

Men's basketball

Oregon prepares for 'track meet'

Head coach Ernie Kent expects Sunday's exhibition opener with Trinity Western to be fast-paced

BY JON ROETMAN
SENIOR SPORTS REPORTER

After a pair of intrasquad scrimmages, the Oregon men's basketball team is ready to face an opponent outside of the program.

The Ducks open their season Sunday with an exhibition game against Trinity Western at McArthur Court at 3:30 p.m. The university from Langley, British Columbia, which pushed Georgia to double overtime last week before falling 75-63, should provide an early challenge for Oregon.

"I'm looking forward to being in front of the crowd and not playing against our own team," sophomore point guard Aaron Brooks said.

"It's going to be exciting to finally put on the uniform."

Oregon displayed an up-tempo brand of basketball during its two scrimmages and doesn't plan to change

Sunday. Brooks, who is coming off a 40-point performance during Wednesday's scrimmage, is expected to lead an offense full of young, athletic players with unlimited potential.

Included in the group are the four freshmen who constitute Oregon's greatest recruiting class ever. Guards Malik Hairston, Bryce Taylor, Chamberlain Oguchi and forward Maarty Leunen are expected to play major roles in how much the Ducks are able to accomplish this season.

"Coaches went out and recruited guys who are going to run," Brooks said. "That's the kind of game we're going to play. It's fun to finally get the pieces in there."

Head coach Ernie Kent said

Sunday's exhibition game will be a good reference point for how far the young Ducks have come, as well as a chance for players to continue getting in shape.

"Sunday, for us, is a track meet conditioning game," Kent said. "We want to really get up and down (the floor) and use the game to get our work in, in terms of conditioning. We want to see how well we play in front of a crowd, in terms of our new guys, and how we handle things."

Though the season has yet to start, the Ducks are already battling injuries. Forwards Ian Crosswhite and Mitch Platt were held out of Wednesday's scrimmage

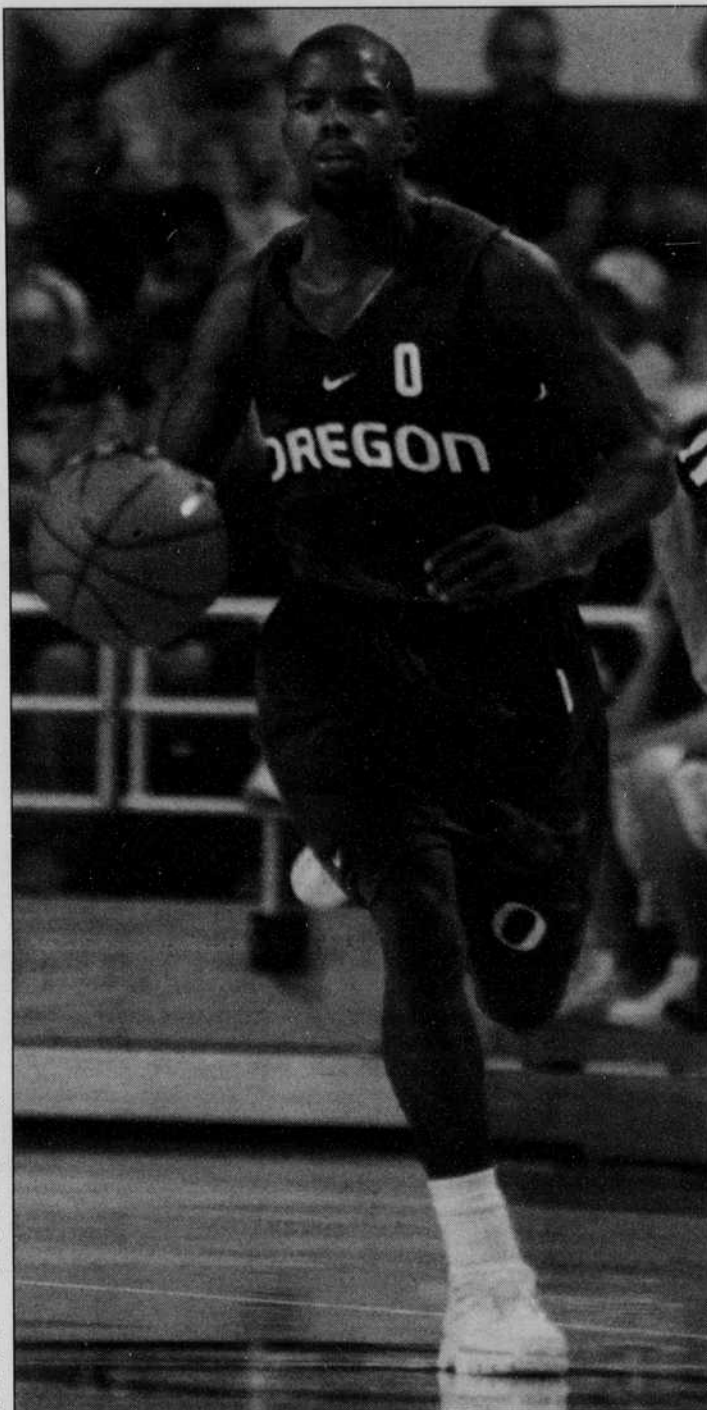
with ailments. Platt re-aggravated a left foot injury from last season during practice last week, while Crosswhite slipped on

wet steps outside his home Tuesday and suffered a slight injury to his left ankle. The status of each player for Sunday's game is undetermined.

Oguchi was also held out of Wednesday's scrimmage after experiencing an abnormally rapid heartbeat Monday. The Houston native received medical clearance, however, and should be available to play Sunday barring any setbacks.

Oregon's second exhibition game will be Sunday Nov. 14 against Western Oregon at Mac Court. The Ducks' regular season opener is Nov. 19 against Idaho State at Mac Court.

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DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Oregon point guard Aaron Brooks scored 40 points in the Ducks' final scrimmage Wednesday. The sophomore from Seattle earned Pac-10 All-Freshman honors last season.

Women's soccer

Ducks look to end winless streak in final home stand

Oregon will have its last chance for a Pac-10 victory this weekend when they host the Arizona schools

BY BRIAN SMITH
SPORTS REPORTER

The Oregon women's soccer team has the chance to play spoiler in the final weekend of the 2004 season.

The Ducks (0-6-1 Pacific-10 Conference, 3-12-2 overall) kick off the weekend tonight against Arizona State and finish with conference-leading Arizona on Sunday at Papé Field.

The Wildcats come into the weekend with a one-game lead in the conference over heavily favored UCLA and need only four points to clinch at least a share of their first-ever conference championship.

"A lot of it is confidence," Oregon head coach Bill Steffen said of the turnaround. "Another part of it is that they had talent that had been underutilized."

Oregon is still looking for its first conference victory of the season. The Ducks have not been held winless in conference play since the program gained varsity status in 1996. They have been shutout 10 times this season, matching the record set in 2000.

Injuries have been by far the biggest contributing factor for the struggling Ducks. The team's offensive weapons have been hit hardest, with the likes of Nicole Garbin, Mele French, Andrea Valadez and Caitlin Gamble all spending significant time on the injured list.

As a result, the Ducks' offense has been almost non-existent. Oregon has scored 13 goals on the season, resulting in a 0.76 goals per game average. They are the only team in the conference to be averaging less

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IN BRIEF

Swinnen advances, Panova loses at national indoor tournament

Oregon senior Sven Swinnen found success in the first round of the Intercollegiate Tennis Association National Indoor Championships in Ann Arbor, Mich., by defeating Mark Van Elden of Oklahoma State, 2-6, 7-6, 5-3 (ret) Thursday.

With the victory over 13th-ranked Van Elden, Swinnen has improved his fall season record to 7-2.

"Sven did another outstanding job of battling back," Oregon assistant coach Ross Duncan said. "He wore down Van Elden after the first set and came away with a huge win."

In the round of 16, the 12th ranked Swinnen will face No. 59 Arnaud Leclourec of Virginia Commonwealth today.

Last week, Swinnen became the first Oregon men's player to win a regional event, when he won the Wilson/ITA West Regional in Berkeley, Calif.

On the women's side, eighth-ranked Daria Panova fell in the first round of the tournament to USC's Nicole Leimbach, 6-4, 6-2.

Panova drops to the consolation round today and will face TCU's Helena Besovic. Besovic was defeated by No. 1 seed Audra Cohen of Northwestern.

It is Panova's second-consecutive loss after being bounced from the regional tournament in the third round by Stanford's Whitney Deason.

— Clayton Jones

Women's basketball

Ducks host WOU in exhibition opener

Oregon is picked to finish fifth and sixth in the Pac-10 by the coaches and the media, respectively

BY STEPHEN MILLER
SPORTS REPORTER

Oregon opens the 2004-2005 season at McArthur Court with an exhibition game against a team that proved to be a worthy opponent in the 1970s — Western Oregon.

The Wolves possess a 6-6 all-time record against the Ducks, whose games against each other took place from 1974-78.

Western Oregon collected an overall record of 8-18 last season. It returns four letterwinners and two starters, including senior forward Shannon Talbott, who was the Wolves'

second-leading scorer.

The Ducks will be worrying more about the health of their returning players. Senior Kedzie Gunderson's defensive skills will be missed due to a season-ending tear of her right anterior cruciate ligament.

Senior Cathrine Kraayeveld is recovering from the same injury, which she sustained five games into last season. Oregon is eagerly anticipating the return of Kraayeveld, as well as her abilities from the perimeter and in the paint under either basket.

"Cathrine returns with her

tremendous and efficient offensive versatility," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "Her defensive prowess and rebounding will return a significant bite to our defensive sting. Cat's ability to make a big difference at both ends of the floor gives our team tremendous punch offensively, and a solid presence in the paint defensively."

"Cat has a great understanding of the game and is healthy for her final season as a Duck, and she will make it an exciting one."

Smith mentioned that her squad's rebounding and defense were acceptable in last week's scrimmage, but there is room for improvement.

Center Andrea Bills is expected

to be Oregon's strength on the boards. The senior was recognized as a Pacific-10 Conference honorable mention selection last season and led the Ducks in points, rebounds, field goal percentage and blocked shots.

"Drea is our most consistent low-post threat and has become a very experienced, effective and smart defensive player," Smith said. "She has been our 'Iron Woman' for the last three years."

Oregon has been ranked this preseason to finish fifth in the Pac-10 by coaches and sixth by the media. The Ducks finished eighth in the conference last season at 6-12 and 14-15 overall.

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