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Marshall no match for run-and-gun UO offense

Oregon received a scare when forward Mitch Platt went down with an ankle sprain late in the 29-point win over the Thundering Herd

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

PORTLAND — Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said it was the best game that Aaron Brooks has played in a Ducks uniform.

He said senior guard James Davis finally "embraced" his role with the Ducks and that Brandon Lincoln is continuing to learn in his role off the Oregon bench.

He said Oregon's 90-61 victory over Marshall on Saturday in front of 9,409 at the Papé Jam was a perfect win, save for an injury to forward Mitch Platt late in the game.

"We needed this game to grow and gain confidence in our system," Kent said.

Overshadowing Oregon's 29-point win at the Rose Garden was the injury to Platt, occurring late in the second half. The freshman appeared to step on the foot of a Marshall player, and quickly limped to the sideline before a timeout was called.

He was carried off the court and to the Oregon locker room. Reports after the game indicated a high-ankle sprain on his left foot, but he will be re-evaluated early next week.

"We're going to hope everything is OK with Mitch Platt," Kent said. "We're going to hope that it's just a sprain."

If it's not, the Ducks (3-0 overall) expect to have sophomore Matt Short back into the lineup against Kansas in Kansas City, Mo., on Dec. 13. He has been sidelined with a foot injury since before the season began, but Kent said he expects Short to start drills in practice next week in preparation of his first game of the season.

Platt's injury may have been the only way to wipe off the exclamation point from Oregon's game. The Ducks established their offense early and often. A 44-30 half-time lead paved the way for the offense to stretch out Marshall's defense in the second half en route to the 29-point win.

That was especially important after the Ducks looked sloppy in a seven-point win over Portland State on Tuesday.

"That 10-day layoff took some time for our guys to adjust," Oregon forward Luke Jackson said of the previous game. "We got back into rhythm and prepared for these guys."

Jackson led all scorers with 21 points on 9 of 17 shooting. He has scored at least 20 points in each of his three games this season.

Davis, who didn't play against Portland State for academic reasons, hit four three-pointers and finished with 16 points.

"James Davis tonight completely embraced his role on this team," Kent said. "If he can continue to do that, he will be dangerous for us."

Oregon's transition offense returned to its traditional run-and-gun style. While the Vikings were able to hang with the Ducks' speed, Marshall (2-3) could not keep up.

The Ducks dished out 22 assists, led by Jackson's seven. Brooks registered six.

"We played a very good basketball team, and we weren't able to hang in there," Marshall head coach Ron Jirsa said. "Oregon does such a great job in transition offense."

Overall, Oregon shot 53 percent from the field and made 12 three-pointers. The Ducks limited the Thundering Herd to less

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Adam Amato Photo Editor

Aaron Brooks skies-high during Oregon's 29-point victory over Marshall Saturday in Portland. The freshman had six assists as the Ducks improved to 3-0 in the 2003 season.

Oregon plays all-around solid defense and forces Marshall into poor shooting and 25 turnovers

By Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

PORTLAND — Bring on Kansas.

The Oregon defense is ready.

The Ducks showed up Saturday night ready to play Marshall in the sixth annual Papé Jam. Oregon (3-0) forced the Thundering Herd to turn the ball over 25 times in its blowout win, 90-61, in front of 9,409 at the Rose Garden.

"We knew Marshall would turn the ball over if we mixed up the defense a little bit," senior forward Luke Jackson said.

Oregon's 10 days off prior to the Portland State game Nov. 25 looked to affect the offense earlier this week, but in the Ducks' rout on Saturday, it was clear that the team's defense strongly benefited from the time off.

Oregon mixed up its defense throughout the night between man-to-man and zone, causing Marshall (2-3) into a scramble several times. At two significant points in the second half, Marshall made poor passes and Jackson converted with a layup and dunk on the other end.

Oregon led by as many as 33 at one point late in the second half. The Thundering Herd had one fewer turnover in the first half than Oregon had in the whole game.

"We had 16 turnovers in the first half, which in our case, was almost impossible to overcome," Marshall head coach Ron Jirsa said. "They're quicker. We weren't able to create any open people even by getting the ball inside. I thought Oregon did a very good job guarding us on the perimeter."

Oregon had redshirt freshman Jordan Kent back from the injured list, which the Ducks credited as a strong factor in the success of the defense. Kent, also a star in track and field, gives Oregon solid quickness on the perimeter, which forced Marshall to shoot without solid looks at the basket.

"Jordan Kent, he's a really great athlete," Jackson, who had a game-high 21 points, said. "Where he's most effective is on the defensive end with his speed."

Oregon's game plan was to take junior guard Ronny Dawn out of the game.

Oregon did just that.

Dawn was averaging 15.3 points per game coming into the contest and was leading his team in scoring. The Ducks kept him to just three points, which came off a basket from beyond the three-point line.

"We were outstanding at limiting his

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Oregon rebounds against Rams

The Ducks defeat Colorado State at the Papé Jam two nights after being blown out by Portland

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

PORTLAND — The Oregon women's basketball team rebounded from Thursday's 18-point loss to Portland by defeating Colorado State, 62-50, at Saturday's Papé Jam at the Rose Garden.

No. 20 Oregon closed the game on a 17-4 run during the final six minutes, improving to 6-1 on the season. The Ducks played with a sense of urgency down the stretch, eliminating many of the mistakes that cost them the Thursday game against the Pilots.

"We were definitely looking to push the tempo up a little in the second half," junior point guard Corrie Mizusawa said. "That's one of the main focuses of our team, in terms of running the ball up the court, because that's our game. We didn't do that as

much in the first half, but once we were able to get into a rhythm and play a little bit better defense, we were able to push the ball up the court."

It appeared Oregon's season had taken a turn for the worst when senior All-American candidate Cathrine Kraayeveld was lost for the season after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in her right knee during a practice last week. After falling to Portland 76-58 on Thursday, the Ducks proved Saturday they could win without their leading scorer and rebounder with an overall team effort.

Oregon committed only 10 turnovers — its lowest total of the season — and held Colorado State to 29 percent shooting for the game.

"We decided (Thursday's) game was over," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "There were lessons that we needed to learn in terms of our preparation and how we approached that game and then we put it in a little paper bag and left it in the garbage can in (the Portland) locker room and just

walked away from it."

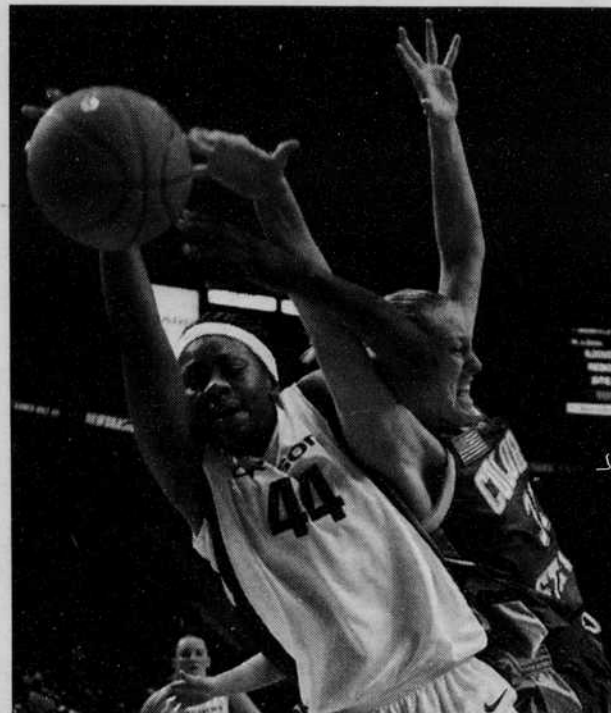
Junior center Andrea Bills led all scorers with 17 points and sophomore forward Carolyn Ganes added 16, helping to fill the void inside caused by the absence of Kraayeveld.

"Obviously, they're big and they think they can muscle their way around," Colorado State head coach Chris Denker said. "We knew that they were going to take it inside a lot. We allowed them early on to get inside and they took advantage of it."

Oregon was able to finish off Colorado State by knocking down free throws and increasing its defensive pressure during the final 6:05. The Ducks connected on 9 of 10 freebies down the stretch, while holding the Rams to just four points.

Colorado State (3-3) grabbed a 46-45 lead on a three-pointer from senior forward Joy Jenkins with 6:21 remaining in the second half. A pair of free throws by Ganes 16 seconds later put Oregon back in front, 47-46. The Ducks held the lead for the remainder of

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Adam Amato Photo Editor

Andrea Bills had 17 points to lead all scorers in Portland.