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6:00-6:50	Kickbox Aerobics Michie	Intermed. Step Megan	Kickbox Aerobics Michie	Intermed. Step Megan	

REGISTRATION begins Monday, January 5, 2004, 8am-5p
Classes run from January 12 - March 12, 2004 (9 weeks)

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REC AEROBICS WINTER 2004

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Next three games are key for Ducks after Brooks' loss



Hank Hager
Behind the dish

Three consecutive games against Oregon State, Washington and Washington State.

A game against the Beavers, who don't have Philip Ricci anymore. A game against the Huskies, who saw Doug Wrenn inexplicably leave early for the NBA draft after last season. A game against the Cougars, who are still getting used to new head coach Dick Bennett.

All of that after a split against USC and UCLA last week in Los Angeles.

That's a perfect start to the schedule for Oregon head coach Ernie Kent and his Ducks. Especially after it was learned earlier this week that freshman point guard Aaron Brooks will be out six to eight weeks.

The season's sure not a wash, especially when it's taken into account that the Ducks have gone 24-7 in the last five seasons against the three teams they will play in the next two weeks.

Only Washington has proved to be a match for Oregon, going 6-5 against the Ducks since the 1998-1999 season. But so far this season, Lorenzo Romar's club has done little, shown little and proved that Wrenn was a pretty good basketball player — only he wasn't wise enough to stick around this season, a move that cost him and the Huskies.

So what does this all mean for the Ducks? Well, if everything goes as tradition stipulates, the Ducks will be looking at a 4-1 Pacific-10 Conference record entering games against Arizona State and Arizona in Tempe and Tucson, respectively, in late January.

In a conference where parity rules and dominance drools, the games against the Beavers, Huskies and Cougars will be key. And it won't be just about wins, either.

It will be about how the Ducks fit

the pieces together. With Brooks out of the lineup, it will come down on Brandon Lincoln's shoulders to run the offense, and he will get breathers when James Davis takes over at times. That, however, will limit some of the three-point looks he would normally get, and that in turn will force more outside shots from Luke Jackson, Jordan Kent and Andre Joseph.

Against the three teams the Ducks are supposed to dominate in the next two weeks, Ernie Kent will have the chance to see what works and what doesn't. That will include lineups, sets and rotations.

It all seemed to have worked out perfectly before the UCLA contest and very well could have continued into the second half against the Bruins. But adversity, all too often a cliché in sports these days, struck at the heart of the Ducks.

Brooks was bringing the offense together, streamlining it and getting used to what he could and couldn't do. In turn, his shooters were getting to see what he had in him: a flashy consistency. Brooks made the plays and was getting better at making wiser choices.

He was beginning to know when to shoot and when to make the inside pass against zone defense. Lincoln, meanwhile, has shown that he knows how to run the offense.

He isn't Brooks, however, talent-wise, and will have to overcome that with hard work and an attention to detail. Lincoln has gotten the chance to sit at times and watch as the run-and-gun offense works its magic.

Now, thrust into the spotlight, he gets the chance to run the offense and add his personality to it. He will be a big part of how the Ducks gel in these next three games.

The Ducks will learn a lot about themselves in that span.

And in that span, they will establish their plans for the 2004 NCAA Tournament.

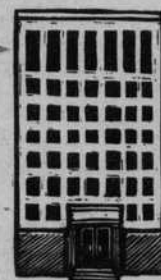
Will they go or won't they? We'll just have to watch and see.

Contact the sports editor
at hankhager@dailyemerald.com.
His opinions do not necessarily
represent those of the Emerald.

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