

*"A three-pointer — that would be nice. One for one."*

Oregon senior Andrea Bills on the possibility of taking and making her first three-point attempt in her 115-game career

■ Women's basketball

## Paying the Bills

*116 consecutive games played and 97 straight starts sounds impressive. For Oregon senior Andrea Bills, it's just another day on the job*

BY STEPHEN MILLER  
SPORTS REPORTER

There are no punch cards or time clocks in McArthur Court. There is no need for a lunch pail when the food can be catered or delivered by the local pizza shop. Heavy equipment is not a necessity, even though the task of defending a 6-foot-3 center can often be a difficult one.

But there is an aura about Andrea Bills that makes every basketball game feel more like a fast-paced construction job site rather than a sporting event.

"She is the quintessential blue-collar worker," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "Whether she is injured or sick, she has a great sense of what it takes to get it done on the court."

In her four years at Oregon, Bills has performed with great merit. She has not missed a single game in her collegiate career, and tonight she will take part in her 116th contest as a Duck — and her 97th consecutive start.

For those reasons, the Moreno Valley, Calif., native is the definition of dependability.

"I've just been blessed to not have anything happen that would cause me to sit out," Bills said. "Even if I am sick, I always try to push through it just because I know that my team needs me and I'm valuable to the team."

The 6-foot-3 Bills has followed through on her proclamation despite suffering from chronic plantar fasciitis in her left foot for the past few years.

"It was basically where the tissue on the bottom of your heels tears and it feels like you're walking on needles," Bills said. "The last three years were kind of painful running up and down the floor."

"I have orthotics, which I got last summer. They have really helped out because I haven't experienced those pains."

Teammate and fellow senior Cathrine Kraayeveld, who is part of Oregon's 1,000-point club along with Bills, said every player deserves time off, but Bills is not one to settle down or sit out.

"There have been times where she's been tired or injured and she didn't really have a choice but to push through it," Kraayeveld said. "There were times last year when I wasn't playing where she had to play because she needed to be out there for the team."

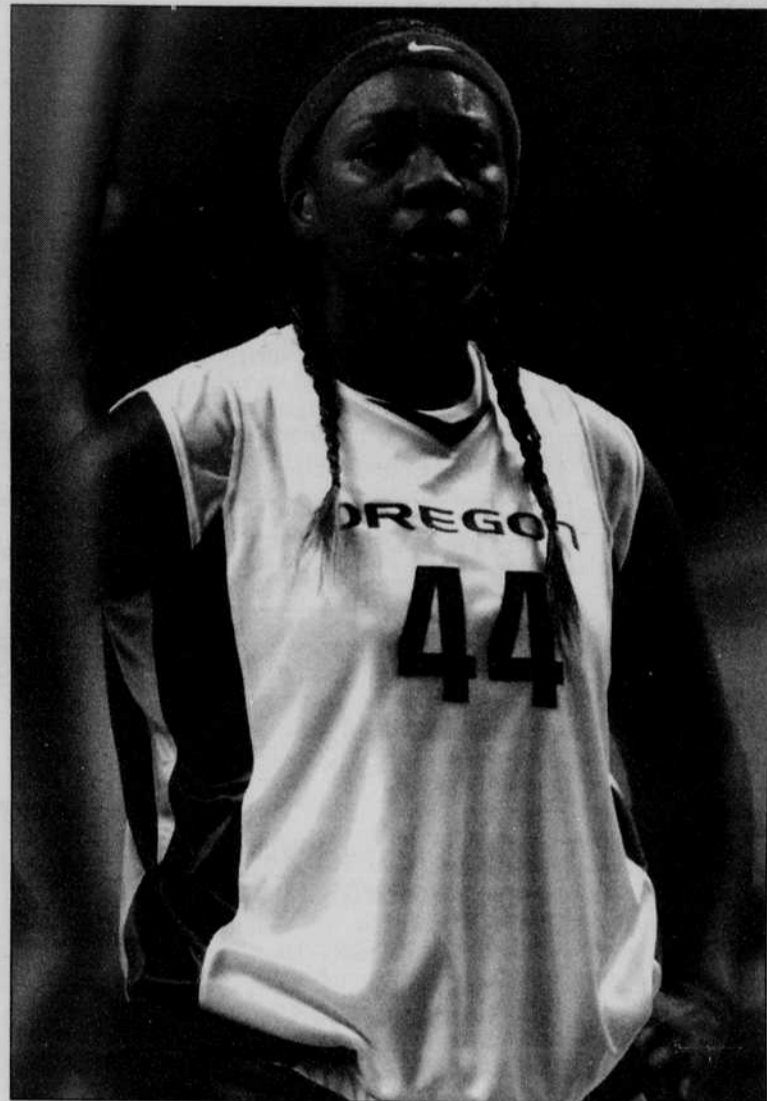
Bills' value was exemplified last season when she was called upon to single-handedly take control of Oregon's frontcourt after Kraayeveld suffered a season-ending knee injury.

"She was our go-to player last year," Smith said. "She believes that she can achieve."

Bills led the Ducks in scoring, rebounding, field-goal percentage, blocked shots and recorded double-digits in points for a team-high 19 games.

"Basically, I took on the opportunity to carry the team on my back and tried to do as well as I

BILLS, page 14



Oregon senior Andrea Bills has appeared in all 115 games of her collegiate career and has started in 96 consecutive contests.

DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

■ Men's basketball

## Ducks face another test with No. 11 Arizona

BY JON ROETMAN  
SENIOR SPORTS REPORTER

Oregon head coach Ernie Kent cracked a huge smile after Saturday's win against Washington State and said his team is finally starting to turn the corner.

His young Ducks were a few plays away from knocking off Oregon State to open the second half of Pacific-10 Conference play Feb. 5. Oregon was a successful free throw or two away from upsetting No. 11 Washington a week ago and finally pulled out a win against the Cougars during the weekend.

With six regular season games remaining, Kent and the Ducks have aspirations of catching fire before entering the Pac-10 Tournament — Oregon's only chance of qualifying for the NCAA Tournament.

"In terms of this team making adjustments and making a transition, they've done that," Kent said. "Now they just need to continue to get better."

Reality check: Oregon travels to Tucson, Ariz., tonight to take on No. 10 Arizona at 5:30 p.m. The McKale Center has been a house of horrors for Oregon — and plenty of other schools — where the Ducks have won only twice in the past 20 years.

The Wildcats (21-4 overall, 11-2 Pac-10) have won 18 of their last 20 games, own sole possession of first place in the conference, and beat Oregon 74-66 during the season's first meeting at McArthur Court.

Is Oregon actually a team on the rise?

Staying competitive in the McKale Center would certainly help answer that question.

"You don't want to go down there and put too much focus on the building," Kent said. "You want to focus on your game plan."

Whatever game plan Kent has cooked up

for his Ducks (12-9, 4-8), it surely includes containing Salim Stoudamire. The lethal sharpshooter is averaging 17.9 points per game and knocking down three-pointers at a 55 percent clip.

"We have to play as tough as we possibly can on him and try not to let him get the ball," Oregon swingman Malik Hairston said. "He's a good scorer but nobody can make every shot."

True. But while Stoudamire doesn't hit every shot he takes, he's one of the few players in the country who puts fear into the opposition every time he touches the ball.

Against Oregon in January, Stoudamire knocked down several off-balance perimeter shots, including a three-pointer by the left-hander in front of the Ducks' bench, while leaning to his right.

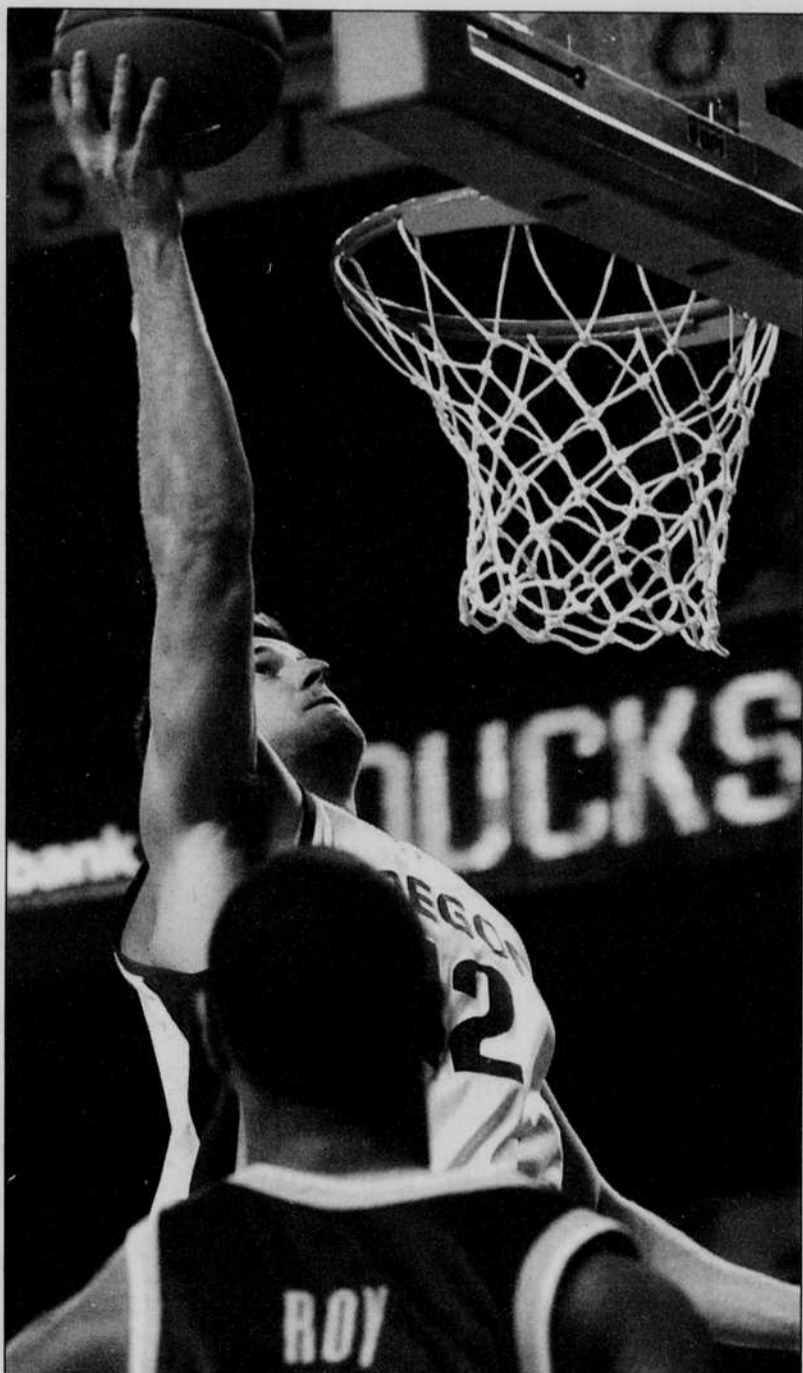
"He's amazing," forward Maarty Leunen said. "He can get a shot off whenever he wants."

To compensate for Stoudamire's shooting talents, Oregon will continue to go with a smaller, quicker, more energetic lineup that can defend the perimeter more effectively. Hairston, Aaron Brooks, Bryce Taylor and Jordan Kent will be essential in keeping the Ducks' defensive energy high, while Chamberlain Oguchi and Adam Zahn will be important factors off the bench.

Kent sprained his left ankle during the end of Tuesday's practice, but should be fine by tipoff.

"If we play strong the first five or 10 minutes and show them we're ready to play, I think we'll be OK," Taylor said. "We need to take this small lineup we've been playing with and use it to our advantage."

jonroetman@dailyemerald.com



Adam Zahn has taken advantage of his recent increase in playing time, posting a 9-point performance against Washington last week.

DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR