

SPORTS

Best bet
NHL Hockey:
Detroit v. Columbus
4 p.m., ESPN2

Wednesday, March 31, 2004

Michigan runs Oregon out of New York, NIT

Michigan takes control early in the NIT semifinal game, ending the Ducks' season with a 78-53 victory

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

NEW YORK — As Oregon walked off the Madison Square Garden court, guard Jordan Kent put his right arm around his father, head coach Ernie Kent.

It was a somber embrace after a game that was

anything but right in Oregon's mind. It was a game where nothing went the Ducks' way.

It was a game where the Oregon cheerleaders

got more of an ovation from the crowd than the team's play itself.

It was that kind of a game.

Michigan took the lead midway through the first half of Tuesday's National Invitation Tournament semifinal game and never relinquished it in a 78-53 win over the Ducks. The loss marks the end of Oregon's season and the career of its four seniors.

"Just to lose like this leaves a bad taste in your mouth," Oregon guard Aaron Brooks said.

What went wrong? Let's start from Oregon's point of view first.

Luke Jackson scored 17 points on 7 of 11 shooting, but turned the ball over six times, four of those coming in the first half.

Andre Joseph, who led Oregon in scoring in wins over George Mason and Notre Dame in the past week, was 2 of 7 from beyond the three-point line. He finished his Oregon career with eight points in the game.

"They fed off our missed shots," Joseph said. "By the second half, they were in control."

That's not the end of it. As a team, Oregon (18-13 overall) shot 34.5 percent from the field. The Ducks committed 16 turnovers. They dished out eight assists. Even though they had 12 offensive rebounds, they scored just two second-chance points.

None of those came in the second half.

"Maybe it's a different game if we knocked down some shots and energy goes our way," Ernie Kent said. "Our big guys had some great looks and the ball didn't go down."

While the Ducks laid "an egg," as Ernie Kent put it, the Wolverines started hot, got hotter and by the end of the game they were sizzling.

Besides holding Oregon to its lowest scoring output of the season — and subsequently worst loss points-wise — Michigan connected on its fair share of shots. The Wolverines took 55 and made 29, their second game in a row shooting better than 50 percent.

Normally a team that shoots 33 percent from beyond the three-point line, the Wolverines hit on 9 of 19 (47 percent) against the Ducks.

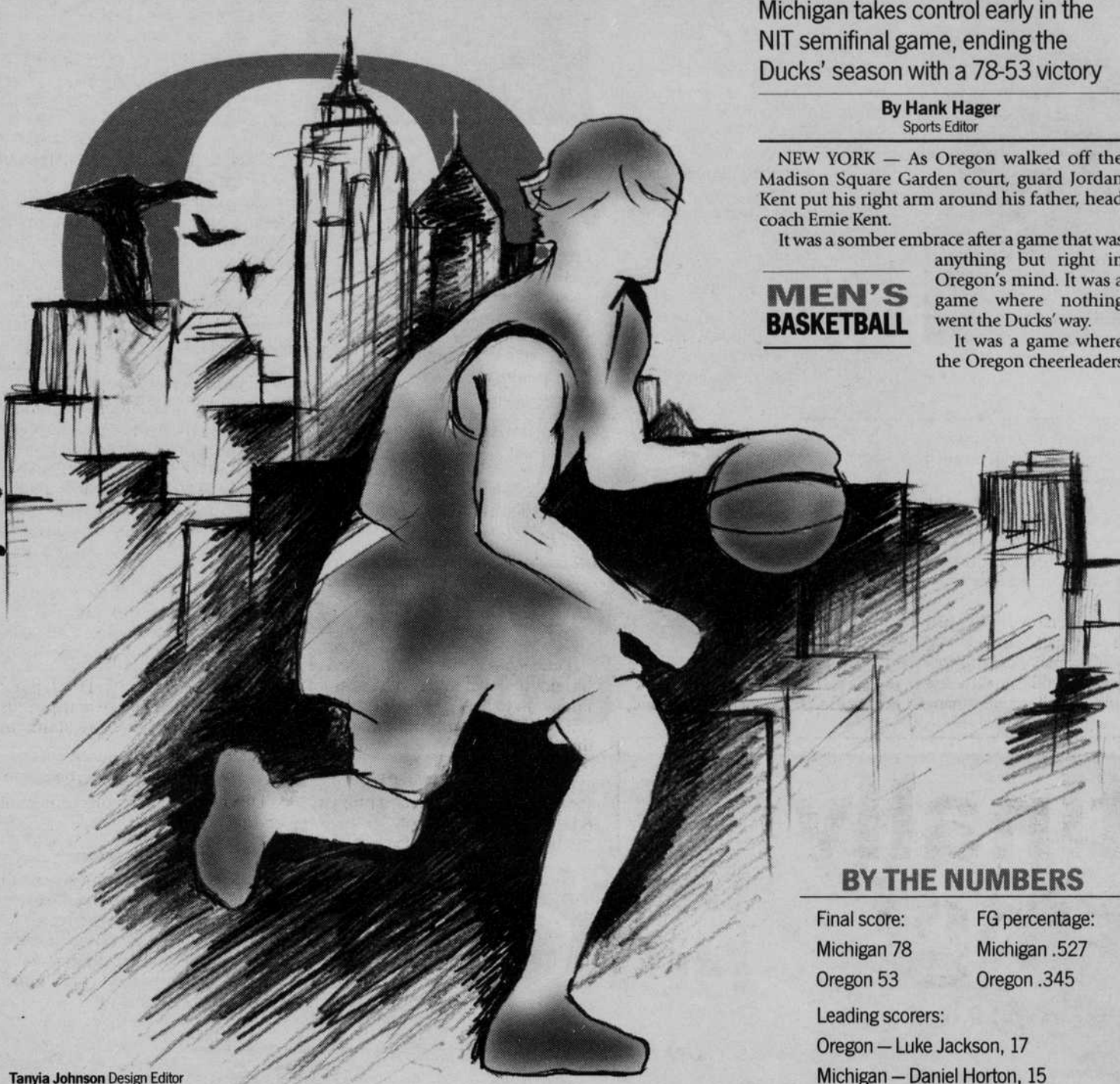
Michigan (22-11) connected on eight in the first half, one in the second.

The second-half tally didn't matter. The Wolverines stretched the lead early on in the first half, went into the break up by 14 and were in control.

"We played with a lot of passion and energy

MEN'S
BASKETBALL

BY THE NUMBERS

Final score: FG percentage:
Michigan 78 Michigan .527
Oregon 53 Oregon .345Leading scorers:
Oregon — Luke Jackson, 17
Michigan — Daniel Horton, 15Turn to **LOSS**, page 14

Tanya Johnson Design Editor

Softball heads north to face fiery Portland State

Before entering the heart of the Pac-10 season, Oregon must first face the Vikings in a doubleheader

By Mindi Rice
Senior Sports Reporter

The No. 17 Ducks return to the road today.

After spending spring break at home where Oregon went 5-2, the softball team takes to the buses for a doubleheader against Portland State.

First pitch is at 3 p.m. with the second game starting 30 minutes after the 42nd out at Erv Lind Stadium in Portland.

"We have to be ready," Oregon head coach Kathy Arendsen said. "We know that Portland State is going to be one of the best-coached teams we see all year. (Portland State head coach) Teri Mariani is outstanding. Their focus is to beat Oregon and Oregon State. That's one of the big things they want to do this year. We have a great respect for that program."

Oregon swept the Vikings in four games last season in a doubleheader in Eugene and one in Portland. The Pacific Coast Soft-

ball Conference's third-place finisher last season is a feisty opponent for the Ducks. Each season Oregon and Oregon State square off against Portland State for two doubleheaders each.

"We're going to take it serious, make sure we play our hardest and give respect to Portland State," Oregon outfielder Kayleen Hudson said. "It's the little teams that bite."

Hudson knows a little about providing that bite. The freshman from Northglenn, Colo., was 6 for 13 in Oregon's past five games, driving in four RBIs, scoring three runs and hitting two home runs. She had a .923 slugging percentage in the same time span. She was named the Pacific-10 Conference's Player of the Week Tuesday for her efforts.

"I'm really excited," Hudson said about the award. "I never expected it."

The Ducks (25-9 overall, 1-0 Pac-10) are about to start the heart of their season. After the Portland State games, Oregon will spend the weekend playing No. 3 California Friday and No. 9 Stanford Saturday and Sunday.

But before conference play resumes for Oregon, the squad's focus is on Portland State and getting wins the Ducks know will be harder to find when the Pac-10 rolls around.



Oregon outfielder Kayleen Hudson was named Pac-10 Player of the Week Tuesday.

Adam Amato
Senior PhotographerTurn to **CONSISTENT**, page 16