

Davis continues hot streak from beyond three-point arc

James Davis came close to his season high when he scored 19 points

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

He may have scored just five points in the second half against Washington on Thursday, but Oregon guard James Davis was instrumental in Oregon's win over Washington.

The Vancouver, Wash., native scored 14 points in the first half on the strength of four three-pointers. When Oregon forward Luke Jackson started off slow, Davis surged ahead, nailing all four of those three-pointers within a three-minute span.

"James was a tremendous spark because I think we were a little out of sync," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "He's been unreal at practice and at games."

His 19 points continued a hot streak that has spanned five of the last six games. It began with 14 points against Alabama Dec. 20 and continued on to Oregon's 90-81 loss to Oregon State last Saturday.

His only slow night came against UCLA Jan. 4 when Davis scored eight points against the Bruins.

So far this season, he has scored

double-digit points six of the 10 games he's played in, all of those coming off the bench.

The 19 points were two points shy of his season-high 21 against the University of Southern California. That mark of 21 earlier this season also tied a career-high, set against Washington State and Grambling State in 2002.

"The coaches have the utmost confidence in me right now," Davis said. "My teammates are finding me and I credit my big men for setting great screens and giving me the looks I'm getting."

Davis came into the game a little more than midway through the first half. He knocked down his first three-pointer at the 12:03 mark, pulling the Ducks to within three, 18-15.

Less than a minute later, he tied the score with his second three-pointer of the game, then put Oregon up 30 seconds later with another.

Andre Joseph got the chance for a field goal with 10:13 left, then gave way for Davis, who promptly knocked down one from beyond the arc with 9:31 left, pushing the Ducks to a three-point advantage.

He ended the half with a simple two-pointer from inside the paint with 3:45.

That's a spark for you.

"When James gets hot like that, he's tough," Jackson said. "He's just going to drain those threes. A couple of those were open shots and a couple of those,

there was a guy in his face. He's just a dangerous weapon when he gets hot.

"He's capable of doing that every night. When he gets his feet set, he's in a good rhythm and he gets his confidence, he can shoot it as good as anybody."

The Huskies might as well have held Davis' hand during the second half, making sure to keep him from getting the perimeter shot. Washington made sure to guard him heavily, keeping Davis to one three-pointer — a shot that came with 6:14 left in the game and put Oregon up 71-58.

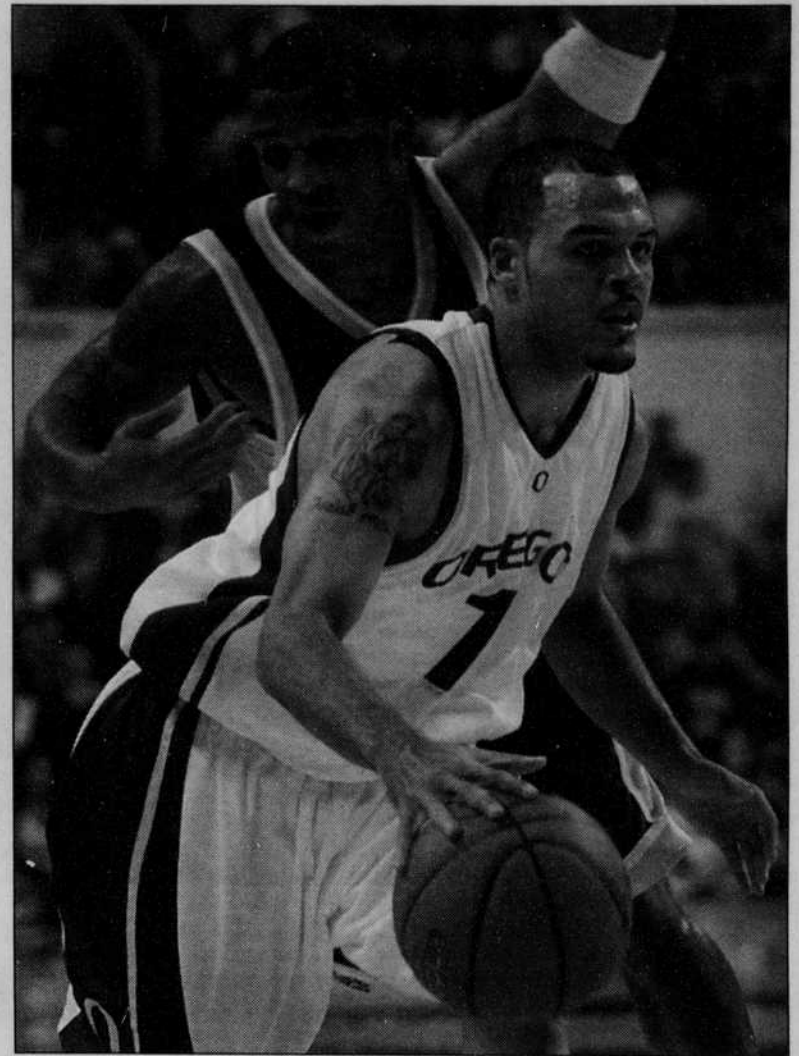
A set of free throws as the game wound down gave him 19 points, his second-highest point total this season.

Davis' five three-pointers on the night gave him 37 on the season, including 19 during Oregon's four Pacific-10 Conference games. He's also now averaging 13.2 points per game this season, 16.3 in the Pac-10.

"I get excited when I see him wide open and there was a play in the second half when I drove baseline and I saw his guy collapsed on me," Jackson said. "I threw it out to him and I just held my hands up. I just felt like I knew it was going to go in."

"Those are just kind of special moments that you just enjoy it while you're out on the floor. You make a pass and you know the crowd's going to erupt."

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Adam Amato Senior Photographer

James Davis scored 19 points against the Huskies — the sixth time this season he scored 10 points or more in a game this season. He made five three-pointers against Washington.

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A panel of 12 to 16 members must be put together just to search for and interview candidates.

"My people know that I have great love for my home state," Moos said, during halftime of Oregon's game against Washington Thursday. "They know — the ones that are close to me — that when I left the state of Washington in 1990, it was my intent to one day return.... If we don't return professionally, we're very happy here."

Moos will one day return to the state, whether that is on a wheat farm in the

eastern part of the state or to Seattle.

It doesn't come as much of a surprise that he is being mentioned to take over the Washington program, and as much as it could potentially hurt Oregon, it would be a boon to the Huskies.

While Moos has to fight wars seemingly every day with critics who raise concerns over the so-called arms race, Washington would pose less of a threat in that regard. Husky fans tasted a national championship in 1991 and won't feel complete until they reach that level soon.

That hasn't happened in Seattle, where Husky football was held out of a bowl. Both of Washington's basket-

ball teams have struggled this season. It was time for a change, whether or not Hedges was going to be pushed out the door.

After a year like no other for the Huskies, that was a distinct possibility.

What the new athletics director will have is the sense of a fresh start with a program that has been under the gun. Enter Moos, who knows what it feels like to have critics stare over his shoulder on a constant basis.

"That would probably be the only one I would consider," Moos said. "I want to look at that position and see what that job is and can be."

If indeed Moos is to leave — whether

that comes in six months or five years — he will vacate a position that is starting to have as much prestige in the nation as any other. With a program that is fully funded by itself and donors — no academic money goes into the athletic pot — the athletics director position with the Ducks would be a wise choice for any candidate.

"My coaches are as good as there are in the country," Moos said. "We're raising money like crazy, we're building facilities at a pace to match anybody in the country. I think the Oregon AD job has become a tremendous job that I feel very fortunate to have."

That's a considerable statement, but

one that is justified when thinking about how far Oregon has come under his guidance. The Ducks have strung together eight straight bowl seasons, and the men's basketball team has enjoyed two straight NCAA Tournament appearances for the first time since the 1960-61 seasons.

So, if Moos were to jump in the fray in Seattle, it wouldn't be surprising to see him head the program next year. Yet at the same time, there is a sense that the Ducks would be just fine.

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

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