

SPORTS

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Best bet
College football:
Oregon at Arizona State
12:30 p.m. Saturday, ABC

Friday, October 10, 2003

Kings beat Blazers in Mac showdown

Former Oregon guard David Jackson dishes out three assists in 17 minutes of play

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

When David Jackson played for Oregon, the guard received very little time on McArthur Court.

Injuries kept him from extensive time with the Ducks. Thursday, however, he made a return to Eugene as a Portland Trailblazer, and the Oregon fans sure didn't forget him.

Sacramento defeated Portland, 111-100, in front of 7,998 at McArthur in both teams' second exhibition game of the season.

For the Trail Blazers, the game was mostly an opportunity to get players into shape and to shake off the offensive cobwebs. For Jackson, the game was an opportunity to impress Portland head coach Maurice Cheeks.

With the regular season approaching fast, the Blazers will have to whittle their roster down to 12. Jackson is doing every thing he can to be one of those.

"I'm having to take in a lot in a short amount of time, (but) come hell or high water, I'll figure it out one way or another," he said. "I don't think I hurt (my chances) any. I didn't shoot the ball like myself tonight. It's a little bit tougher trying to run that offense when you've got guys that are such great individual players."

Jackson finished the game 0 of 5 from the field. He dished out three assists in 17 minutes, but also picked up four fouls while primarily guarding

Sacramento guard Mike Bibby.

Bibby finished the night with 16 points on the strength of 8 of 10 shooting from the foul line.

Jackson entered the game with 1:56 left in the first quarter, subbing for Jeff McInnis. Jackson earned one of the loudest ovations of the night from the Oregon faithful when he stepped on the court for the first time.

"That was great," he said. "Even though I didn't play much when I was here, they always supported me."

McInnis finished the night with eight points, and Damon Stoudamire played just eight minutes. Cheeks said after the game that Stoudamire could get the start tonight when the Blazers play in Los Angeles against the Clippers.

Jackson's play against the Clippers and against Seattle on Tuesday could determine his status with the team.

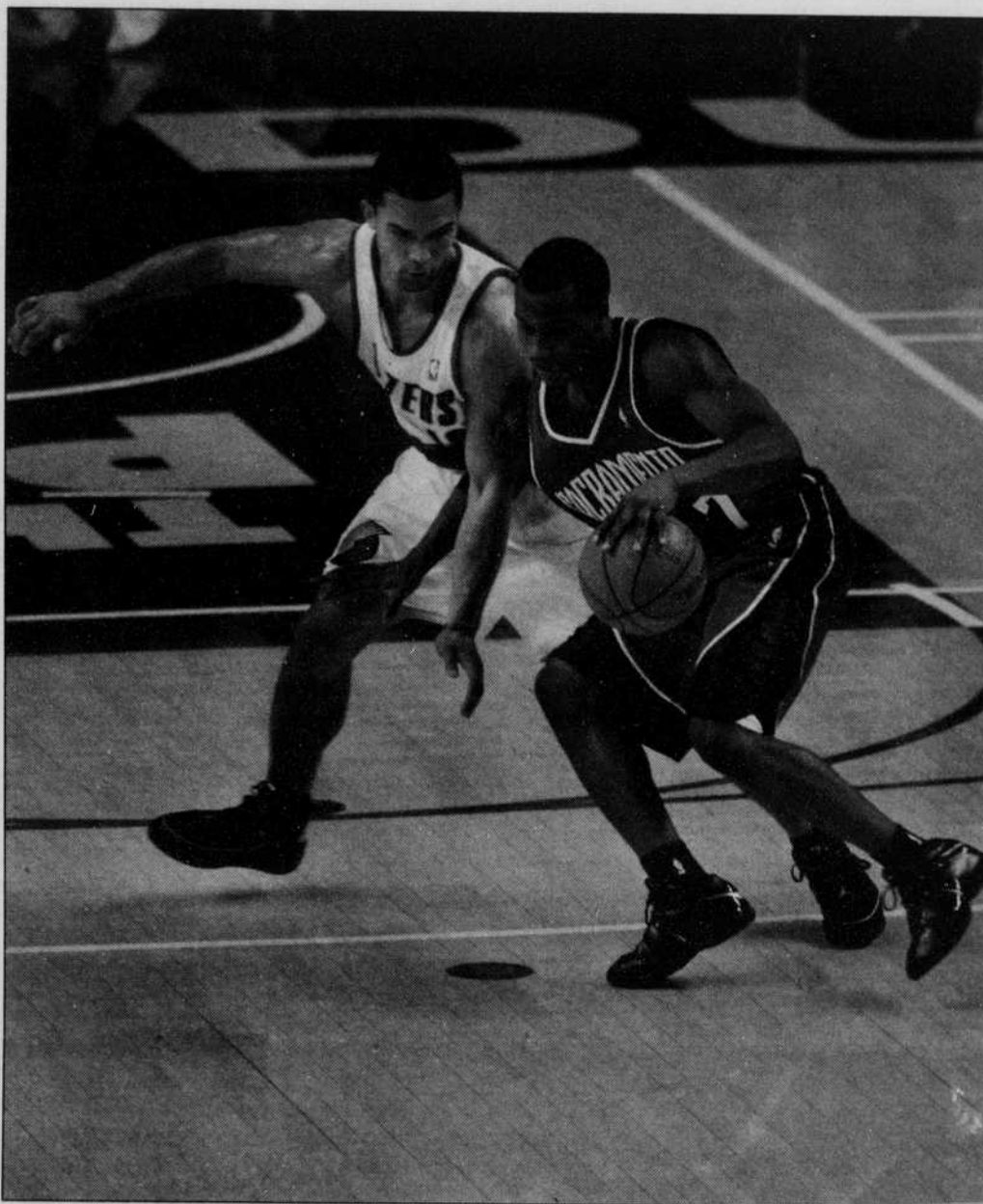
"I think I had him on the floor too much," Cheeks said, also complimenting the guard's play. "My intent was to just put some guys in situations that they hadn't been in before and see if they could handle it."

Former Oregon State forward Phillip Ricci also saw action. The Sacramento rookie entered the game with 2:54 left in the fourth quarter and immediately missed two shots before draining a jumper with less than a minute left to play.

"It was pretty fun to hear the boos when I checked in," he said. "It was kind of cool coming back here. I never thought I'd play on this court again."

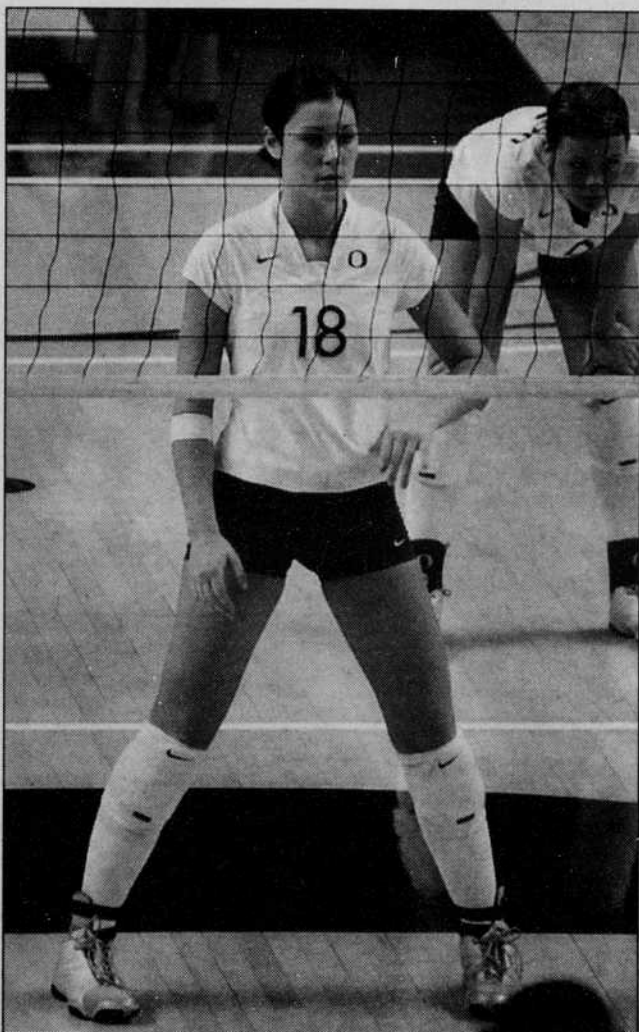
The game was closer than the 11-point final deficit indicates.

Turn to **BLAZERS**, page 12A



Mark McCambridge Photographer

Portland guard David Jackson was the star of the show for the Oregon faithful at McArthur Court. The former Duck posted three assists on Thursday in his return to Eugene with the Blazers.



Emerald

Sophomore Kelly Russell leads the Ducks with 3.29 kills per game.

BLOCKING ADVERSITY

Sophomore middle blocker Kelly Russell has overcome odds to succeed as an Oregon volleyball player

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

When Kelly Russell was a freshman at Prairie High School in Vancouver, Wash., she had visions of being a soccer player.

A gifted athlete with quick feet and good vision, Russell was set to excel on the field. But there was one huge problem. She despised running.

"I was going out for soccer in the fall, but then I found out how much they had to run," Russell said. "I was like, 'uh uh, I'm not going to run that much. What other sports are there?'"

After turning away from soccer, Russell chose volleyball as her athletic path and has been on a winding road ever since. Now a sophomore middle blocker for the Ducks, the last five and a half years have been filled with ups, downs and plenty of unpredictable moments.

Russell started playing for the elite Nike Northwest Junior Volleyball Club in Gresham as a sophomore, where she would meet Oregon head coach Carl Ferreira.

"When I initially recruited her, she wasn't a high end player," Ferreira said. "But you could see that greatness for her was right around the corner."

Russell said she can remember some of the first conversations she had with Ferreira.

"My sophomore year, Carl would come to my club practices and would come over to my court and talk to me," Russell said. "(He'd say) 'you're doing good, you're improving and I'm going to keep my eye on you.' I always thought he was joking around because I wasn't very good."

"I wasn't on the top teams, and I wasn't the player the coaches were looking at."

It turns out one of the players the coaches were looking at would greatly influence Russell's life. Jodi Bell, now a sophomore setter for the Ducks, was one of the top volleyball recruits in the nation while attending Barlow High School in Gresham. The two became club teammates their junior year, but weren't on the best of terms.

"We didn't get along really well because I wasn't very good," Russell said. "She was young and didn't have very much patience and I was young and didn't know what I was doing."

"That whole year we worked together and she never gave up on me and never stopped setting me."

During their junior year, the duo made a trip to Oregon, but Russell felt like she was

simply tagging along.

"I came with Jodi and it just seemed like the whole trip was for her," Russell said. "I thought I was just there for (someone to tell me) 'if you want to walk-on you can sure come.'"

"(Ferreira) ended up offering me (a scholarship) when I went up to his office and I was really surprised."

After wrapping up her high school career, Russell moved to Eugene and roomed with Bell in H.P. Barnhart.

"She was my best friend last year," Bell said of Russell. "She's a caring person who is always there when you need her. She always knows great advice to give you with relationships or anything."

Oregon started the season 9-4, but Russell and the Ducks would soon run into problems. The initial joy of coming to college had worn off. Russell missed her family, friends and was stressed out by school work and the team's struggles. Player relationships were strained by the a 2-17 finish, and six players eventually quit or left the team for personal reasons.

There were several points during the season that Russell felt like walking away. Volleyball had become a burden. But every time she was close to giving up, she turned to her mother, Sandra Russell, for a free therapy session.

"I'm very close with my mom; I look up to her a lot," Russell said. "She kept me

Turn to **VOLLEYBALL**, page 12A