

Sports

OREGON MEN'S BASKETBALL

Ducks' 5-star center has strong debut in 81-48 win over Montana

EUGENE (AP) — Oregon suddenly looks bigger, and potentially even stronger.

The eighth-ranked Ducks made a significant addition to their lineup Wednesday night as 6-foot-11 N'Faly Dante played his first college game and scored 11 points during an 81-48 win over Montana.

"He's just a dominant big," said Oregon sophomore Will Richardson, who played against Dante in high school. "Any time he steps on the court, even if he's not scoring a lot, he's going to make his presence felt."

The much-anticipated debut of Oregon's top freshman recruit probably wasn't needed against the Grizzlies (4-6), but the Ducks want Dante comfortable with his role before Pac-12 play begins in two weeks. Oregon (9-2) has two more nonconference games.

"I didn't know what to

think," Ducks coach Dana Altman said. "He's practiced OK other than his conditioning. ... I thought he could come out and give us a few minutes.

"You can see his natural talent and I think as he gets in shape and (learns) more of our sets," his contributions will increase.

Francis Okoro, a 6-9 sophomore who had been Oregon's tallest player, posted the second double-double of his career with 12 points and 17 rebounds, the latter a career high while he matched his career best for scoring. Richardson and Payton Pritchard led the Ducks with 14 points each, and Pritchard added seven assists.

Okoro and Dante were never on the court together Wednesday, but Altman envisions that possibility.

"It's going to help Francis a lot," Richardson said. "They work well together.

"Now we've got two physical big men. It's going to make us a lot better."

Dante would have been a high school senior this year but the native of Mali reclassified over the summer to go to college. He wasn't cleared for eligibility in time to enroll for the fall term but when that ended last Friday, he officially became a student for winter term, though classes don't begin until Jan. 6.

Dante didn't play Saturday in Oregon's road win at No. 5 Michigan because he hadn't practiced with the Ducks, but after a couple of days of workouts he was in uniform Wednesday.

He immediately made an impact.

The Ducks scored 11 consecutive points to break away from the last tie at 12-all.

That spurt included the first two Oregon points for Dante, who entered the game with

7:50 left in the first half and promptly scored seven points in three minutes.

Dante converted a pair of lob passes for dunks, the second one when he was fouled and hit the free throw for a three-point play. He finished the first half with nine points, equaling Okoro's total as the Ducks dominated inside. The two big men combined to go 8 of 9 from the field as the Ducks shot 52% to lead 37-24 at halftime.

Oregon gradually expanded the lead in the second half and ended up shooting 54% from the floor.

"I like what we're doing," Altman said. "We've just got to keep taking steps in the right direction."

Montana could never find its groove on offense, shooting 37% while committing 20 turnovers. Kendal Manuel led the Grizzlies with 15 points.

Lillard, McCollum lead Blazers to win

By Eric Garcia Gundersen
Associated Press

PORTLAND — The Portland Trail Blazers aren't concerned about style points. A mid-December win was enough — tight as it felt against the team with the NBA's worst record.

Damian Lillard had 31 points and a season-high 13 assists, Hassan Whiteside grabbed 23 rebounds and the Trail Blazers beat the Golden State Warriors 122-112 Wednesday night.

CJ McCollum scored 30 points and Carmelo Anthony added 17 for Portland. Whiteside also scored 16 points.

"Tonight was just one of those nights," Anthony said. "It was a physical game, a game that we had to win no matter what. We did that. We need to find a groove, just a rhythm amongst the team and string some wins together."

After starting the season 4-8, Portland

is 12-16 and only a half-game back of the Sacramento Kings for eighth place in the Western Conference standings.

"It was an emotional roller coaster ride," McCollum said. "We gave up a ton of offensive rebounds, lots of 3s in transition, but we tightened up in the fourth quarter. We did a better job of getting stops and running out."

McCollum, Anthony and Lillard combined for 78 points a game after combining for 80 in a win at Phoenix. Anthony thinks he's settling into his role as the team's third option.

"I'm just playing off of those guys," Anthony said. "I'm letting them do what they do and I get to take advantage of what's left and the opportunities that's out there. That's all I've been doing."

D'Angelo Russell led Golden State with 26 points and seven assists. Warriors coach Steve Kerr was pleased with

his team's effort.

"The effort was great, we did a lot of good things," Kerr said. "I like the way we executed offensively, but we had too many breakdowns defensively."

Lillard set the tone in the first quarter. Going against the team he grew up rooting for, Lillard had 16 points and five assists in the opening quarter to help the Blazers build a 40-29 halftime lead.

The Warriors still showed plenty of fight even though they entered Wednesday with the worst record in the NBA.

After trailing by 13, the Warriors led 66-65 late in the first half after a 3-pointer by Eric Pascall. Golden State had a 27-11 advantage in second-chance points and went 16 for 38 from the 3-point line.

A driving layup by Lillard got Portland a 67-66 lead heading into halftime.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Utah upsets No. 6 Kentucky Wildcats

By W.G. Ramirez
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Timmy Allen has dedicated every game he's played to his mother since losing her to cancer in 2016.

He gave her something special Wednesday night — at a contest benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer, no less.

Allen hit a tiebreaking floater with 1:14 left to help Utah dodge a rousing comeback try by No. 6 Kentucky for a 69-66 upset. The Utes

sophomore, who has a tattoo on his arm and messages written on his shoe memorializing his mother, Elise, said his mind went straight to her.

"I told her this game was for her today, and I'm glad I lived up to it," said Allen, who had 25 points and nine rebounds.

The Wildcats (8-2) used a 27-10 run to tie it at 68 on Ashton Hagans' dunk with 1:43 remaining, but Allen put the Utes (9-2) back ahead

with his step-back, right-handed floater over Nick Richards.

"It was tough, but that's the stuff I work on," Allen said. "I'm not surprised I made it, but I had a 6-foot-11 guy right there, so getting it over him was tough, he's a big, physical presence. But that's the stuff I work on."

Kentucky, which had held its last four opponents to 58 or fewer points, got off three more shots, including two in the final 11 seconds, but

none connected.

The Utes' last win against an AP Top 25 team was on Feb 27, 2016, against No. 9 Arizona at home, 70-64.

Both Gach contributed 14 points and six rebounds, Rylan Jones had 12 points and Riley Battin added 10 for the Utes.

Utah shot a blistering 62.5% (10 of 16) from the floor in the second half and was 23 of 42 (54.8%) for the game, including 53.3% (8 of 15) from 3-point range.

BMS boys intramural basketball busy

Baker Middle School's intramural boys basketball teams competed in a pair of recent tournaments — Dec. 14 at Burns, and Dec. 12 at home against North Powder.

Burns tournament

The intramural team split into two teams, one coached by Jimmy Howerton and one by Bryan Dalke.

In the first game Dalke's team lost 27-24 to Crane.

Baker had a chance to tie the game at the buzzer but the 3-point attempt by Drake Hetterley barely missed.

"The boys played hard and fought back to make for an exciting finish," Dalke said.

Brandon McCullough was Baker's leading scorer with 8 points and Caleb Hills added 6. Hetterley, Jacob Staehle, Zane Morgan, Izek Cleve-

land, and Brycen Martin all scored 2 points.

Baker's other intramural team led by Coach Howerton beat Burns 21-14.

"The team played great and their hard work paid off in the victory," Dalke said. Alex Palmer and Graison Stone led the way for Baker with 6 points. Ernesto Lopez-Villalvazo scored 5 points, and Christopher Luna and Ashtyn Carter both scored 2 points.

Against North Powder

• Game 1: Coach Howerton's team beat North Powder Blue, 30-15. Alex Palmer and Graison Stone had 6 points each. Alex Brown, Ernesto Lopez-Villalvazo and Ashtyn Carter scored 4, Alex Wise and Jason Arenas scored 2. The leading score for North Powder was Caleb

Kerns with 4 points.

• Game 2: Coach Dalke's team lost 18-13 to the North Powder White team. Scoring for Baker was led by Brycen Martin's 6 points, 4 by Brandon McCullough, and 2 by Caleb Hills. North Powder's leading scorer was Range Bingham with 6 points.

• Game 3: Howerton's team beat North Powder White team 30-12. Graison Stone scored 12 points, Chris Luna had 6, Ashtyn Carter and Alex Palmer scored 4 points, and Ernesto Lopez-Villalvazo and Alex Wise had 2 points. North Powder was led by Stran Bingham and Kale Dalke who both scored 4 points.

• Game 4: Dalke's team lost 23-15 to North Powder Blue team. Baker was led by Caleb Hills and Brandon McCullough with 4 points each.

Kayden Garvin, Brycen Martin and Jacob Staehle all scored 2 points.

OREGON STATE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Beavers win seventh straight

HOUSTON (AP) — Oregon State is off to its best start in 35 years and has its depth to thank for it.

Ethan Thompson and Kylor Kelley each scored 23 points and Oregon State beat Texas-San Antonio 88-78 on Wednesday night for its seventh straight win.

Thompson shot 8 of 11 from the field, and Kelley was 7 of 8 as Oregon State (9-1) shot 56% overall and made 25 of 39 free throws.

"We've always talked about the strength of this team is our depth," Oregon State coach Wayne Tinkle said. "No one person carries us. ... It's nice that there's always other guys there when some guys aren't on their best."

Tres Tinkle finished with 11 points, and Sean Miller-Moore had 10 for Oregon State.

"We knew their focus was going to be to try to take Tres and Ethan out of the game," Wayne Tinkle said. "We challenged our other guys to step up. Kylor really did, and then Ethan took over a couple times each half for us. That's what veteran leaders do, and these guys did a good job."

The Beavers' 9-1 start is their best since the 1984-85 season when they started 15-1. Their seventh straight win was a first since doing so in 1992-93.

"The record shows that we are able to close out some games even if we aren't playing at our best for the whole 40 minutes," Thompson said. "I think it shows the maturity of our team, and we are confident going down the stretch later in the season in close games, that our team will come out on top."

Jhivvan Jackson, who came in as the nation's leading scorer at 25.2 points a game, scored 20 of his 28 points in the second half and finished 10-of-21 shooting for the Roadrunners (4-7).

OREGON STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

OSU still unbeaten

By Kalani Takase
Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii — It was evident early that No. 4 Oregon State planned to make the most of its distinct size advantage over Northern Arizona.

Freshman center Taylor Jones had a double-double by halftime and the Beavers pulled away from the Lumberjacks for a 91-57 victory Wednesday night in the Maui Jim Maui Classic.

Oregon State (10-0) never trailed and led Northern Arizona (2-6) by as many as 34 points.

The 6-foot-4 Jones had 17 points and 10 rebounds in the first half. She finished with a career-best 25 points on 12-of-18 shooting and grabbed 13 rebounds, including seven offensive boards.

"We knew that (the Lumberjacks) could give us a lot in the post, just because of the size difference, and so we wanted to capitalize on that and I think our guards did a really good job of getting the ball into the posts and the posts did a good job of finishing," Jones said.

The Beavers scored on their first five possessions, including three consecutive baskets inside by Jones, to take an early 12-2 lead that was never threatened.

Only
\$11.95 per adult
\$11.50 Seniors

11 AM - 5 PM
December 25
Christmas Day
All-You-Can-Eat Buffet
50¢ per year of age - children up to 12 years
(when ordered with an adult dinner)

ROAST TURKEY • BAKED HAM
• Dressing • Yams • Mashed Potatoes & Gravy
• Green Beans • Rolls • Cranberry Sauce • Salad Bar
• Deviled Eggs • Pumpkin Pie • Peach Cobbler

Non-buffet Christmas Dinner \$10.95
Open: 6 AM - 3 PM Christmas Eve
8 AM - 5 PM Christmas Day

DINNERS TO GO, TOO!

OREGON TRAIL RESTAURANT 211 Bridge Street
523-5844

Community Christmas Love Service

Join us in celebrating a special time of Christmas Joy

Baker High School Auditorium
December 24th, 6-7 PM

Sponsored by the Churches of Baker City