

College Basketball



In this Feb. 21, 2015, file photo, Oregon State men's basketball coach Wayne Tinkle yells from the bench during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game against Colorado in Corvallis.

AP Photo/Don Ryan, File

OSU no longer Pac-12 surprise

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

CORVALLIS — With no returning starters and a new coach installing his own system, very little was expected of Oregon State last season.

So there was genuine surprise around the league when the Beavers went on a tear at home, winning their first 14 games at Gill Coliseum. Oregon State would win 15 total games at home, a new single-season record.

The Beavers finished 17-14 overall and 8-10 in the Pac-12. Not bad for a team that was expected to finish last in the league at the start of the season.

Now starting his second year, coach Wayne Tinkle knows that expectations are raised and that opponents will be wary, too.

"I don't think anybody's going to look past a team. But we knew we set some things in motion that people were going to be maybe a little more ready for us going into this year, and then you add to it that we had a pretty good recruiting class," Tinkle said at the conference's annual media day.

All five starters return from last season's team and the Beavers brought in one of their best recruiting

classes ever. The media that covers that Pac-12 picked Oregon State to finish sixth this season.

The Beavers certainly hope to be able to shoot a bit more now that they've got a year together. Last season they averaged just 60.9 points per game, worst in the Pac-12. That was partly due to the personnel that Tinkle had — the team held open tryouts before his first season to fill available roster spots.

"Now with added depth and talent, certainly offensively doesn't mean we're going to take quick bad shots, but we will look to score a little bit more and score more off of our defense and be more aggressive there," he said.

LIKE FATHER LIKE SON: Gary Payton II, whom social media refers to as GP2, returns for his senior season in hopes of leading his team to the NCAA Tournament — just like his dad.

Payton averaged 13.4 points, 7.5 rebounds, 3.2 assists, 3.1 steals and 1.2 blocked shots, and earned Pac-12 Defensive Player of the Year honors.

Payton looked at jumping to the NBA early, but ultimately decided to stick around.

"I think bringing Oregon

State back to the tournament would mean a lot, not just for me, but the city of Corvallis, and just the town, and most important the school and the fans and everybody who supports it for so long," Payton said.

LIKE FATHER LIKE SON, PART 2: Prized recruit Tres Tinkle will make his debut this season for his dad and the Beavers. The 6-foot-7 younger Tinkle averaged 24.8 points, 10.7 rebounds and 2.2 assists as a senior last season at Hellgate High School in Missoula, Montana.

However, he's coming off a stress fracture in his foot that kept him out of the summer workouts.

"But he's been out there the last couple of weeks, and to be honest, after the first day I had to go up to my office and pinch myself afterward because it just kind of hit me all at once that here I am coaching my son now for the first time," the elder Tinkle said.

MORE FANS IN THE SEATS: Last season's surprising success gave Oregon State a big boost at the gate. Average attendance was 5,612, a 42 percent increase over the previous season. The Beavers did even better in league play, averaging 6,988 fans.

With Young gone, Oregon looks to others for offense

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

Coach Dana Altman maintains that Oregon's offense last season wasn't all about Joe Young.

Young averaged 19.8 points, 4.5 rebounds and 3.7 assists last season for the Ducks, and was named the Pac-12 Player of the Year as the league's scoring leader. He has since moved on to the NBA's Indiana Pacers.

But Altman, named the league coach of the year after leading the team to a 26-10 overall record, pointed to senior transfer Dylan Ennis, top returning scorers Elgin Cook and Dillon Brooks, and top returning rebounder Dwayne Benjamin, as the remedy for Young's departure.

"I think offensively we'll be a balanced team with a number of guys who can score. We're going to have to guard better. We're going to have to do a better job on the boards. But I think offensively we've got a number of guys that can step up and score a basket," Altman said at Pac-12 media day.

Altman was named the conference's Coach of the Year after leading his team to its third straight appearance in the NCAA Tournament. The Ducks beat Oklahoma State in their opening game before losing to Wisconsin for the second straight season.

Oregon's conference nemesis last season was Arizona, which defeated the Ducks 80-52 for the Pac-12 tournament title, and won both regular-season games.

"I think since we have more returners, we kind of know what to expect, how to come into practice and what we need to be doing, what we need to accomplish, and it's a lot more intense. All our guys are competing, and we just know how important every practice is," said Cook, who averaged 13.0 points and 5.2 rebounds last season.

REMEMBERING



AP Photo/Chris Pietsch, File

In this Feb. 8, 2015, file photo, Oregon men's basketball coach Dana Altman gestures to his team during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game against Washington State in Eugene.

PEARL HARBOR: The Ducks will play a game against the U.S. Naval Academy at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Day. The game is part of a series of events marking the 74th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

"Our team had an opportunity two years ago to go to South Korea and play on an Army base, and I thought it meant a lot to our players. I know it meant a lot to our staff," Altman said. "So when the opportunity came up to go play on December 7th and observe that tragedy, I was all set to go."

The game will be held at Bloch Arena, which survived the attack.

ENNIS IMPACT?: Ennis played a season at Rice before two seasons at Villanova, last season's Big East champion.

Even though Young was a shooting guard, he ran Oregon's offense last season. The 6-foot-2 Ennis is poised to take over that responsibility at point guard. Last season he averaged 9.9

points, 3.7 rebounds and 3.5 assists per game for the Wildcats.

OH CANADA: Brooks, who averaged 11.5 points per game for the Ducks last season, played this summer for his native Canada, both in the U19 FIBA World Championships, where he was the tournament's second-leading scorer with 18.8 points, and then with the senior national team for the Pan Am Games in Toronto.

GIVING HOOPS ITS DUE: Oregon's basketball team has been overshadowed in recent years by the success of the school's football team, which went to the national championship game last season.

Altman said the Ducks are eager to elevate the status of basketball at Oregon, too. The process has already started with three straight trips to the NCAA Tournament.

"We just have to do our part: We have to grow, we have to play an exciting brand of basketball, we have to win. We've got to continue to get better," Altman said.

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