

JACKSON

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So where will Jackson go?
 "The most consistent thing I'm hearing is 10 to 15," he said by phone Tuesday.

One of those teams, Portland, would be a natural selection for Jackson, a Creswell native. Not only would Portland be a two-hour drive from his hometown, it also has two selections in the first round — No. 13 and 23 — and is expected to rebuild its roster with high-character players.

"It'd be great to be in Portland," Jackson said. "I liked working out in Portland."

Right now, NBA Draft guru Chad Ford of ESPN.com has the former Oregon forward going to New Jersey at No. 22. But Jackson, along with former Nevada guard Kirk Snyder, has impressed teams, making an earlier selection possible.

"But it's not out of the question (Jackson) could sneak into the lottery," Ford wrote Friday. "Jackson is one of the few players in the draft

who can play right now, and that should make things interesting for teams such as Cleveland (No. 10), Portland (No. 13), Utah (No. 14, 16, 21), Atlanta (No. 17), New Orleans (No. 18), Denver (No. 20) and New Jersey."

Jackson is rated below Duke's Luol Deng, Stanford's Josh Childress and Arizona's Andre Iguodala, all players who declared for the draft early and are sometimes compared to Jackson. If they are taken off the board early — Ford has them going No. 3, 4 and 9, respectively — it could alter some team's views of Jackson.

"He's a great player," Bartelstein said. "He makes the game easier for his teammates."

Some have called Jackson one of the best shooters in the draft. Bartelstein has even gone a step further, choosing to call Jackson the best passer, if not one of the best, available to teams.

Jackson won't participate in the NBA Pre-Draft Camp at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. The camp, which takes place from June 8-11, is set up for players who need

to improve their stock.

Jackson will be there, participating in physicals, but will not play.

"I don't think he needs to," Bartelstein said. "I think teams have seen plenty of him in game competition. People have seen his game tapes."

Those tapes, Bartelstein said, include Jackson's performance in the National Invitation Tournament against Colorado, a game where he posted 29 straight points in Oregon's overtime win. And that also includes his play early in the season, where he was the offensive catalyst for an Oregon team that was without its starting point guard, Aaron Brooks.

"He's a great kid and a basketball nut," Bartelstein said.

There are 22 days until the NBA Draft. Until then, Jackson has visits to Chicago, Miami and Toronto planned.

"Things couldn't be going any better than what they are right now," he said.

Contact the sports editor at hankhager@dailyemerald.com.

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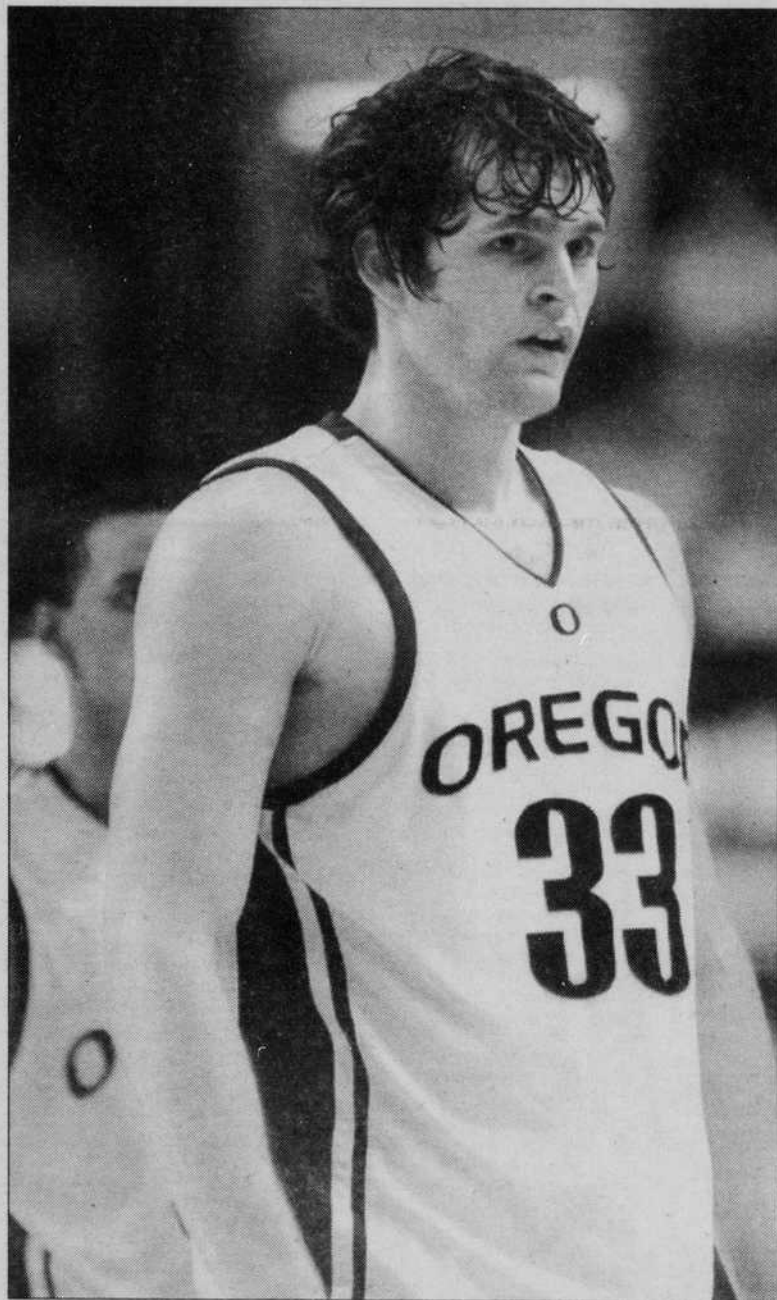
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Former Oregon forward Luke Jackson expects to be selected anywhere from 10th to 15th overall in the NBA Draft later this month.

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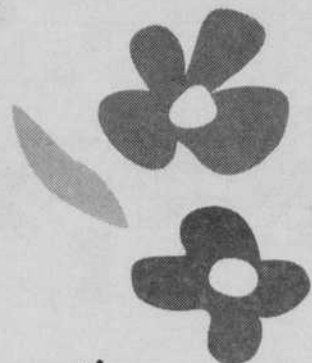
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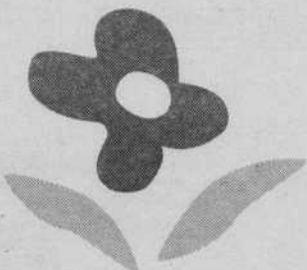
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