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Best bet
NCAA basketball:
Michigan State vs. Kansas
6 p.m., ESPN

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Hank Hager
Behind the dish

Clemens becomes captain of UO ship

More than one time after Oregon's victory over Oregon State on Saturday, head coach Mike Bellotti made it a point to praise quarterback Kellen Clemens.

Just as quickly, though, he understood that the redshirt sophomore has room to grow.

"He didn't play a perfect game," Bellotti said. "I told him when he came off the field that the great thing about this is he still has room for improvement."

"Several of his scrambles he used his athleticism and showed greater speed than I think anybody thought he had. I was pleased. He became the captain of the ship, in a sense."

Cool, calm and collected, Clemens found the gaps in Oregon State's defense and exploited them. He showed poise in the pocket, picking the best times to tuck the ball in his arms and run with it.

His numbers weren't sterling, but his mastery of the offense was. He waited as long as need be on his 15-yard loft to Terrence Whitehead in the first quarter. He bulleted the ball to Demetrius Williams in the back of the end zone in the second and found a wide open Dante Rosario in the third.

"He made plays," Bellotti said. "He threw a couple of passes that were great individual efforts."

Clemens proved that in the next two seasons in Eugene, he will be an offensive leader for the Ducks. He will lead Oregon to winning seasons, extending the team's bowl streak to nine and its season-winning streak to 12.

That would be ideal, of course, but if he can play with the same kind of confidence he exhibited against California, UCLA and Oregon State, the Ducks will be in an idealistic world.

Clemens is a leader in the truest sense. All season, he has deflected questions surrounding his personal confidence to the team's. He says his confidence hasn't wavered, despite the poundings at the hands of Washington State, Arizona State and Washington.

And why should it?

Oregon, after all, is just four points away from being 9-3 instead of 8-4. Clemens has played a big role in that.

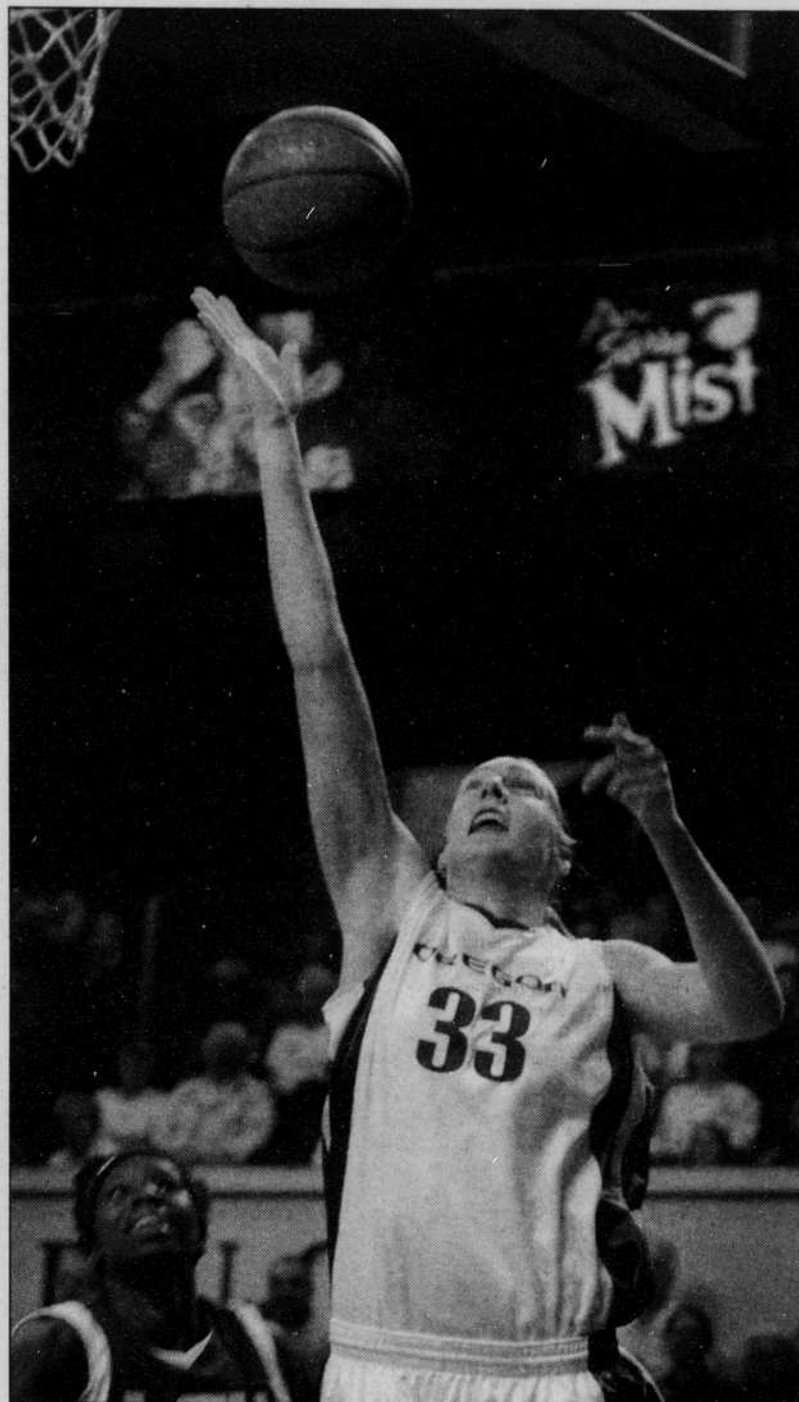
He's lost a starting wide receiver in Keith Allen, a fullback in Luke Rowley, a starting offensive lineman in Joey Forster and seemingly tight end after tight end to injuries.

That's just on the offensive side of the ball.

He's been able to take the rag-tag Ducks and mold them into a capable offensive unit. He doesn't seem to play favorites on the field, getting the ball to each of his receivers, creating a balanced offensive attack. Clemens has utilized Samie Parker's speed and has taken advantage of the apparently sure hands of Williams.

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Oregon faces first road test tonight



Adam Amato Photo Editor

Cathrine Kraayeveld will lead Oregon tonight when the Ducks take on Gonzaga in Spokane. Oregon defeated Gonzaga, 83-72, last season at McArthur Court.

The Ducks battle with Gonzaga during their first road game of the season

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

The Oregon women's basketball team faces its first road test of the season tonight against Gonzaga at The Kennel in Spokane, Wash.

It will be the first action in more than a week for the No. 24 Ducks (2-0), who last played Nov. 16, defeating then-No. 9 LSU, 76-67, at McArthur Court.

Junior point guard Corrie Mizusawa said the Ducks have taken advantage of their lengthy preparation time between games and are looking forward to stepping back on the court.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

"I think it's been good practice for us based on our (victories over Valparaiso and LSU)," Mizusawa said. "We're definitely excited to go to Gonzaga and get ready to play."

After being crowned champions of the Women's Sports Foundation Classic nine days ago, the Ducks are making sure not to take upset-minded Gonzaga for granted. After confidence-building wins against Valparaiso and LSU, along with games against Kansas and North Carolina State coming this weekend, it would be very easy for the Ducks to overlook the Bulldogs.

"We're in their house and their kennel," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "We have a big target on our back. We're a Pac-10 school, and they're going to give us their 'A' game and we have to bring ours."

Oregon has never lost to Gonzaga in seven meetings dating to 1986, including last year's season-opening 83-72 victory at

McArthur Court.

Gonzaga is led by junior Ashley Burke. The 6-foot-1 forward is averaging 17.5 points per game while connecting on 74 percent of her shots. Sophomore forward Ashley Anderson is the only other Bulldog averaging double figures at 14.5 points per game. Anderson is also the team's top rebounder with six per game.

Gonzaga's main outside threat is junior Raenna Jewell. The 5-foot-10 guard is averaging 8.5 points per game and has connected on three of seven three-point attempts. As a team, the Bulldogs are struggling from the outside, connecting only 26 percent of the time from behind the arc. Perimeter shooting struggles aside, Gonzaga is shooting 50 percent as a team.

Along with the Bulldogs' talented trio, the Ducks know they'll have to battle the added pressure that comes with playing as a top 25 team.

"It's a little more pressure on us, but we just have to go into every game playing the way we know we can play," Mizusawa said. "We did that against Valpo and LSU, so hopefully we can do that (tonight)."

Mizusawa is third on the team in scoring at seven points per game, but more importantly, she has done an excellent job of distributing the ball among her teammates. Mizusawa has created open shots for teammates at all spots on the floor, while averaging nine assists per game.

Senior forward Cathrine Kraayeveld has been the main beneficiary of Mizusawa's passing skills. Kraayeveld leads Oregon with 25.5 points per game, scoring both inside and outside. The 6-foot-4 forward has connected on nine of 18 three-point attempts and is shooting 50 percent from the floor overall.

Kraayeveld is also averaging 10 rebounds and 3.5 blocks per

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Ducks take 21st in NCAA Championships

Eric Logsdon and Ryan Andrus earn All-American honors and the Ducks nab a 21st-place finish

By Scott Archer
Freelance Reporter

Oregon wanted to finish in the top 20 in the nation at the end of the cross country season.

It came close; the Ducks finished at No. 21.

The Ducks entered the 2003 NCAA Championships in Waterloo, Iowa, hoping to have peak performances as a group — something they hadn't done all year.

The race was a reflection of the way the season had gone for the Ducks. There was a terrific finish by Oregon's three All-Americans. But the rest of the team failed to provide an extra push that could catapult the team

into the top 20 finish the Ducks knew they were capable of producing.

Oregon was led by Eric Logsdon, as the junior finished the race 29th overall, finishing the 10,000-meter race in 30 minutes, 13 seconds. Ryan Andrus finished 51st overall in 30:25, followed by Brett Holts, who finished in 30:39, good for 70th overall.

Both Logsdon and Andrus earned All-America honors again this year.

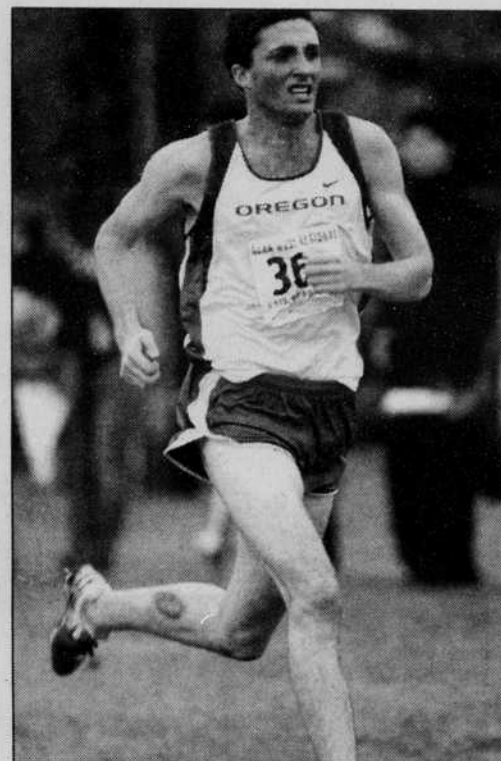
"Through the first mile I was around 75th or 80th, and was still stuck back at 60th after the halfway point," Logsdon said. "I didn't get into the top 50 until between the seventh and eighth kilometers, and from there I passed a ton of people."

But it was Oregon's final two runners that finished 198th and 205th, respectively, that kept Oregon from moving a few spots up in the finish.

Shane Ahlers finished with a time of 31:46, while Noel Paulson finished 31:50.

"This race has been symbolic of

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Eric Logsdon led Oregon at the NCAA Championships, finishing 29th overall.
Geoff Thurner
Oregon Media Services