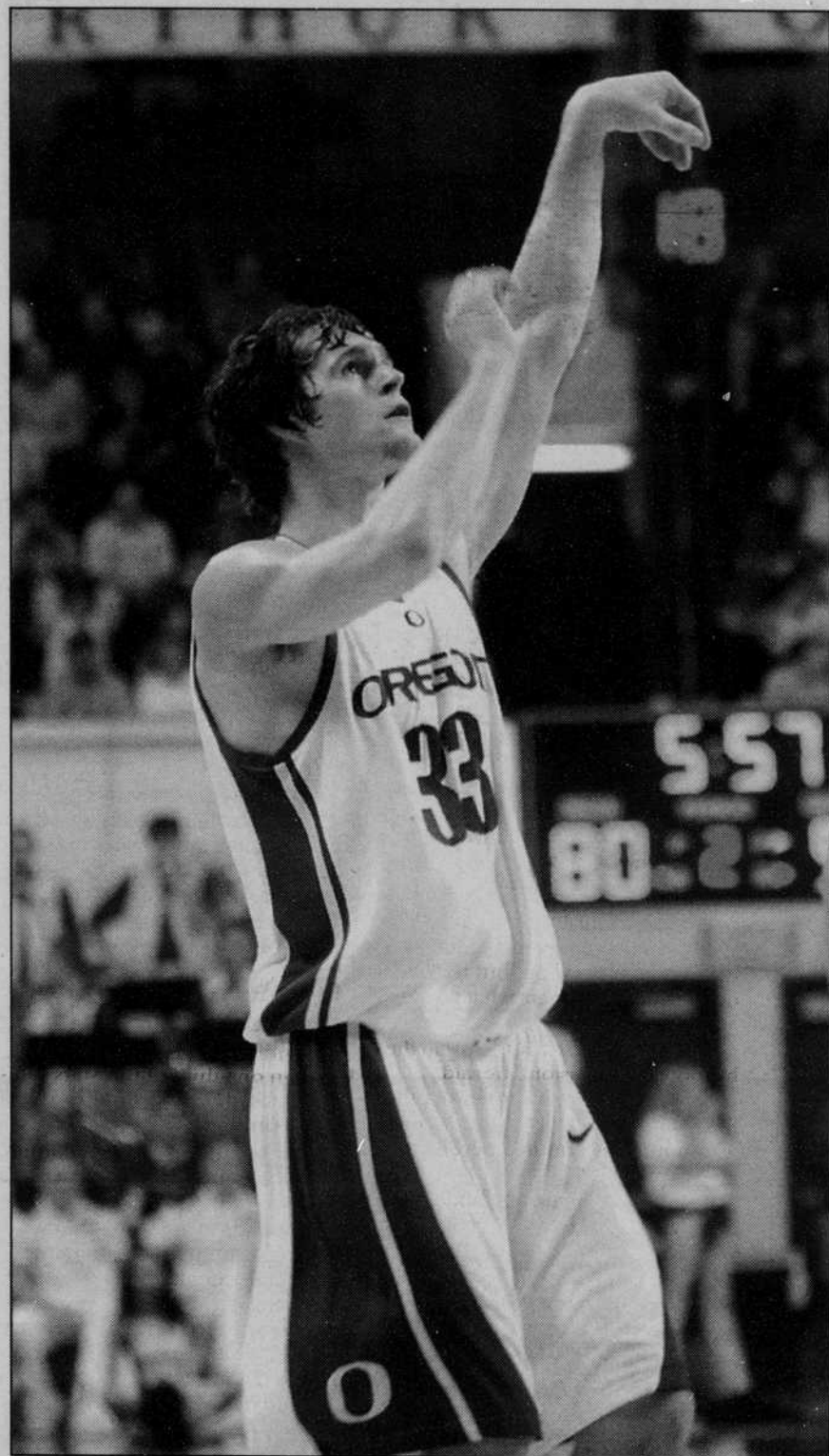


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Erik Bishoff Photographer

Luke Jackson, 33, and James Davis have combined to average almost six three-pointers a game.

Jackson, Davis prove sharpshooting is a must

The 'deadly duo' combines to average more than 35 points and almost six three-pointers per game so far this season

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said James Davis is one of the best shooters he's ever coached.

Forward Luke Jackson has shot a little less than 44 percent from beyond the three-point line in Pacific-10 Conference play and he's still far behind Davis' 65.6 percent clip.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Together, Jackson and Davis make up a deadly duo from beyond the three-point arc, leading Oregon to a national-best 43.7 shooting percentage from downtown.

And that's just two Ducks. Factor in Andre Joseph, who is 20 of 43 overall this season, and Brandon Lincoln, who has made 34.5 percent of his three-point shots, and you've got a stone-cold three-point shooting team.

Oregon is a prime perimeter team that can decide games single-handedly from beyond the arc.

"This has always been an excellent three-point shooting basketball team," Kent said. "The difference this year, particularly over the last couple of years, is we're taking a lot more just better shots, as opposed to we took some bad shots, I felt, last year."

Davis, in particular, has dominated Oregon's outside game, especially in Pac-10 play. He has made 21 of 32 shots in the Ducks' five games, leading to 15 points per contest.

He tied a career high with seven three-pointers against Southern California on Jan. 2.

How do you describe Davis in two words? "Consistent and fluid," Lincoln said. "His shot always looks the same no matter if he's fading away or shooting straight on balance. He always keeps the same mechanics."

Davis has also improved from last season. He hit some pockets — albeit small ones — of inconsistency last year, but still led the Ducks with a 43.1 percentage. This season, he is shooting 52 percent.

The same goes for Jackson. A year ago, he posted

a 36.3 percent mark from the three-point line and has upped that to 45.7 overall.

"One of my goals was to improve my range," Jackson said. "And my jumper and I feel good at where it's at right now."

The beneficiaries of the hot outside shooting include Oregon's post men who have been given more room to work down low. Drawing out an opponent's big men is key, especially come Thursday when Ike Diogu hosts the Ducks at Arizona State.

Ian Crosswhite has led the big men's resurgence at Oregon, averaging 13.7 points and 6.8 rebounds per game.

As a team, the Ducks are averaging two less rebounds per game, 34, than last season, but have held opponents to a little more than 31 per game.

"This year, we have a little more of an inside presence so other teams are going to have to double team and stop the inside scoring," Crosswhite said. "Then the outside guys will get open."

Ranked and ready

Aside from being the best team nationally on three-point shooting, in terms of statistics the Ducks sit at 25th in the country with 79.9 points per game.

Had Oregon played two more games this season to this point, Jackson would be sitting pretty in the national rankings as well. The Creswell native is averaging 22.6 points per game, but to be eligible on the national lists, he needs to have played in at least 14 games or have scored at least 279 points.

Jackson has played in all 12 of Oregon's games and has posted 271 points.

He does, however, sit 24th in the nation in free throw shooting at an 89 percent (65 of 73) clip.

Blast from the past

ESPN.com's Bill Walton, in analyzing Indiana's situation in the Eastern Conference this season, described former Oregon guard Fred Jones in different tones.

"Deep down the rotation is a couple of ever-ready guys who are salivating to establish themselves as real NBA players in Freddie Jones and Jamison Brewer," Walton wrote. "Freddie — with all due respect to Steve Jones and Danny Ainge — is easily argued as the best player to ever come out of the state of Oregon."

Later in his column, Walton isn't so positive about Jones' talents. According to the former Trail Blazer, this scenario could easily happen if the Pacers don't

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Ducks' week of firsts comes at right time in conference season

Oregon's return to the win column Saturday brought out some feats they hadn't seen on the court in 2004

By Mindi Rice
Senior Sports Reporter

It was, in fact, the Ducks' worst loss in Pacific-10 Conference history Thursday: A 95-50 defeat at the hands of Washington in the Bank of America Arena.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

They turned it around Saturday with a 60-50 win against Washington State and ended their skid with a large number of "firsts" in 2004.

It was the first time since a Nov. 16 victory against LSU that Oregon had a 20-point scorer — junior guard Brandi Davis.

It was the first time since a Dec. 18 loss

to George Washington that the Ducks outrebounded their opponent.

It was the first time since a Dec. 16 win against Santa Clara that Oregon scored 60 points.

And it was the first time since a Dec. 6 victory against Colorado State that the Ducks held their opponent to 50 points.

"It was an opportunity for us to rebound and get back on the floor and do the things we didn't do against Washington," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "We really had to let that game go and get back on the court. We didn't talk much about WSU, it was all about us on Saturday."

But the Ducks are not thinking of one win as letting them off the hook. Oregon's focus is turning to the Arizona schools as they come to town Thursday and Saturday, as well as continuing on the team working together.

"We understand that the win against Washington State was what we needed,

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California 'shocked' by death of Lewis by apparent meningitis

The Golden Bears' Alisa Lewis passed away Monday in Oakland; she was 20

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

California junior Alisa Lewis died Monday morning in Oakland, Calif., from apparent bacterial meningitis, university officials said.

Lewis — a 20-year-old from Spokane, Wash. — died shortly after being taken to the hospital Sunday night with a severe headache, rash and flu-like symptoms.

A team spokeswoman told The Associated Press on Monday that doctors believe Lewis probably died from bacterial meningitis, an infection that attacks the brain covering and spinal cord, and spreads through saliva and mucus. The final cause of death, however, is pending further tests.

"Our hearts go out to Alisa's family following this horrible, devastating news," California head coach Caren Horstmeyer told the AP. "Alisa was one of the nicest, hardest-working players I've had the opportunity to coach. We're all in a complete state of shock."

Lewis averaged 1.9 points and 1.7 rebounds in 10 games as a reserve this season.

The 5-foot-11 forward spent the first three seasons of her prep career at Fairfield High School in the Bay Area before attending Gonzaga Prep in Spokane her senior year.

Oregon head coach Bev Smith said Lewis' death is a reminder on how short life can be.

"It's really tragic and unfortunate," Smith said. "It puts in perspective that you have to live every day as it is your last because you never know. Our hearts go out to the family and the Cal team."

Smith also talked to Oregon players on a one-on-one basis about minimizing the chance of contracting meningitis by practicing good hygiene and not sharing water bottles.

Husky turnaround

Washington (10-7 overall, 3-5 Pacific-10 Conference) appears to be back on track after sweeping the Oregon schools last week.

The Huskies improved to 3-5 in the Pac-10 after an injury-plagued 1-5 start. Washington, picked to finish third in both preseason conference polls, hosts Washington State (4-13, 0-8) on Saturday.

Husky guard Giuliana Mendiola said teamwork was one of the main reasons Washington has been successful.

"Whoever stepped on the court brought great intensity," Mendiola said after Thursday's 95-50 win against

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Alisa Lewis