

Women: Gonzaga's 27-3 record not enough

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Tennessee has been a No. 1 seed. The Lady Vols have won six national championships, more than any other program, and have been in the NCAA tournament every year.

Two teams from the same conference have been No. 1 seeds 10 times previously. Tennessee and LSU also were the two that year.

LSU and Tennessee both will start the tournament in Knoxville. There are eight teams at the first- and second-round sites, twice as many as before. Each site has four teams from one regional and four

from another.

Michigan State's No. 1 seed caps a resurgence for that program under McCallie, who's in her fifth season with the Spartans after a successful run at Maine.

The Spartans (27-3) shared the Big Ten regular-season title with Ohio State, then won the conference tournament and will take a 12-game winning streak into their first-round NCAA matchup with Alcorn State in Minneapolis next Saturday. Their highest seed previously was No. 4 in 1991.

The Spartans went 10-2 on the road this year, with victories at Notre Dame

and Connecticut. Their schedule was also considered stronger than Stanford's, with eight victories over teams now ranked in the Top 25.

Among teams thought to be sitting on the "bubble" — Virginia Tech, Purdue, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Houston, Arizona, Oregon and Richmond — all got in. Iowa, Villanova and Xavier did not.

Three teams with glossy records that won regular-season conference titles but lost in their league tournaments also weren't among the select 64 — Delaware (25-5), Gonzaga (27-3) and Chattanooga (24-4).

Forristall: Positive attitude encourages team

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the other end of court, Forristall went back up with ball under her own basket. Halfway up, she got a little assistance from a teammate, avoiding potential embarrassment.

"I was playing in front of my hometown and I was so excited and I wanted to do so much," Forristall said. "Before the free throw, Chelsea (Wagner) told me to go get the rebound. So then they shoot it, I get the rebound, and I'm going up and all I see is her yelling 'no.' And then I thought 'why would she be mad at me for shooting a layin?'"

Then and now

Last Thursday's practice at South Eugene High School demonstrated a Forristall that has come a long way from her self-professed "deer in the headlights" phase.

She's quick to lavish praise on teammates for a good play. She's confident, goofy and always ready to display her humor wherever needed.

"I have a good time," Forristall said. "I think you need to learn how to be intense and have a good time. When you have a victory you need to celebrate it, and when something bad happens you need to shake it off and say, 'you've got the next one.' It's always being positive, it's always being up and keeping your teammates up."

Her transition from an inexperienced freshman to a confident ball player was aided by a greater focus on her own play. "It's not the fact that a light bulb went on," Forristall said. "I guess I finally saw myself on film, and how I was acting. I'd catch the ball, and I'd be on my heels, or I'd be looking to pass all the time. If you want to be on the court, you have to be aggressive. Even when I was playing (early in the season), the coaches would put me in for fresh legs and I'd go in and come out, and I thought, 'what are you doing for the team?' I thought that I had to be a threat."

Her strong play in practice and on the court were rewarded when she started the first seven Pacific-10 Conference games as a true freshman.

"I think she's played really hard," Kraayeveld said. "As a freshman, sometimes it's hard to come in and contribute, and she has that confidence in herself. That's really helped us this year, and it's been a big deal for us."

After Forristall, the first McDonald's High School All-American to play for the Ducks, scored a career-high 19 points in place of an injured



DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Kristen Forristall's personality has helped get her through the transition from prep basketball at Oregon City High School to Pac-10 hoops at Oregon.

Kraayeveld in the Ducks' loss to Washington on Feb. 12, the comparisons started to hold some weight.

"Kristen is a competitor first and foremost," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "Her talent cannot be denied. She has great potential both defensively and offensively. Her height and versatility are 'Cat'-like. However, all that she does is enhanced by her intense desire to win."

Even Kraayeveld, who has over 1,000 points and 700 rebounds in her career, agrees their games have some similarities.

"I think so," Kraayeveld said. "She has gotten the opportunity to play more her freshman year than I did, and I think that it's one reason why it was seen as such a big leap, because I had a lot more to contribute my sophomore year, and I was given a chance to play more. Hers probably won't look as big because she's played more, but she definitely has a

lot of potential and a lot of room to grow, and if she wants to, she can turn herself into a really good player."

Even though Forristall has turned in a solid freshman season, she already sees opportunities for improvement in her game.

"Hopefully next year I will be a better shooter," Forristall said. "Right now, I'm not a great shooter, and I'm not a consistent three-point shooter for the team, and that's what I'd like to see happen."

Forristall knows that she is her own player, not a reincarnate of a departing legend.

And her teammates know that. "They have allowed me to be who I am," Forristall said. "They've almost made it so that I have to be proud of who I am. I still have to be confident in myself. They've taught me to be very strong."

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Smith: Seniors help lead Oregon to tourney berth

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Smith said. "How they worked, how they committed to the things that our coaching staff felt was important. All the hard work was worth it, and right now, it's a great moment for our team."

For example, how about the three seniors, Kraayeveld, Mizusawa

and Andrea Bills. Time and time again, the trio put the season on its shoulders and continued to press forward.

Or the midseason play of Brandi Davis, who provided the Ducks with a dangerous shooter to compliment an Oregon offense that started from the inside?

Or how about the freshmen? How about Kaela Chapdelaine or Eleanor Haring or Chelsea Wagner?

So congrats, Smith and Co.

'Drink' up this tournament experience and enjoy.

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