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Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Ducks take win with final shot in exhibition

Oregon pulls off a close one in its final exhibition test despite poor shooting from the free-throw line

By Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

Forward Ian Crosswhite was Oregon's third option in the final 33 seconds of Monday's game at McArthur Court.

Guards Luke Jackson and James Davis were Oregon's first and second options. As the defenders collapsed on Davis, Crosswhite was low in the post battling man-to-man.

With a quick turn to the basket, Crosswhite executed as if there weren't seven seconds left on the clock and a 74-74 tie. But there was a tie, and the game was in its waning moments.

Crosswhite wasn't even expecting the ball.

"No, I was screening for James," Crosswhite said. "He threw an unbelievable pass. He got that pass through there."

Crosswhite's final score gave Oregon the 76-74 win in its second and final exhibition game against the EA Sports All-Stars.

It was the little things that didn't go Oregon's way that left it close. Early in the game, turnovers hurt

Oregon as the Ducks played unselfishly. Second-chance attempts didn't go in the basket early on. The Ducks shot 35.7 percent from the free-throw line.

"We didn't shoot the ball well at times," head coach Ernie Kent said. "We shot free throws poorly, which gives me some things we certainly need to work on."

It was Oregon's first true test. Oregon had no trouble defeating MBC Nikolaev in its first exhibition. But it was a wake-up call that Oregon needed.

"It was a game that was great for us to play at this time of year," Kent said. "That's a much better game for us than to beat someone by 30 or 40. That team was a team that made us think. They made us

play some tough basketball at times."

Oregon's test came early on. EA Sports took a 12-10 lead six minutes in and held it for nearly all of the first half. Forward Ed O'Bannon had 11 of his 21 points in the first 20 minutes. He led all scorers in the game.

When forward Maurice Spillers earned a technical foul with less than a minute to go in the half, Oregon went on a 5-point swing to lead, 46-40, at halftime. Spillers was caught having words with Jackson.

"He really wasn't talking to me that much," Jackson said. "But on the play before that, he was running down the floor, and he took a cheap shot at me and there were some words said."

Oregon wasted no time to start the second half. After a Crosswhite layup and freshman Aaron Brooks' break-away, the Ducks had the game's biggest lead, 54-43, at 15:35.

But EA Sports made its free throws and converted on the fast break and with less than 10 minutes to go, pulling it to within six points. EA Sports was 93.3 percent from the free-throw line, bettering Oregon's 5 for 14 performance.

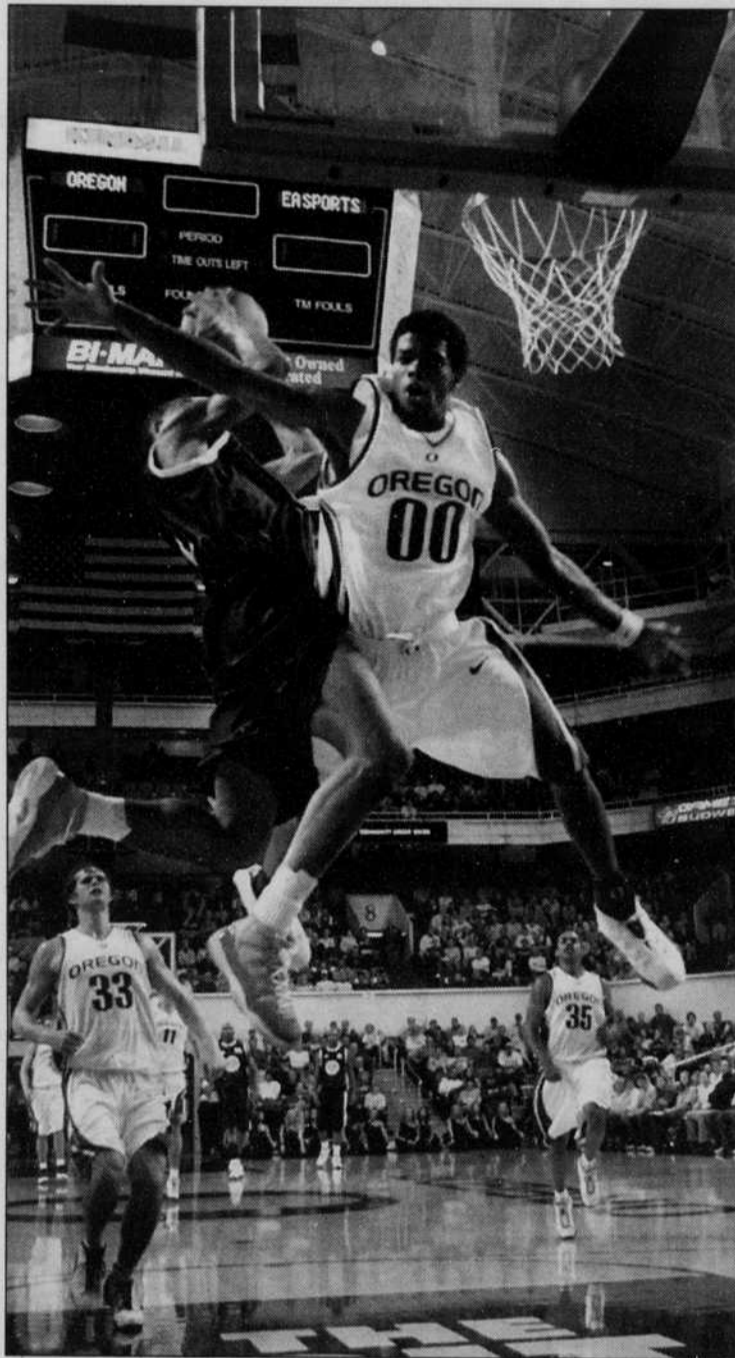
"We led the league two years in free throw shooting," Crosswhite said. "Guys and personally myself are going to have to get in there late at night and shoot up a 100 free throws."

As EA Sports continued to chop away at Oregon's lead, it was at the 1:47 mark when the teams met at a deadlock of 74. With the clock winding down, Davis found Crosswhite for the game-winner.

"Two guys came out on me, and I was hoping I wouldn't have to shoot it, as terrible as I'm shooting," Davis said.

Davis had plenty of looks, but they didn't fall as he went 1 for 7 from the field. Jackson led Oregon with 17 points in his 34 minutes, but they all came in the first half. Brooks had 11 points.

Oregon shot 49.2 percent from the field. EA Sports was 54.9 percent on field goals and out-rebounded the Ducks 32 to 27. The Ducks shot twice as many three-pointers than their opponent, finishing 9 for 26. Jackson



Adam Amato Photo Editor

Despite the presence of Oregon's Aaron Brooks (00), EA Sports' Dion Bailey was able to make the layup with 3:16 left in the second half to pull his team within two points.

earned three of those three-pointers.

The Ducks know they have work to do before they face Fresno State on Friday night at McArthur Court. The little things, including free throw shooting and improved defense, top the list.

"Fresno State will be a very athletic

basketball team," Kent said.

"They play a lot of one-on-one basketball. They've got a pretty good system. They really pound the glass very similar to this team."

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Hank Hager
Behind the dish

Don't be deceived by second impression

There were issues Monday night at McArthur Court.

Issues such as 15 Duck turnovers, 5 of 14 shooting from the free-throw line and 27 rebounds compared to the EA Sports All-Stars' 32.

Oh, well. Big deal. Time to move on.

Oregon players and head coach Ernie Kent said after the game they were concerned with those numbers, but in an exhibition game, those figures really don't matter. Those numbers are just statistical figures that get wiped out when the Ducks open the regular season Friday against Fresno State.

Worry then if those kind of figures pop up again.

With a young team playing at McArthur Court this season, growing pains are expected. The starting five of Ian Crosswhite, Mitch Platt, Luke Jackson, Andre Joseph and Aaron Brooks has little experience playing with each other.

Platt and Brooks started just their second games at Oregon, and Crosswhite didn't start full time last year. Joseph was the sixth man off the bench in most contests.

The only starter from the game Monday that saw significant action early on in games last year was Jackson.

No worries.

The Oregon offense can be described as high-octane, a run-and-gun kind of fun. The fans at McArthur are going to be on their feet more than last season, more so because of the kinds of plays the Ducks are able to pull off.

They will be fast and they will be acrobatic, which was exactly what the Ducks showed on Monday.

The problem is, they passed the ball a little too much and turned the ball over a

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Rodgers proving Tedford right by having career season at Cal

California defeated Washington by 47 points Saturday with Aaron Rodgers pacing the Golden Bears' offense

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

Aaron Rodgers has become the real deal at California.

The junior from Chico, Calif., was one person named the Pacific-10 Conference's Player of the Week on Monday after throwing for 348 yards against Washington on Saturday. His scintillating performance came as the Golden Bears handily defeated the Huskies, 54-7, for their sixth win of the season.

California needs one more win — its final game of the season coming against Stanford on Saturday — to become bowl eligible for the first time since 1996.

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"They've been playing well lately," Rodgers said of the

game next week. "We're going to have to play another good game. It's going to be a big game, the big game. There are a lot of bowl implications on the line for both teams, so it should be interesting."

The first of Rodgers' 20 completions came just 18 seconds in the game and made a statement to the home crowd that the Bears are for real. Wide receiver Geoff McArthur found a seam in the Washington defense and sprinted for a 79-yard touchdown reception.

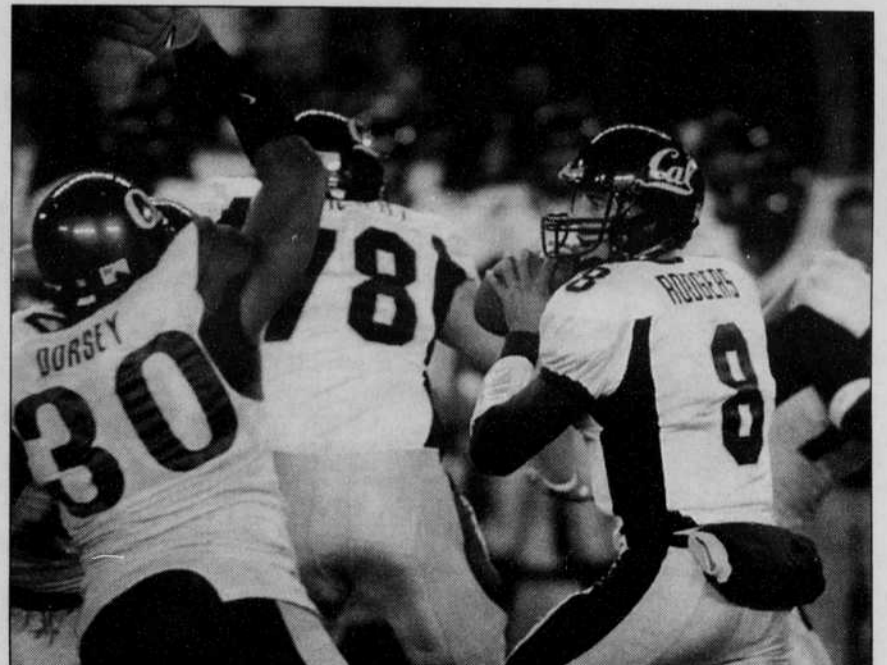
Cal scored four touchdowns and two field goals in its first six possessions.

The Golden Bears didn't punt the ball until 2:11 remained in the third quarter.

"We couldn't stop anything they were doing," Washington defensive tackle Terry Johnson said. "They were prepared for our schemes."

Rodgers has been the catalyst of the California offense that has helped lead the team to three wins in its last four games. In two of those three wins, he's passed for more than 300 yards.

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Mark McCambridge Photographer

Quarterback Aaron Rodgers (8) has been the catalyst for the Cal offense, which has paced the Golden Bears to three victories on their last four games.