

Friday, March 12, 2004



Hank Hager
Behind the dish

Venue displays impartial Pac-10

LOS ANGELES — Oh, the beauty of a neutral court.

Both the Ducks and Golden Bears showed the ability to dominate at their respective home courts this season. Oregon went 9-3 at McArthur Court this season, California 11-4 at Haas Pavilion.

On the road, it was a much different story. The Ducks struggled, going 4-6 away from Eugene. California was worse, taking a 2-7 hit away from Berkeley.

So when it came down to a neutral court Thursday at the Staples Center, the better team won, right?

The thing is, it's really hard to tell which of these teams was necessarily better. Throughout the season, the Bears and Ducks were the poster boys for the down year in the Pacific-10 Conference.

Both were expected to be one of at least four teams to grind their way through the conference season and earn a bid into the NCAA Tournament — before the Pac-10's postseason even started.

Based on the way each battled one another throughout the season, there really wasn't much definition. The lines were blurred. Oregon and Cal players could have switched jerseys, and

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Oregon sinks Cal with three-pointers



Adam Amato Senior Photographer
Luke Jackson (33) co-led the Ducks with 19 points in an 87-82 win against California.

The Ducks won their first game in the 2004 Pac-10 Tournament, earning Oregon a meeting today against No. 1-seeded Stanford

By **Hank Hager**
Sports Editor

LOS ANGELES — Oregon set a Pacific-10 Conference Tournament record with 13 three-pointers against California Thursday.

But that's only half the story. Had the Ducks made just 12, as they did twice in last season's tournament, Oregon might've headed back to Eugene late Thursday night.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

A freshman decided otherwise.

Aaron Brooks sank his second, and the team's 13th, three-pointer of the game with 1:54 to play, propelling Oregon to an 87-82 win over the Golden Bears at Staples Center.

"Everybody was really pumped up," Brooks said. "It was amazing. I haven't felt that much love from the team since when I stepped on the floor in the Arizona game."

The Seattle native sat for most of the second half, playing just five of his 20 minutes. After getting whistled for fouls twice in the first half, he earned his third of the game less than a minute into the second half. That prompted Oregon head coach Ernie Kent to replace him with sophomore guard Brandon Lincoln.

Eight minutes later, Brooks came in again, earned an early foul and went straight to the bench.

With 3:56 to play, Brooks entered for the final time and two minutes later sank the three-pointer that sent the Ducks to a matchup with top-seeded Stanford today at 6:15 p.m.

"All year long, I've felt like this was a good basketball team if we could get back in rhythm and get all our pieces back," Kent said. "Having Aaron back, it gives us an opportunity to do that."

Those pieces began to fit for the Ducks (15-11 overall), allowing Oregon to play the wide-open, up-tempo style of basketball it came into the season hoping to play. The Ducks dished out 20 assists — led by Luke Jackson's six — and out-rebounded the Golden Bears, 32-29.

"I think we got back to playing our style of basketball, especially on offense," Kent said. "We are a terrific shooting team when we take balanced shots and make that extra pass."

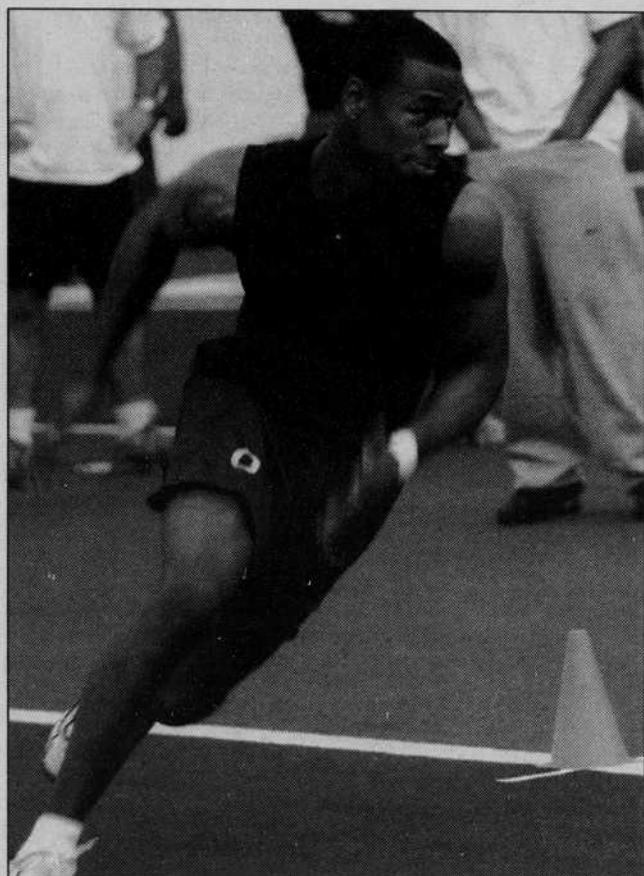
Balanced shots allowed Jackson, Andre Joseph and James Davis to all score 19 points. For Joseph, it tied a career-high.

For Davis, the 19 points came on 5 of 10 shooting from beyond the three-point line.

"We were pretty efficient offensively," Davis said. "We were swinging the ball and finding the open man, and when we do that, our guards shoot the ball well and we can knock down some good shots."

Four of those three-pointers came in the first half, helping Oregon jump out to as much as a seven-point lead early in the game. That eventually evaporated, due in large part to Amit Tamir's 19

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Danielle Hickey Photo Editor

Samie Parker stole the show Thursday at Pro Day for NFL scouts.

Eleven Ducks showcase NFL readiness

NFL scouts were impressed by Samie Parker's 4.3-second 40-yard dash time in Thursday's workout at Moshofsky Center

By **Kirsten McEwen**
Freelance Reporter

Come April 24 and 25, 11 former Oregon football players will have a better understanding of what their future NFL football careers will look like.

DUCK FOOTBALL

Until then, all they can do is showcase their skills and speed, and play the waiting game.

Thursday afternoon, countless NFL scouts made the trip to Eugene in hopes of getting another look at some of the country's top draft picks. Quinn Dorsey, Jason Fife, Keith Lewis, David Martin, Kevin Mitchell, Steven Moore, Igor Olshansky, Samie Parker, Josh Rogers, Junior Siavii and Dan Weaver participated in a number of speed and quickness drills in the University's Ed Moshofsky Sports Center.

Thursday's Pro Day was run in a much more casual fashion than what the players

experienced last month at the NFL Combine.

Parker stole the show from the beginning, recording a 4.3-second 40-yard dash, one of the fastest times in the country. Lewis had the second fastest 40-yard dash of the day, clocking in at 4.54 seconds. Martin, on the other hand, failed to finish due to a hamstring injury. Olshansky was the lone player who did not participate in the drill, having already recorded a 4.97 time at the NFL Combine.

Olshansky said he has been given no indication of what team will draft him come April, but he has been told he is doing well and "will be happy in a couple months."

"I'll be in the first day, that is what I have been told," Olshansky said. "The first day is quite an accomplishment."

Olshansky at least has a vague idea of his fate come draft day. Fife, on the other hand, isn't certain.

Fife has increased his stock tremendously in the past few months, after he was named the MVP of the Las Vegas Classic.

Thursday's session was a chance to possibly improve some of his previous marks. Fife said he was pleased with his past performances.

"I'm pretty happy with my previous times, it was just another opportunity to

maybe better those times," Fife said. "As far as throwing, if you are completing balls, you are doing well."

Following in the footsteps of Chris Miller, Akili Smith, A.J. Feeley and Joey Harrington, Fife hopes to continue the streak of former Oregon quarterbacks who have found success in the NFL.

"At this point, I am just kind of like a dark horse, and that's fine, I don't mind," Fife said.

Fife, as well as Moore, are two players more concerned with getting the chance to play professionally than what round they are drafted in.

"I don't want to get my hopes too high or too low, I am just kind of in the middle," Moore said.

Although each player will go in a different round to a different team, they all find themselves in the same boat. No one knows where they will reside come next season.

"You never really know, they don't tell you anything," Moore said.

For now, the performing is over, but the wait is not.

"I just hope something goes well for me," Moore said. "That's all you can do, because at that point, it is out of your hands."

Kirsten McEwen is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.