room of the Gaylord Entertainment Center, Ridnour and Davis, two of the last Ducks to leave, sat next to each other, staring blankly at the floor, hands shadowing their teary eyes.

In the final seconds of the Midwest Region matchup between the No. 8 seed Ducks (23-10) and the ninth-seeded Utes (25-7), Ridnour, as has been the case throughout the season, was given the ball in the waning moments of the game. He drove, then kicked to an open Davis.

"That first one I thought for sure was going in," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said of Davis' shot.

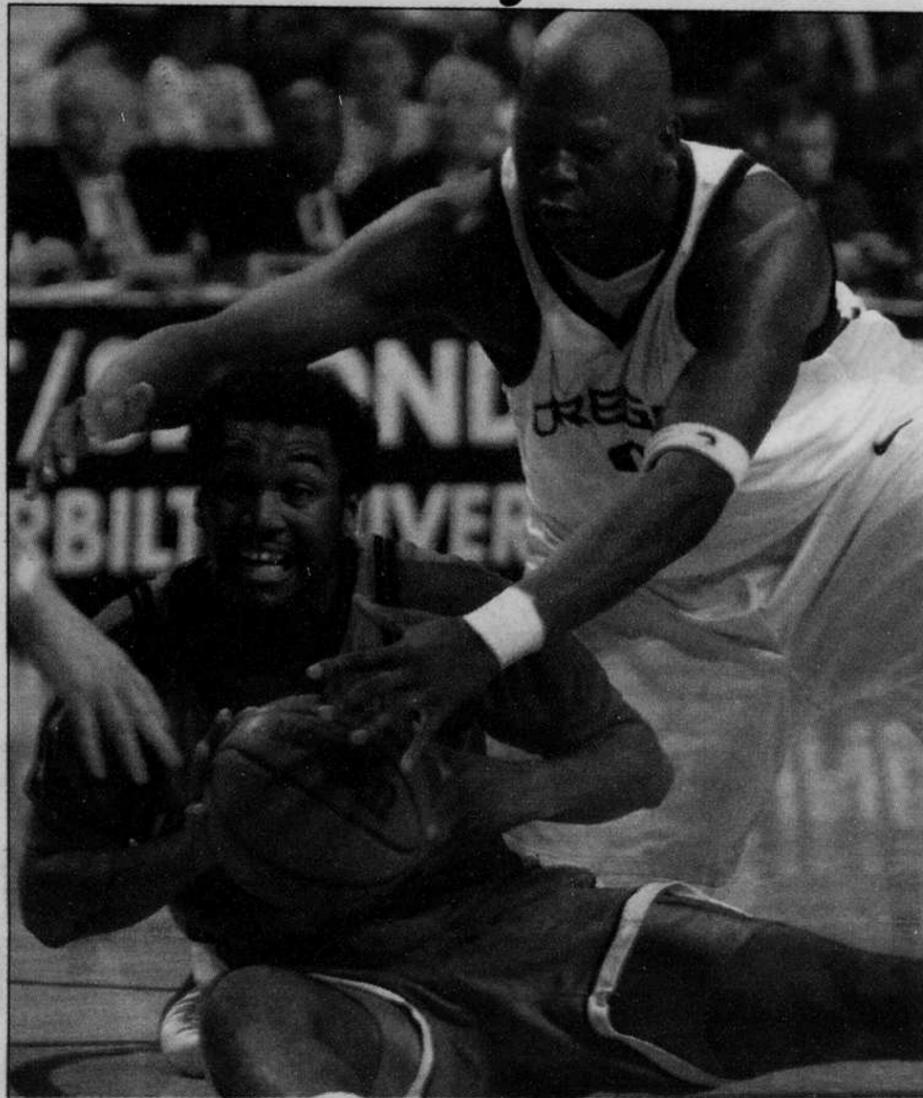
It didn't. The rebound bounced back out to Davis, who took a deeper attempt with two Utes running at him. It clanked off the rim, too, and the horn sounded immediately after.

"I just didn't hit the shots," Davis said. "We gave ourselves a good opportunity to win, the shots just didn't fall."

"It breaks my heart, man, especially the way we lost. I can't explain it."

Ridnour couldn't explain it either. The Pacific-10 Conference Player of the Year didn't score his first field goal until the 13:08 mark of the second half; he finished with 13 points on 3-of-13 shooting — no jump shots — with five assists, five rebounds and five turnovers in 39 minutes.

"(Utah) did a good job of making him go to his left, but he was missing shots he normally hits," Kent said. "I would say half of (Ridnour's struggles) was their defense, and half was him out of a rhythm a little."



David Stephenson Lexington Herald-Leader (KRT)

Robert Johnson (top) and the Ducks couldn't handle the smothering defense of Tim Drisdorn and Utah. Johnson, a senior, scored nine points and added five rebounds in his final game in an Oregon uniform.

Davis was 2-for-12 from the field. Both Ridnour and Davis took the blame for the loss, though their teammates said that's hardly fair. As a team, Oregon shot 34.5 percent (19-of-55); the Utes were even worse at 29.5 percent (18-of-61).

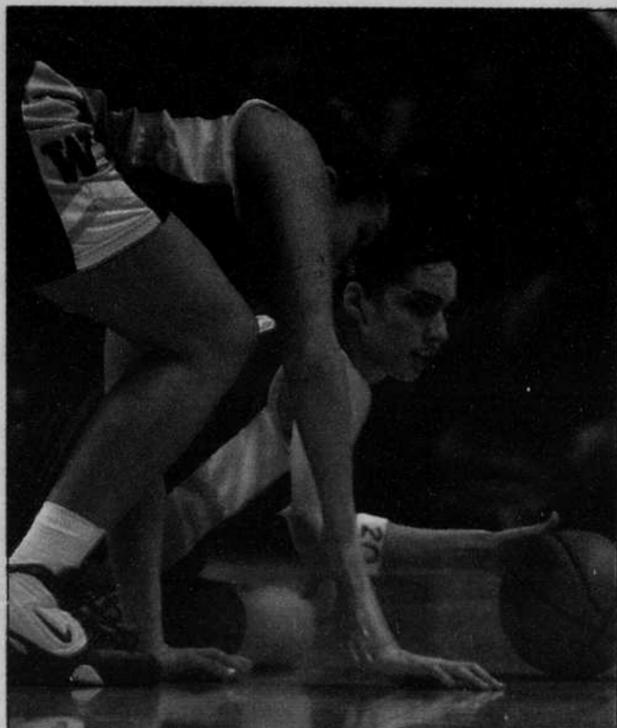
"You can't fault one person," said junior forward Luke Jackson, who paced the Ducks with 14 points. "This is a team loss."

Even without Britton Johnsen, their best player who was ruled out of the tournament because of mononucleosis, the Utes built a

51-42 lead with 9:28 left. But three Utes fouled out in the final 10 minutes, and the Ducks went on a 12-2 run to take a one-point lead after a pair of Ridnour free throws with 5:41 remaining.

With the game tied 58-58, Utah opted to hold the ball with 46 seconds left. With three ticks left on the shot clock (14 seconds on the game clock) Utah's Nick Jacobson missed a three-pointer, but was fouled by Ridnour on the shot.

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Mark McCambridge Emerald

Kristen O'Neill and Wasington fell to UWGB in the first round.

Four teams shine in Eugene's segment of women's tourney

LSU comes away unscathed at the McArthur Court sub-regional to advance to the third round of the NCAA Tournament

Women's basketball

Hank Hager

Sports Reporter

The LSU women's basketball team came away from the Eugene sub-regional to advance to the third round of the NCAA Tournament.

But not before the Lady Tigers came excruciatingly close to being upset by eighth-seeded Wisconsin-Green Bay.

LSU won the second-round game, held at McArthur Court on Monday, 80-69, but led by as little as five with under three minutes left to play.

"We were very close to shocking the NCAA world, very close," UWGB head

coach Kevin Borseth said. "This year, I knew the players we had were winners. They just don't give up."

LSU, the top seed in the West region and ranked third in the nation, was led offensively by Doneeka Hodges, who had 20 points on the strength of 4-of-6 shooting from beyond the three-point line. As a team, the Lady Tigers shot an astounding 63.3 percent from the field.

All of that after starting point guard Temeka Johnson left the game with just less than 13 minutes left, after receiving an errant elbow from UWGB center Chandra Johnson.

"Any time you lose a player of that caliber, someone else has to step up," Hodges said. "We didn't really have to say anything; we just knew we had to keep playing."

Down 71-62 with three minutes left, UWGB's Johnson pulled the Phoenix closer with a tip-in. She was fouled on the play by Seimone Augustus, and sank her only

free throw to pinch the score to five.

The Phoenix got within six, 73-67, minutes later, but Hodges hit a three with 57 seconds left, then proceeded to sink four-straight free throws to ice the game.

Johnson had a momentous game for the Phoenix in her final outing for UWGB. She scored a career-high 29 points and grabbed five rebounds.

"It was really fun to see Chandra come full-circle and end her career with a great tourney against some real good teams."

With the win, LSU advanced to the third round against Louisiana Tech, played Sunday at Maples Pavilion in Stanford, Calif.

No. 8 UWGB 78, No. 9 Washington 65

The Phoenix started the tournament in style, defeating the only Pacific-10 Conference representative in the Eugene bracket.

Tiffany Mor led UWGB with 15 points, but as a team, the Phoenix were balanced
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