

Men's Hoop Recruits

by Jerry Thompson

Men Sign 3 "Blue Chippers"

In the last 40 years in which I have been watching Oregon basketball, the Ducks have had some great recruiting classes. In the late '60s, the class of Stan Love, Bill Drodziak, Larry Holliday, Carlton Slater, Johnny Green, and Lenny Jackson were very impressive. In the early '70s what many consider the Oregon basketball recruiting class ever made their way to Eugene led by Prep All-Americans Stu Jackson, Ernie Kent, Steve Manker along with the great Greg Ballard

worker" in the classroom and on the court. "He is a very exciting player to watch who can play like a guard, is a great team player with great passing skills and has an excellent feel for rebounding," Bokn stated. Bokn said Maarty's shot has greatly improved even from last year and that he is a great team defender who will need to get a little stronger to be a great 1 on 1 defender. "From 22 feet he is developing a very proficient 3-point shot," added Bokn. At 6-9, Leunen, who is of Scandinavian descent, bears a striking resemblance to Luke Ridnour. Bokn said he could easily grown an inch or two and will definitely put on some weight as he matures out of his "peach fuzz" stage.



Maarty Leunen

and Greg Graham. Ernie Kent has signed some very good classes with his first class composed of Freddie Jones, Chris Christoffersen and complimented by J.C. players Alex Scales and Darius Wright laying a good foundation. Kent's best to date has to be the Ridnour, Jackson, Davis, and Anderson class although Brooks, Platt, and Schafer may yet have something to say about that. The good news is that Kent has done it again and maybe even improved with the addition of **6'9" Maarty Leunen from Redmond, Oregon; 6'4" Bryce Taylor from North Hollywood, California, and 6'5" Chamberlain Oguchi from Richmond, Texas.** These three players are among the top 100 players in the nation and can now concentrate on school and basketball with their big decision having been made.

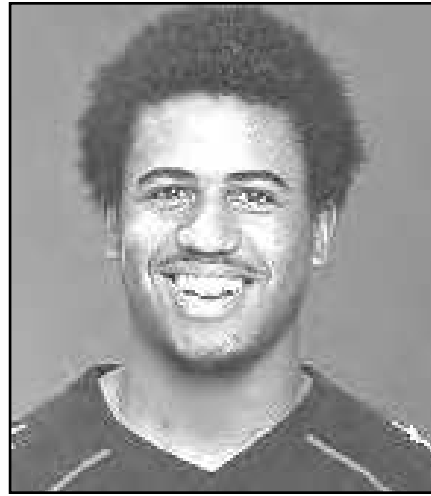
Maarty Leunen

Leunen is a great addition for the Ducks for a number of reasons. First, he is the best in-state player in Oregon and it is very important that Oregon "holds serve" here against Oregon State and other suitors. Second, Leunen, who led his team to the state championship last year and averaged 20 points and 10 rebounds, will be a natural replacement for Luke Jackson as a big 3 or small 4 position player. Third, he is just another of many quality young men with character which coach Kent molds into the program. Leunen is a 3.5 plus student whom his coach Kelly Bokn describes as a "real hard

Leunen's decision came down to Oregon, UCLA, Gonzaga, and Oregon State. Leunen felt very comfortable with Oregon's scheme and style of play as well as the current players and his fellow new recruits. Playing close to home and for Oregon fans was an added bonus.

Bryce Taylor

The Ducks broke some other recruiting hearts with the commitment of the sensational Bryce Taylor who is in the top 50 (and by the end of this season probably much higher) on every list of great U.S. high school players. Taylor's dad Brian played in the ABA and NBA and the genes are evident. Taylor is one of the elite scorers in the nation and his coach Greg Hilliard at Harvard-Westlake said he poured in an amazing 28 points per game. "Bryce wants to score that many at the next level and if he doesn't it won't be for a lack of hard work. He has an insatiable desire to get better," Hilliard said. His coach described Bryce as "guy who wants to have the ball for the last shot." Taylor can score from a variety of places on the court as he is a rare combination of shooter and leaper who loves to "throw it down". Taylor has an incredible 39" vertical and helped lead his summer AAU team from Southern California to the national championship against a team from Georgia which sported two players who will probably jump from high school to the NBA. Hilliard said Taylor's stock went way up in the summer, but fortunately for Oregon he had become "enamored" with



Bryce Taylor

coach Kent. Taylor chose Oregon over Indiana. Taylor shoots over 40% from beyond the arc but as his coach pointed out, with his driving and leaping ability the 6-4 super star can create a shot from anywhere on the floor. Hilliard said Bryce compares very favorably with other highly sought after recruits Aaron Affalo (UCLA) and Gabriel Pruitt (USC).

Chamberlain Oguchi

One of the big recruiting surprises came with the decision by 6-5 Chamberlain Oguchi to go West to Oregon instead of stay closer to home at Oklahoma or Kansas State. Oguchi, from George W. Bush H.S. in the Houston, Texas area averaged 25 points per game last year in a school district with very tough competition. Oguchi's coach, Bobby



Chamberlain Oguchi

Knotts described Chamberlain as "a really nice kid from a great background with really great parents." Knotts said Oguchi is "a shooting guard who is extremely quick with tremendous hops." "He has really expanded his game and not only shoots 35-40% from the arc, he can put it on the floor and take it to the basket," Knotts said.

Knotts said that Chamberlain and his parents were very impressed by the academic emphasis that Ernie Kent brought to the table. Their two daughters attend Notre Dame and Penn State on academic scholarships and the academics and total program at Oregon really sold them. It has been reported that between Leunen, Taylor, and Oguchi Oregon may have wanted Oguchi the most. That may not be accurate, but the point is, with these three exciting additions who should be able to enjoy the new basketball arena, Oregon basketball looks like it will be able to compete with teams at the highest levels in the nation. **O**



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