

Thursday, February 19, 2004

CALL HIM CONFIDENT

Oregon forward Ian Crosswhite has taken his confidence and run with it

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

To understand Ian Crosswhite, one must look no further than his play in Oregon's 67-62 overtime win over Washington State on Saturday.

The 6-foot-11 forward contributed a career-high 23 points and five rebounds.

Those stats in themselves are a good indication of his play against the Cougars.

But delve deeper into the sophomore's eyes and ask him what really matters most, and the true Ian Crosswhite comes out into the open.

That is, if you can make it past the massive black bruise surrounding his right eye, otherwise known as a shiner.

At one point in Oregon's win, the redshirt sophomore went up for a shot and was elbowed in the head. As the play moved on and he missed the shot — one of only three misses in 13 attempts for him — he was called for a foul.

Ironic? He thinks so. But the black eye is what stands out the most.

"The shiner was worth it," Crosswhite said. "If we won, it was worth it. As long as we win, I don't care how many shiners I get."

There's a hint of confidence behind Crosswhite's words, and why not? As Oregon's main offensive weapon inside, he has run with the role. Stats-wise, he has been phenomenal.

In a quick glance, he's scored at least 10 points in 17 of the Ducks' 19 games this season. He has posted double-digit figures in the last seven games, four of which ended as Oregon wins.

"No one can stop him right now," Oregon forward Mitch Platt said. "Against Washington State, if he doesn't foul out, we win it outright. He's just been playing real tough lately."

A look at the stat sheet doesn't do Crosswhite justice. His physical stature — he's listed at 6-foot-11 and 250 pounds — is intimidating to even the Pacific-10 Conference's best. He gained five pounds since the end of last season, and he weighs 25 more than when he came to the Ducks as a wide-eyed recruit prior to the 2001 year.

Comfortable? Crosswhite is becoming more so every day, and the Australia native is beginning to show it.

"I know every arena we're going to play in; I know what to expect," Crosswhite said. "I generally know who I'm going to play against and what they're going to be like. Being in the Pac-10 for a couple of years, that helps out a lot, too."

Crosswhite knows what he will see. He has played against Ike Diogu before, and that experience aided Crosswhite when the Ducks played Arizona State on Jan. 22. He scored 15 points.

He knows what he will get from California's Amit Tamir. That enabled Crosswhite to score 16 points in 34 minutes of play in the Ducks' 68-56 win at McArthur Court last month.

Crosswhite knows.

"In the Pac-10, at the four position, you can guard anybody like Amit Tamir — who's 6-foot-10, 6-foot-11 — to Hassan Adams, who's 6-foot-4, 6-foot-5," Crosswhite said. "Each night, you know who you're going to be guarding, but it's going to be a different type of guy. You can guard a guard-like forward or a big man. It just changes."

They're having problems guarding Crosswhite, however.

Last season, that wasn't the case. He posted 9.3 points per game, starting three of Oregon's 33 contests. Crosswhite did have a knack for perimeter play. In 54 three-point attempts, he made 23.

The inside game was lacking, though, so he took the time over the summer to practice. He worked out with the likes of Luke Jackson and Jay Anderson, improving his post play.

Namely, that is, the use of his right hand as an offensive tool.

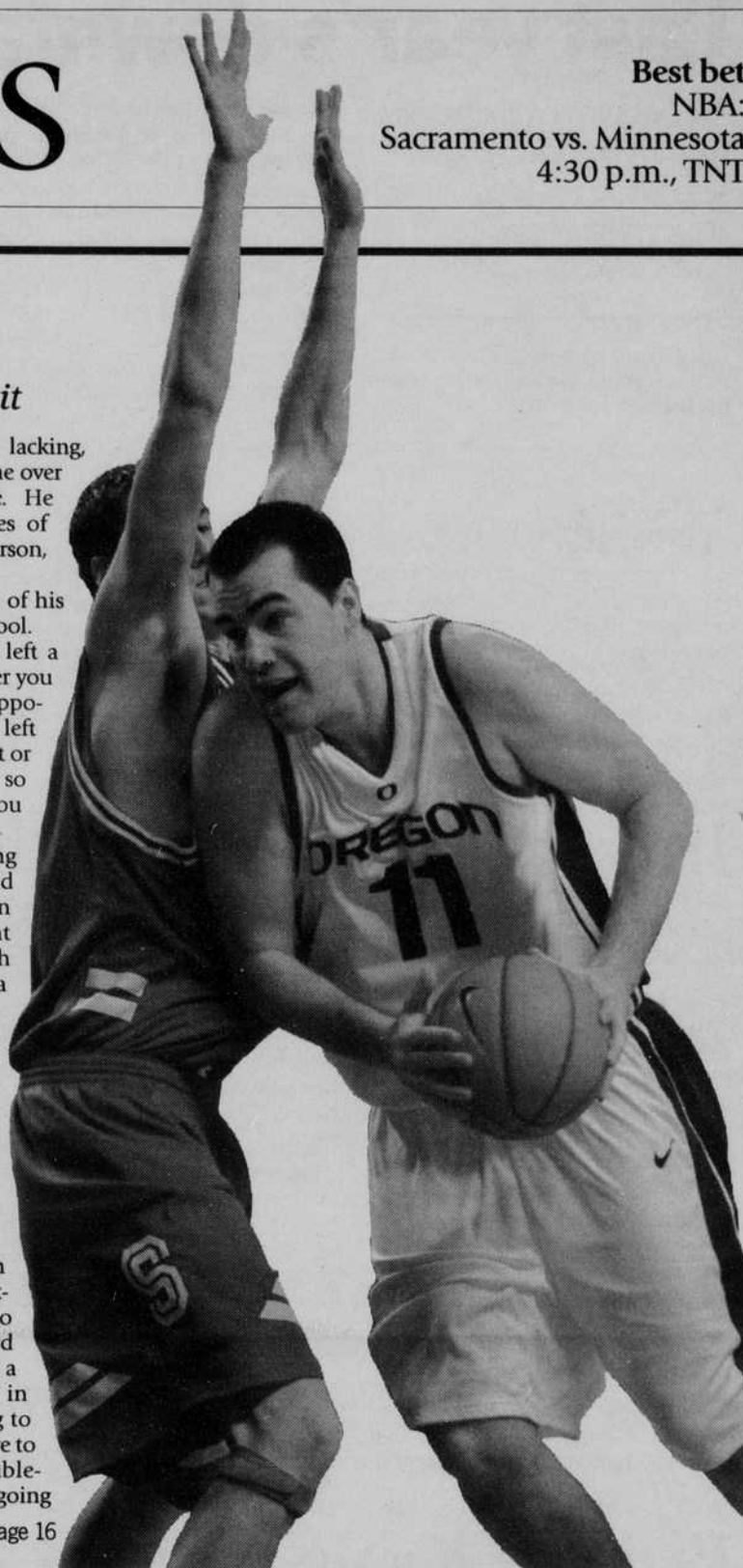
"People recognize I go left a lot," Crosswhite said. "After you go left a lot of times, (opponents) are sitting on your left hand. So you try to go right or fake like you're going right, so they move there and you come back left."

Crosswhite is averaging 14.3 points per game, good enough for second place on Oregon's scoring list. That figure also places him 11th in the Pac-10 above a handful of the conference's big men.

He's also 12th in the Pac-10 in rebounding at 5.9 per game. Rebounding, though, takes a back seat right now as his increased confidence on the scoring end has opened up the team's offense.

"People have just been keying on the guards, taking us out and forcing us to pass it in," Oregon guard James Davis said. "(He's) a presence we haven't had in the past. Ian is just going to work. They're going to have to lift up off of us and double-team him, otherwise, he's going

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Ducks look to finish season strong starting against ASU Sun Devils

Oregon wants to finish the season on a positive note after enduring frustration throughout the year

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

With four regular season games remaining, the Oregon women's basketball team has one goal in mind: finish strong.

Oregon's first crack at achieving its goal comes tonight when the Ducks battle Arizona State at Wells Fargo Arena at 5:30.

The game marks the start of the Ducks' final Pacific-10 Conference road trip of the season, which includes a matchup with



Erik Bischoff Photographer

Chelsea Wagner expects to be pressured by Arizona State defenders tonight.

Arizona on Saturday.

"We just want to finish strong," guard Chelsea Wagner said. "The season has been kind of frustrating for us. (We want to play) the next four games really strong so we can go into the Pac-10 Tournament with the momentum of winning some games."

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Winning games hasn't come easily for the Ducks this season. Injuries to Cathrine Kraayeveld, Corrie Mizusawa, Kedzie Gunderson, Wagner and others have taken a toll. Oregon's (12-12 overall, 4-10 Pac-10) chances of finishing any higher than eighth in the conference are slim to none. With that in mind, the Ducks look to play the role of spoiler as they close their season against three of the Pac-10's top teams, starting with Arizona State.

The Sun Devils (15-8, 9-5) sit in fourth place but trail first-place Stanford by only two games.

"When you're at where we are in the standings, you like to be a spoiler," Oregon assistant coach Allison McNeill said. "That's one of our motivations is go down (to Arizona) and try to knock off one of those teams at home."

In the season's first meeting, Arizona State overcame an eight-point second-half deficit on Jan. 24 to defeat Oregon 69-67 at McArthur Court. Junior guard Betsy Boardman led the way with 13 points for the Sun Devils. The Beaverton native also made a huge defensive play, stripping the ball from Oregon forward Eleanor Haring with less than 10 seconds remaining to seal the victory.

Boardman (12 points per game), forward Kristen Kovesdy (10.4) and guard Kylan Loney (9.2) are the Sun Devils' main offensive threats.

Oregon plans to counter Boardman with its best defender, forward Kedzie Gunderson. The Ducks were without the services of Gunderson during the teams' first meeting, after the 6-foot junior was forced to leave the game with a knee injury just

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Ducks get victory over Portland State to salvage season

Oregon rebounds from its civil war loss to extend its winning streak over Portland State to 22 matches; the Ducks finish the season 2-12 overall and 1-7 in the Pac-10

By Scott Archer
Freelance Reporter

It finally happened.

Heading into its final Pacific-10 Conference match on the season, Oregon needed a win to avoid its worst season ever.

Oregon won 34-13 Wednesday against Portland State, giving the Ducks their first, and because its the end of the regular season, Pac-10 victory.

DUCK WRESTLING

The Ducks double their win total with their triumph Wednesday, and finish the regular season at 2-12 overall and 1-7 Pac-10.

Oregon won seven of its 10 matches, including the team's first match on the night when senior Jake Leair beat his opponent and started the Ducks off on the right foot.

"It's a good way to end the dual meet season and to head into the Pac-10 tournament with positive momentum," said head coach Chuck Kearney. "We wrestled tough tonight and that made the difference in tonight's win."

Oregon also received victories from Cody Parker and Jason Harless. However, the most memorable feat of the night came when Oregon pinned four of its opponents in a row.

Joey Bracamonte, at the 157-pound class, Luke Leair (165-pound class), Chet McBee (174-pound class), and

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