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Hank Hager
Behind the dish

Tedford is central to Bears' outlook

The Pacific-10 Conference is a fickle world for college football coaches.

Oregon's Mike Bellotti is the dean of the conference, this being his ninth season with the Ducks. After that, only Arizona State's Dirk Koetter and USC's Pete Carroll can attest to being in their third season with their respective programs.

In other words, the conference tends to chew coaches up and spit them out with regularity.

Yet it's a former Oregon coach that may be making the biggest waves this season. California head coach Jeff Tedford led the Golden Bears to a 7-5 record last season in his first season at the helm in Berkeley.

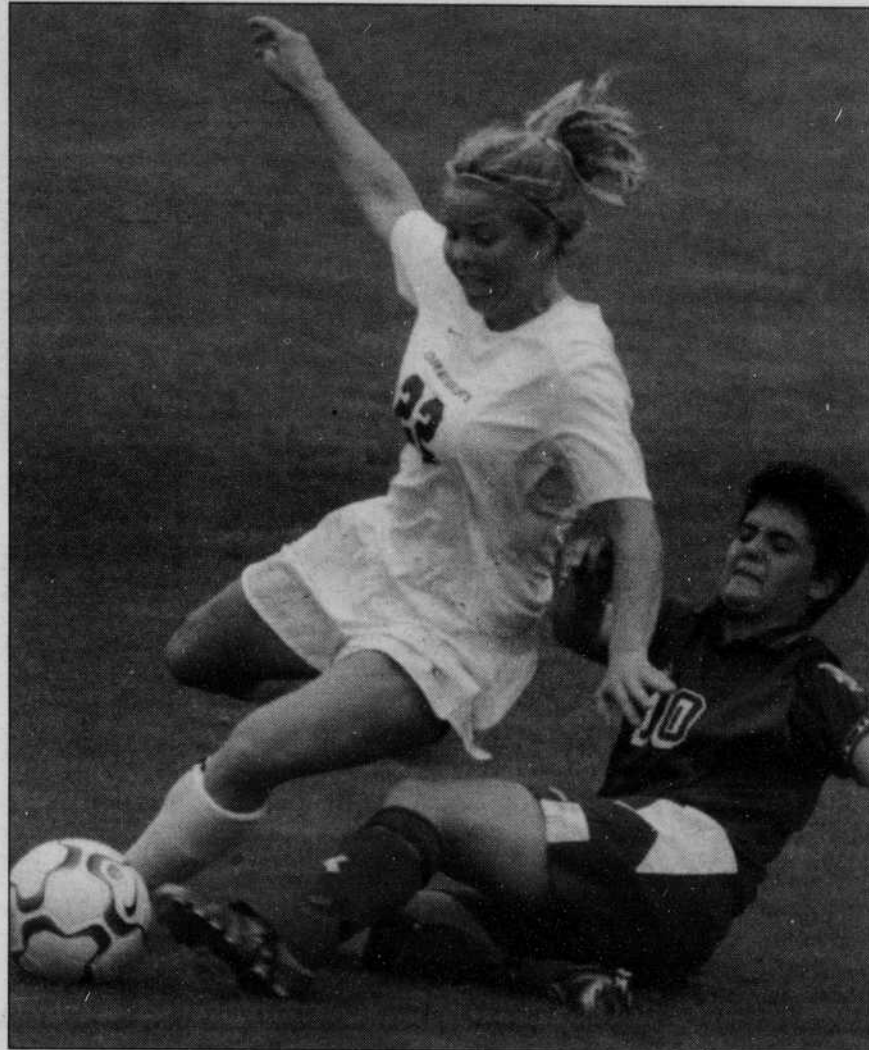
Granted, he's led the team to a .500 record — 5-5 — so far this season, but that's a remarkable feat considering the Golden Bears haven't had back-to-back winning seasons since 1990 and 1991. That's when Bruce Snyder patrolled the sidelines, and since then, California has had Keith Gilbertson, Steve Mariucci and Tom Holmoe cycle through the system.

Only Mariucci led the team to a non-losing record, and that was a 6-6 year in 1996.

Tedford's teams have played with enthusiasm, intensity and focus since he arrived last season. His players have

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Final two games to tell all for Oregon



Mark McCambridge Photographer

Redshirt junior Erin Engelhardt has given Oregon a spark on offense as of late, scoring her first career goal with the Ducks against Stanford. UO's tournament hopes rest on this weekend.

Oregon searches for its first-ever NCAA tournament berth with two games at Papé Field

By **Jesse Thomas**
Sports Reporter

It has come down to the wire.

It's the final two regular season games for the Oregon women's soccer team, and the final chance to prove it is worthy for a bid to the NCAA tournament. It's seniors Lindsey Werdell and Mary Etter's final chances to play at Papé Field.

In Oregon's final homestand against USC and UCLA this weekend, the Ducks will wrap up what has perhaps been the best season in the program's history with a 9-9 overall record and 3-4 ledger in conference.

DUCK SOCCER

"It definitely means a lot, not only for the tournament but also for Lindsey and for the seniors," junior defender Christine Mintz said. "(It's the) end of a year that has basically been about turning the program around and developing a new attitude on the team."

Oregon's position isn't easy. The goal all year has been to advance to the postseason for the first time in the program's history. The Ducks are right on the cusp for a bid; two wins this weekend would give them a solid chance, whereas one win would leave them questionable.

USC (7-7-4, 3-3-1) and No. 2 UCLA (14-1-3, 6-0-1) will give Oregon a hefty challenge to obtain its goal. But the Ducks are used to defying the odds.

"For us to be in this position, it's challenging, but that's OK," Oregon head coach Bill Steffen said. "We faced challenges all year so we're OK with it. It's not easy to say we got to win two games against two teams that are nationally ranked and tournament teams year in and year out."

Oregon hosts USC on Friday at 7 p.m. and UCLA on Sunday at 1 p.m. at Papé Field. Both teams have advanced to the NCAA tournament for the past three years and both teams have defeated nationally ranked squads this season.

The Ducks have nothing to lose when they face the Trojans, since they have yet to defeat USC in seven tries. In last year's

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Quarterback finds success in first season at Cal

Cal quarterback Aaron Rodgers is the next in line for success under head coach Jeff Tedford's guidance

By **Mindi Rice**
Senior Sports Reporter

California head coach Jeff Tedford has taught a few well-known quarterbacks in his coaching career. Five top 20, first-round NFL draft picks have

come from Tedford's guidance, including the No. 1 and No. 3 picks — David Carr of Fresno State and Oregon's Joey Harrington — in the 2002 draft.

In his second season as head coach of the Golden Bears, Tedford may have a future top draft pick in transfer sophomore Aaron Rodgers.

Rodgers spent his first collegiate season at Butte College in Chico, Calif., where he garnered Division I attention while leading his junior college to

a No. 2 national ranking.

"He certainly is a great find," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "He's really the first guy that Jeff's recruited in a long time. He picked a good one."

The Chico native threw for 2,408 yards and 28 touchdowns in his sole season at Butte, where the team went 10-1.

"I told my junior college coach that if I had a

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Ducks roll into first game with injuries, work to do

The Ducks start their 2003-04 season with a young lineup due to injuries to key players during practices

By **Hank Hager**
Sports Editor

It's that time of year again for the Oregon men's basketball team.

A time wrought with challenges from the opposing team ...

Oh wait, that's the regular season. On Sunday, the Ducks will participate in their first exhibition game of the season against the Basketball Travelers at McArthur Court. The game starts at 6 p.m.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

"I want to caution people that a lot of people are talking about basketball season and we've got a football season to complete yet," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "We've got to get ready yet and we're not ready yet. We're going to open up the season probably with a freshman point guard, and a freshmen four-man out there on the floor. But they don't play like freshmen. Understand there's going to be some growing pains and there's

work to be done."

That freshman point guard is Seattle native Aaron Brooks, one of the top recruits in the West Coast this season. He has shown flashes of brilliance in practice and will share time with sophomore Brandon Lincoln early in the season.

"It's kind of the same thing we ran in high school," Brooks said. "It's just a little faster and with more talented people."

The rest of the starting five for Sunday should include:

- Center Ian Crosswhite: The Australian averaged 9.3 points per game with the Ducks last season. In Oregon's scrimmage Wednesday, he pounced on rebounds and sank shots from inside.

"I challenged him to play better," Kent said. "I thought he didn't show what he was capable of in our first scrimmage that we had. He stepped up and answered the bell. He did a wonderful job today."

- Forward Mitch Platt: The freshman is expected to see extended time against the Travelers, especially with Matt Short still injured and Luke Jackson questionable for the game. At the team's

scrimmage Wednesday, Platt posted 14 points in 20 minutes.

Platt said he doesn't think he'll be too nervous in his first game at McArthur Court.

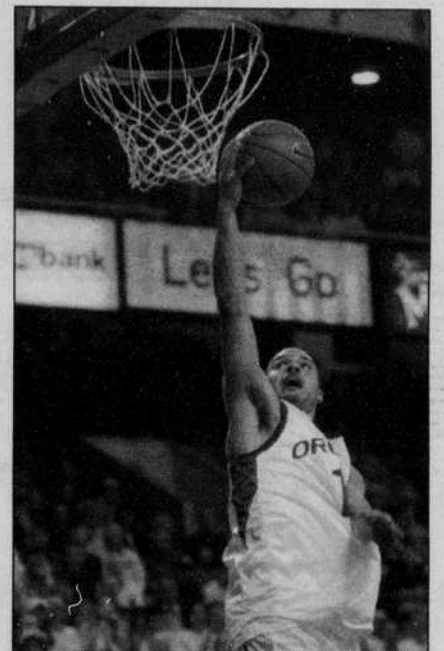
"I'm just anxious to see what the place is like when it's loud," Platt said. "I don't think it's going to be too much different as long as we stick with the system."

- Guard Andre Joseph: The senior was a key threat on the outside for the Ducks last season and has shown the same hot hand this season in practice. With James Davis possibly favoring an ankle — he landed on a teammate at the scrimmage — Joseph could get a nice amount of shots in Oregon's run-and-gun offense.

The game will be a good indication of Joseph's offensive presence.

- Davis: The guard is a long-range threat, but like a number of his teammates, he may see limited — if any — action against the Basketball Travelers. After draining a three-pointer in the scrimmage, he went down clutching his ankle.

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Adam Amato Photo Editor

James Davis may see limited action due to a possible ankle injury he suffered this week.