

Final-Four-bound: Ducks upset Michigan, (1) Kansas for first Final Four bid since 1939

Oregon won the very first men's NCAA tournament in 1939, the Ducks now look to the Final Four for the first time since then

By Sam Wright
sports@cgsentinel.com

The Oregon Duck's men's basketball program made it to the final four last week for the first time since the first NCAA tournament debuted in 1939. Oregon has gotten to the Elite Eight in previous years, but it hasn't been to the final four since the Ducks won the first national championship 78 years ago.

But before we jump right into the excitement of finale of one of the most popular collegiate tournaments in the world, let's analyze just how Oregon slowly emerged into the spotlight.

We last discussed the second-round game between Oregon and Rhode Island. Tyler Dorsey hit a deep three-pointer to give the Ducks the win and advance to the Sweet 16.

This is where Oregon changed from being the favored team, to being the underdog. And so far, the underdog label seems to suit them better.

The Michigan Wolverines were on a tournament roll after

downing second-seeded Louisville as a seventh-seeded team in the Midwest Region. Although Oregon was a higher-seeded team (3), ESPN and Las Vegas had Michigan as the favorite in the Sweet 16 matchup.

The predictions weren't unfounded. Oregon struggled to put away Rhode Island, which was an 11th seed. Oregon is also without its big man, Chris Boucher. Boucher led the nation in defensive blocks until he suffered a severe knee injury against Cal during the Pac 12 tournament.

So how did the Ducks make it all the way to the Final Four as the underdog over the past two games? The answer lies in the trio of Tyler Dorsey, Dillon Brooks and Jordan Bell.

Throughout the regular season, Brooks was the show-stopper who held the spotlight.

Brooks led the team in scoring and hit several buzzer-beating game winners from three-point range against teams ranked top-five in the nation. Joining him is now Dorsey. There's a reason why Dorsey is nicknamed Mr.

March. He now leads the team in scoring during the tournament, and he's the one draining the threes. Bell has tied a school record for most blocks in a tournament game, and his rebounds were the saving grace against Michigan.

The Sweet 16 game saw close to 10 different lead changes, but the Ducks held the lead for most of the game. However, with just over two minutes to play, Michigan had a three-point lead at 68-65. Within a minute, Bell scored a put-back layup, and Dorsey drove for a go-ahead layup with just over one minute left in the game. Barely holding on to a 69-68 lead, the Ducks fed the ball to Brooks, who drove to the basket and missed. But Bell was in perfect position for a devastating offensive rebound that allowed Oregon to drain more of the clock.

Michigan's high-scorer Derrick Walton Jr. attempted a last-second three-pointer for the win but came up short, and the Ducks were sent to the Elite Eight for a second consecutive year.

Bell finished the game with 13 rebounds and 16 points.

Now to where the Ducks were truly an underdog. On Saturday, Oregon faced off against one-seeded Kansas, a team that scored over 90 points in its past two games. Kansas was predicted to beat Oregon solidly by over 10 points, but writers and analysts spent the days leading up to the game talking about how the game will be closer than expected, and Oregon could stay under 10 points.

Well that wasn't the case at all. Because not only did the Ducks maintain a lead for the vast majority of the game, they won by more than 10 points. They beat the Jayhawks by 14 points to be exact, in a 74-60 game.

Oregon took an early lead after Kansas initially went up 3-2. While the Jayhawks were keeping things close throughout the first half, Oregon ended the half with an 11-point lead after Brooks and Dorsey hit back-to-back three-pointers before going into the locker room at halftime.

After that, it was pretty much all Ducks. Bell was a menace for the Kansas offense, as the center racked up eight blocks on the game, a school record for NCAA tournament games.

Oregon extended its lead to 18 at one point, but Kansas slowly chipped away and brought the game to 66-60, the closest score of the second half.

But Dorsey responded with a three-point shot to put the lead back up to nine, and the Ducks finished an 8-0 run to end the game.

Dorsey had a game-high 27 points, shooting nine-for-13 from the field and six-for-10 from three-point range.

Along with Bell's eight blocks, he also had 13 rebounds

and 11 points. Brooks finished with 17 points, five rebounds and four assists. Dylan Ennis added 12 points.

Now the Ducks look to the Final Four this weekend. Oregon will face off against North Carolina on Saturday in what will be the Tar Heels' 20th Final Four appearance. Last year, North Carolina lost to Villanova in the national championship game.

ESPN reported that less than one percent of the 18 million brackets filled out this year had Oregon going to the Final Four. The upset has rocked a lot of brackets as Kansas was at one point perceived as the best team in the tournament.

Cottage Grove hosts three schools at CG Icebreaker last week, individual results promising

CG boys and girls in top five of most events



Jacob Woods runs as the anchor for the 4x100-meter relay team. Woods crossed the finish line and took first place at the Cottage Grove Icebreaker meet on Wednesday.

By Sam Wright
sports@cgsentinel.com

Cottage Grove's track and field team kicked the season off last week with the Cottage Grove Icebreaker on Wednesday. The Lions hosted North Valley, Thurston and Pleasant Hill.

Neither the girls' nor the boys' team took first place at the meet, but there were a lot of impressive finishes among both squads.

Junior Jacob Woods took second place in the 100-meter finals with a time of 11:53, a personal record. Cooper Ladd took fifth place with his own personal record of 11.76 seconds.

Woods and Ladd had top-five finishes in the 200-meter finals. Woods finished with a PR of 23.53 in his second-place sprint, and Ladd finished in fourth place with a time of 24.60. The two sprinters were also joined by freshman Markus Julien in

the top 10. Julien took ninth place with a time of 25.94.

In the 400-meter race, two young Lion runners, freshmen Logan Nelson and Frenando Soto-Cruz took fifth and sixth place, with times of 60.45 and 61.90, respectively.

Sophomore Erick Giffen showed his stamina in the 800-meter race. Giffen finished with a time of 2:18.77 to secure fourth place in the finals. Teammate Daniel Dunn crept into the top 10 in ninth place with a time of 2:28.90.

Cottage Grove saw wonderful results from its long-distance runners. In the 1500-meter race, Jesse Ellingworth set his own personal record with a time of 4:41.77 and a second-place finish. Freshman Michell Krokus took sixth place with a time of 4:55.25.

Freshman James Talley of Cottage Grove gave the Lion boys their first first-place finish

in the 3000-meter race. Talley finished in just 10:20.96, and Michell Krokus took fourth place with a time of 4:55.25.

Junior Hayden Glenn gave Cottage Grove their second first-place with the 110-meter hurdles. Only four competed, but Glenn finished with a time of 17.27. The high hurdles will be a race that the Lions will struggle with this year. Last year, star senior Michael Tharpe consistently took first place in regular season meets and finally broke 15 seconds at the district meet in Cottage Grove. However, Tharpe started his hurdles career with much slower times. As the season goes on, expect to see Glenn's times drop sharply.

The boys' relay team secured another first-place finish in the 4x100-meter relay. Glenn, Ladd, Woods and Chad Bottorff finished with a strong time of 44.75 seconds.

On the field side of things,

Hunter Hall took first place in the shot put by throwing a distance of 42 feet, 1.5 inches. Hall also took second in javelin (138 feet, 11 inches).

Giffen, who took fourth place in the 800-meter race, took second place in the high jump at a height of five feet, eight inches. Cottage Grove also took first and second place in the pole vault event with Takoda Brooks (10 feet), and Max Gause (eight feet, six inches), respectively.

In the long jump, Tucker Porter took second place, jumping 20 feet, eight inches, and Glenn took second place (18 feet, nine inches). Porter also placed third in the triple jump.

The boys' ended the meet in second place, not bad considering the competition coming from North Valley (first place) and Thurston (third place).

Athlete of the Week

James smokes competition at Icebreaker



Freshman Sabrina James took home her first high school track gold medal in the 1500-meter race. James finished in a time of 5:24.12 seconds, 25 seconds faster than the second-place finisher. Her teammate Abril Leal finished in fifth place.

Girls show strong balance between track and field events

By Sam Wright
sports@cgsentinel.com

The girls' team took third place overall, but Cottage Grove, North Valley and Thurston stayed fairly close in terms of points. Thurston finished in first with 74, North Valley had 67 and Cottage Grove had 68.

But to avoid early injury, the Lions didn't have their star athletes compete in all of their usual events, which is probably what caused a slight dip in points.

Regardless, Hannah Albrecht and Zarah Wemple took third and fourth place, respectively, in the 100-meter dash. Albrecht sprinted in 13.49 seconds and Wemple finished in 13.72. Albrecht then took fourth in the 200-meter (27.78), and Aramie Nydam took third in the 400-meter race (1:16.77).

Hudson Weybright, who earned a spot to compete at the state tournament last year, competed in only one event during the Icebreaker, the 800-meter race. Weybright took third place with a time of 2:38.19.

The first first-place finish on the girls' squad came from freshman Sabrina James. James ran the 1500-meter race in 5:24.12, 25 seconds faster than the next runner. Senior Abril Leal followed up with a strong

fifth-place finish in 5:46.10.

Cottage Grove wasn't able to take first place in the 100-meter hurdles, but the girls secured the next three spots. Faryn Dahlen took third place (17.56 seconds), Tyra Gordon took third (18.37) and Celeste Pelham took fourth (18.58). A similar pattern happened in the 300-meter hurdles.

Sydney Boxberger (59.20) took fourth place, Pelham (59.30) took fifth place, Dahlen (59.82) took sixth, Gordon (62.79) took seventh and Chelsea Armstrong (63.20) took eighth place.

Finishing off the track results, Cottage Grove took fourth place in the 4x100-meter relay. No 4x400-meter relay was run during this meet.

In the field events, Boxberger took first place in the javelin throw, with a meet-high distance of 98 feet, 10 inches. Melissa Powers and Kaitlyn Brooks took third and fourth respectively, with throws of 94 feet, six inches, and 91 feet, four inches.

Paige Welch took the top Cottage Grove spot in the shot put with a fifth place throw of 26 feet, 6.5 inches. Powers took sixth in the discus (70 feet, four inches) and was shortly followed by Miranda McCasline

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Fool's Rush 5k run to be held April 1

Run CG, an organization dedicated to staging quality, unique running experiences in Cottage Grove will be hosting its second-annual Fool's Rush 5k Run/walk on April 1 at 6 p.m. The run will take you up Mt. David in Cottage Grove and is the exciting part of the run according to those who participated in it last year. The race will start and end at Sixth and Washington Streets in downtown Cottage Grove.