

*"We're all at fault, but I just feel like Joey (Harrington)'s been here four years, and being the No. 3 pick in the draft, he hasn't given us anything."*  
Detroit Lions cornerback Dre' Bly on why Steve Mariucci was fired as head coach Monday

■ In my opinion



SCOTT J. ADAMS  
INTENTIONAL GROUNDING

## Ducks shut out in AP polls for the second time

It appears that voters are costing Oregon ground in the polls. No, I'm not talking about that Oregon team, I'm talking about a different one. I'm talking about the Oregon women's basketball team, which despite holding a 5-1 record, still finds itself scratching at the Associated Press top 25's front door.

On Monday, Oregon made quick work of coach Amy Stephens' Drake squad. The Ducks' 70-40 win over the Bulldogs marked their fourth straight and made an Oregon believer out of Stephens.

"I think they're a good basketball team, and if they're not in the top 25 they probably should be," Stephens said. "Losing to Temple at home probably hurt them. They had a great opportunity to pull an upset over a ranked team. They certainly are very competitive."

While hosting the championship game of the Women's Sports Foundation Classic, Oregon squandered a three-point lead late in the second half and fell 51-46 to No. 21 Temple. It marked the Ducks' only loss this season amidst lopsided wins over St. Francis, Portland, Arkansas and Drake. Granted, not one of those teams has a winning record.

Unlike other teams gracing the top 25, Oregon is yet to be on the losing end of an upset. Take for instance its conference foe No. 25 USC. The Trojans traveled down the street last week to face Long Beach State, which handed the Trojans their first loss of the season. The 51-46 defeat sent USC four spots south in the AP Poll where they rest today even after dropping another road loss to No. 15 Notre Dame on Nov. 27. As a 2-2 squad with a three-game stretch against unranked opponents ahead of them, USC's schedule is similar to Oregon's but not its record. The result? The .500 Trojans somehow get the nod in the AP rankings.

Texas Tech, ranked 24th, has also tread an interesting path into the top 25. The Red Raiders are dead last in the Big XII Conference standings at 1-4 with only two of those losses coming against ranked teams. The latest was a three-point nail-biter at the hands of No. 13 Stanford, 66-63. Texas Tech lost in similar fashion to Rice (73-70) and Mississippi (72-69) on the road last week. To vindicate their ranking, they have an impressive 85-56 win over Ohio Valley Conference powerhouse Southeast Missouri State. Can you sense my sarcasm? The only thing keeping the pride of Lubbock, Texas, in the top 25 is their No. 13 ranking in week one.

Purdue also has an upset loss on their hands. The No. 23 Boilermakers lost at George Washington Nov. 25, but are blessed with a weak schedule heading into December to break their fall.

Fortunately for Oregon, its quest to gain national recognition and a place in the AP Poll gets easier until their conference opener against UCLA Dec. 20. The Ducks may have no home games in December, but they also face zero matchups against ranked opponents. The top 25 is just around the corner for Oregon.

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■ Men's basketball

## Oregon seeks win at Commodores

*The Ducks meet Vanderbilt in a battle of two undefeated squads tonight in Nashville*

BY SHAWN MILLER  
SPORTS EDITOR

The Oregon athletic department swears that this time the competition is real; they aren't over-hyping the game. Undefeated Vanderbilt hosts undefeated Oregon, both with 4-0 records, tonight at 6 p.m. in Nashville, Tenn.

The past two men's basketball games were built up to be something they didn't come close to living up to. Pacific, which reached the second round of the NCAA Tournament last season, was dismantled early by an energetic Oregon team on Nov. 22. The end result was a 22-point victory. Four days later it was Rice, which reached the NIT Tournament last year. The result was nearly the same, with Oregon pulling away with a 24-point win. However, Vanderbilt is a different team, one that will test the Ducks in an area that Oregon coach Ernie Kent is looking forward to.

"It's a game we need to play right now to get challenged," Kent said. "They are a great defensive team. ...They are an excellent three-point shooting team. It's a good challenge."

The Ducks also know not to read too much into their blowout wins and to not be overconfident.

"Vanderbilt is good, they are going to be tough," Malik Hairston said. "We just need to continue to work ... and to continue to grow as a basketball team."

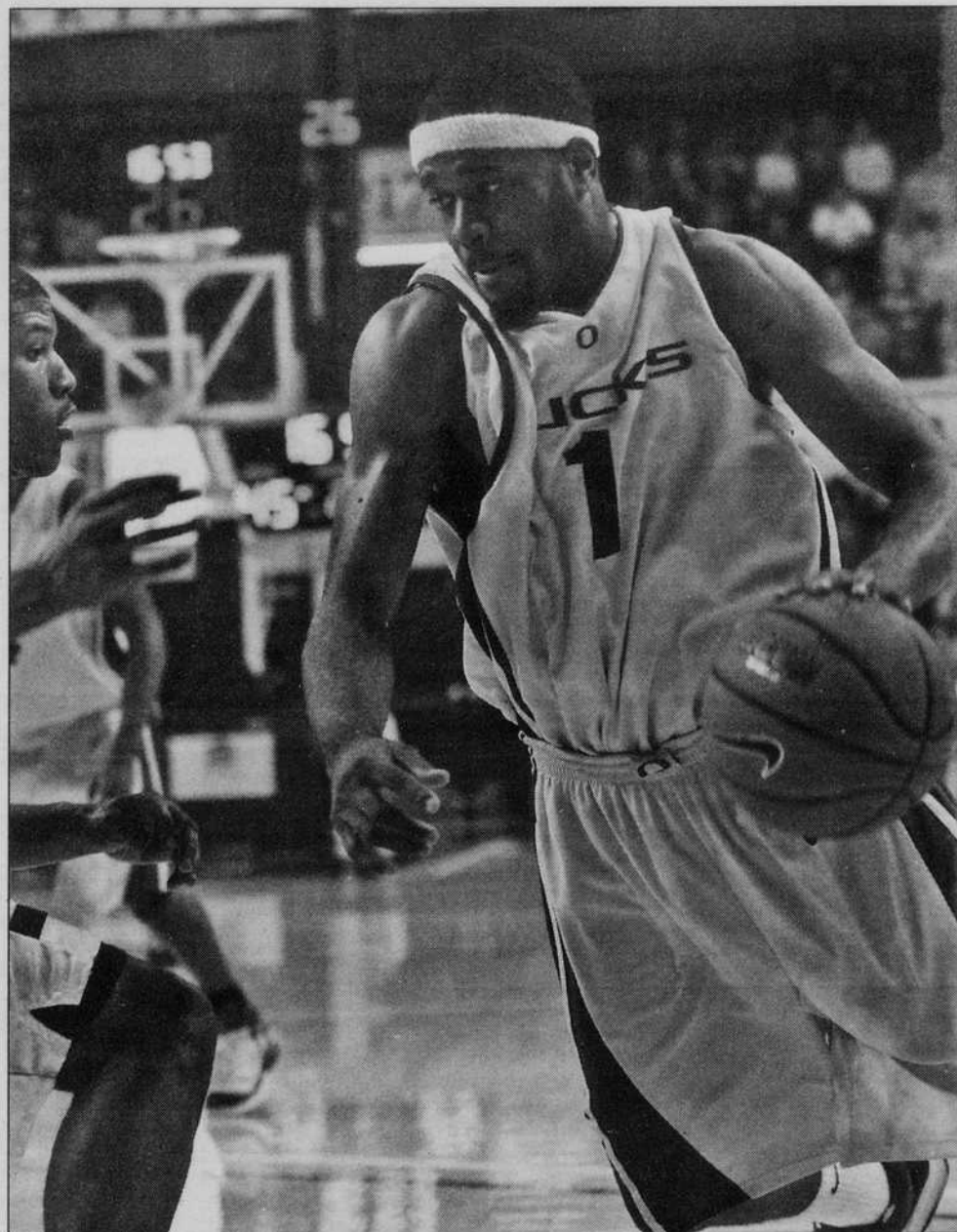
Oregon has seemed to find its rhythm by running as often as possible, an area that the Ducks were unable to do in the two exhibition games. A lack of boxing out and rebounding was the area of emphasis for a quick fix and that is what has happened.

The Ducks have outrebounded their opponents by an average of 14.3 boards per game.

"Our goal is to run and for us to run we've got to get rebounds," said Maarty Leunen, who recorded a career-high 13 rebounds during Oregon's win over Rice.

Meanwhile, Vanderbilt is coming off a 68-61 win over Georgetown (Oregon's next home opponent Dec. 3 at noon).

The statistics are nearly the same for



KATE HORTON | PHOTOGRAPHER

Malik Hairston drives toward the basket during an 84-60 Oregon win over Rice on Saturday. Hairston scored 14 points and leads the Ducks with a 13.3-points-per-game average this season.

both the Ducks and Commodores, as each averages within one steal, assist and three-point field goal made per game of each other. Shooting, the Ducks have the edge in field goal percentage overall (51.7 percent to 50.2) and at the free-throw line (73.8 to 72.2), while the Commodores are slightly better beyond the

arc (39.4 to 38.2).

"That's going to be a big test," Oregon point guard Aaron Brooks said of the game. "Definitely will be a big step for us if we pull (a win) off. We are going to have to come out

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■ Club hockey

## Inconsistent first half plagues Ducks

*In defense of its first Pac-8 title, Oregon has fallen flat lately, losing its last three games*

BY WILL SEYMOUR  
FREELANCE REPORTER



COURTESY

Oregon senior Ryan Jones takes a shot against UCLA. The Ducks' record is 8-5 this season as they try to defend their Pac-8 title.

The University club hockey team will be looking forward to the winter break as much as anyone. A rash of injuries to key players has seen the Ducks skid to a three-game losing streak, marring an otherwise strong Pac-8 title defense. Oregon will face its final opponents of the fall schedule this weekend and then use the break to regain health and fluidity on the ice.

The Ducks began their regular season with a rematch of last year's championship against Washington. Oregon came out

swinging as soon as the puck dropped in the traditional rivalry game, dominating the Huskies and coasting to 5-0 and 5-2 victories in the two-game series. However, the Ducks dropped a game to UCLA 4-1, before managing to split the weekend.

"We came out a little flat," senior defenseman Jordan Guffin said.

Oregon returned to form in a pair of away games against Stanford, crushing the Cardinal by a combined score of 25-4 in the two contests. It appeared that the torrid scoring pace would

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