

= 1938 ? 39 Oregon Webfoots men 's basketball team =

The 1938 ? 39 Oregon Webfoots men 's basketball team was a Division I college basketball team that represented the University of Oregon . The Webfoots , coached by Howard Hobson , played in the Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) and compiled a 29 ? 5 win ? loss record in regular and postseason competition . After winning the PCC title , they became the champions of the inaugural NCAA Men 's Division I Basketball Tournament .

Coming off a season in which the Webfoots were defeated in the PCC championship series by Stanford , the team returned all five of their starters . Known for their fast break offense , Oregon 's players were nicknamed the " Tall Firs " and held a height advantage over most teams . After several early @-@ season wins , the Webfoots went on an extended road trip to the East Coast , becoming the first West Coast team to do so . The team suffered two losses on the trip , to City College of New York (CCNY) and Bradley , but posted seven victories as well . Oregon won 10 consecutive games at one point in PCC competition , and clinched a Northern Division championship with a win in the next @-@ to @-@ last contest of the regular season . In the best @-@ of @-@ three PCC championship series , against California , the Webfoots won in two games to earn the team 's first conference championship since 1919 .

Oregon was invited to compete in the West Regional of the NCAA Tournament , and beat Texas in their first game to reach the regional final , where the team won against Oklahoma . At the first NCAA Tournament final , versus Ohio State , the Webfoots claimed a 46 ? 33 victory behind a game @-@ high 15 points by John H. Dick . Three players from the 1938 ? 39 Oregon men 's basketball team were selected as All @-@ Americans , and Hobson and Lauren Gale have been honored by the Basketball Hall of Fame .

= = Background = =

The 1937 ? 38 Webfoots posted a win ? loss record of 14 ? 6 in Pacific Coast Conference play . In the conference 's North division , the Webfoots won the title by a one @-@ game margin over Washington . The Webfoots were led by Lauren Gale , who was the PCC North division 's leader in scoring with 12 @.@ 5 points per game in conference play ; his overall average was 12 @.@ 4 . Oregon advanced to the best @-@ of @-@ three PCC championship series , but lost two consecutive games to Stanford by margins of 52 ? 39 and 59 ? 51 . That ended the team 's hopes of being crowned PCC champions . Following the decisive game of the series , player Bobby Anet said at a team meeting , " Next year , we 're going to win everything . "

= = Roster and schedule = =

Oregon 's entire starting lineup returned from the 1937 ? 38 team that had lost in the conference championship playoff ; it included 6 ' 8 " center Slim Wintermute , who was known for his shot @-@ blocking ability . Forward Gale , who was 6 ' 4 " , had what sportswriter Michael Russell called " enormous hands (that) allowed him to fake opponents while palming the ball with one hand " ; he was the PCC points @-@ scoring leader in 1938 ? 39 . Anet , a 5 ' 8 " guard , was " the heart of the team " , according to Russell , due to his ability to dribble and run the floor quickly . He was the Webfoots ' captain , and was responsible for calling timeouts and engaging in conversations with referees . Other players on the team included 6 ' 4 " forward John H. Dick and 5 ' 11 " guard Wally Johansen . Newspaper editor L. H. Gregory called the Oregon team the " Tall Firs " due to the height of the team 's players , since Oregon was taller than most other teams of the era . Eight of the eleven men on the roster came from Oregon , and the other three from neighboring Washington . Anet and Johansen , along with forwards Earl Sandness and Ted Sarpola , had played for Astoria High School ; Anet and Johansen had won multiple state championships before joining Oregon . Ford Mullen , a future Major League Baseball player , was a backup guard on the team . Along with Mullen , the Webfoots ' reserves included guard Matt Pavalunas and forwards Bob Hardy and Ted Sarpola . The team normally played up to nine players in a game , foregoing a regular substitute for

Wintermute ; when he needed a rest , Dick or Gale often changed positions to play center , allowing for a third forward to be inserted into the lineup . The Webfoots ' head coach was Howard Hobson , who was in his fourth season on the job . In his previous three seasons , he had led the Webfoots to a total win ? loss record of 63 ? 28 .

Oregon 's preferred offensive game plan was to play an attacking fast break style of basketball . In response , opposing teams with shorter players often played a slower @-@ paced offense . Oregon 's fast break was unique among West Coast basketball teams , who were not accustomed to facing such an offensive style . Dick said of the team 's attack that " We wanted to keep the pressure on (the opponent) mentally ? more so than physically . Never give them a moment 's rest . " Hobson frequently tracked Oregon 's attempted shots in both competition and practice sessions , and built the offense around his players ' strengths . On defense , the team switched between zone and man @-@ to @-@ man styles depending on how its opponent played .

= = Regular season = =

The Webfoots began the 1938 ? 39 season by defeating Portland 51 ? 24 on November 29 , 1938 . Oregon 's second game was also against a team based in Portland , which represented the Multnomah Athletic Club . The Webfoots won by an 83 ? 25 final score . In a closer game with a team representing Signal Oil , Oregon stretched its winning streak to three games with a 46 ? 34 triumph . The team then recorded a victory over Pacific Packards , by a 54 ? 39 final score .

Following those games , the Webfoots embarked on a long trip through the Eastern United States ; they were the first college basketball team from the West Coast to do so . Nine games were set up in as many cities , with eight held on the East Coast and one in San Francisco before the team returned home . In scheduling the extended trip away from Oregon , Hobson sought to show the team " different styles of play and officiating " and help them prepare for games later in the season . As a result of the extended travel , a University of Oregon student newspaper nickname the club the " Wandering Webfoots " . The first game of the trip came in December at New York City 's Madison Square Garden against City College of New York (CCNY) . Oregon had a poor start to the game ; according to the Sporting News , the team was " confused by officials ' interpretation of legal and illegal screens to the moving picks set by City College of New York . " CCNY took an early 10 @-@ point lead , but Oregon cut its deficit in half by the end of the first half , and tied the game at 30 ? 30 . Despite Oregon 's comeback attempt , CCNY won 38 ? 36 to hand the Webfoots their first loss of the season . The trip continued on December 19 with a game at Convention Hall in Philadelphia , against local team Saint Joseph 's . Oregon won easily by a 54 ? 44 margin , as Gale and Wintermute led the Webfoots with 13 points each .

Future stops included Chicago , Cleveland , and Detroit , among other locations . Starting with the St. Joseph 's game , the Webfoots had a streak in which they played four games in five days before Christmas Eve . On December 20 , Oregon routed Miami (Ohio) 74 ? 38 , as Sarpola led the team with 20 points . Wintermute suffered an ankle injury during the game . The Webfoots then defeated Canisius by a 12 @-@ point margin . In the next game , against an undefeated Wayne State team , the Webfoots entered halftime tied at 22 ? 22 and needed a late burst of scoring , led by Gale and Johansen , to clinch an 11 @-@ point victory . After the Miami (Ohio) game , Wintermute missed three of the team 's following four games . The Webfoots won without him in their next two games , but not in the game in which he returned to action against Bradley . In Peoria , Illinois , Oregon fell behind by 17 points at halftime and lost 52 ? 39 , as Bradley center Dar Hutchins tallied 17 points while defended by Wintermute , who was playing through his ankle injury . Following their loss to Bradley , Oregon traveled to the Chicago Coliseum for a game against Western Illinois State Teachers College . Despite being without the services of Wintermute again , the Webfoots posted a 60 ? 45 victory . Drake , the Webfoots ' opponent on December 29 in Chicago , was defeated by 11 points . The final game of the road trip , held in San Francisco on New Year 's Eve , saw the Webfoots lose to Stanford . The stretch proved profitable for the school , which made \$ 4 @, @ 400 off of the East Coast games , and Dick credited the trip for giving the Webfoots exposure to different styles of play than they had been accustomed to .

= = = Conference play = = =

The Webfoots then entered play in the PCC , with four games scheduled against each of the four other teams in the conference 's Northern Division ; Oregon hosted each club twice and played two games at all opposing teams ' arenas . At the beginning of 1939 , the Webfoots began its PCC schedule with consecutive home games against Washington State on January 6 and 7 . In the first , Oregon entered halftime with a nine @-@ point advantage and prevailed by a 46 ? 35 margin . They lost the second , 39 ? 34 , for their only home defeat of the season ; the loss broke a 23 @-@ game winning streak at McArthur Court , the Webfoots ' arena .

Oregon then began a 10 @-@ game winning streak , their longest since the start of the 1937 ? 38 season . Oregon State was the Webfoots ' first opponent during the streak , on January 13 ; Oregon prevailed 31 ? 26 . In two higher @-@ scoring contests at Washington State on January 17 and 18 , the Webfoots claimed 56 ? 44 and 57 ? 31 victories , respectively . A five @-@ game road trip concluded with games in Idaho on January 20 and 21 . The contests were closer than those against Washington State , but the Webfoots won 38 ? 30 in the first game and 35 ? 31 in the second to improve to 6 ? 1 in conference play . Oregon 's next five games were at home , beginning with a second encounter against Oregon State , on January 27 that they won by a seven @-@ point margin . Washington traveled to Oregon for games on January 31 and February 1 , and 57 ? 49 and 58 ? 42 victories moved the Webfoots ' winning streak to eight . They then concluded their four @-@ game season series with Idaho , winning by 17 points in each game . On February 18 , the Webfoots ' streak ended with a 50 ? 31 upset loss to Oregon State , which would be their last of the season . Six days later , Oregon posted a 48 ? 37 win over the Beavers at home . That game was the Webfoots ' last appearance for the 1938 ? 39 regular season at McArthur Court ; it was the school 's 100th win at the arena since it was opened in 1927 .

With two games left in the regular season , the Webfoots held a one @-@ game lead over Washington , with a pair of contests scheduled in Seattle against the Huskies . Oregon required one victory to clinch the Northern Division championship . On March 3 , the Webfoots defeated Washington in the first game of the series 39 ? 26 ; Gale led the team in scoring with 11 points , as the team won despite missing 53 of their 67 field goal attempts . Anet suffered a dislocated finger and was held out of the second game against Washington , which took place the following day . The Webfoots claimed a two @-@ point win , their fourth of the season over Washington . Of the Huskies ' five losses in 1938 ? 39 , all but one was against the Webfoots . By the end of the regular season , Oregon had won the PCC North Division with a 14 ? 2 conference record , and had a 24 ? 5 record overall .

= = Postseason = =

= = = PCC championship series = = =

By winning the PCC Northern Division , Oregon earned the right to play the winner of the Southern Division in a best @-@ of @-@ three playoff series , with the games held at McArthur Court . In addition to the PCC championship , the winner would gain a berth in the first NCAA Men 's Division I Basketball Tournament , which the National Association of Basketball Coaches would run . The series was slated to be held between March 10 ? 13 , but a tie between California and Southern California for first place in the Southern Division necessitated a one @-@ game playoff . Rumors began that the PCC championship series would be postponed by one week , which would have prevented the winner from competing in the NCAA Tournament ; the event was scheduled to begin on March 20 . In response , Oregon declared that they would not play if the series was scheduled to end after March 14 . Despite the school 's claim , it agreed to a rescheduling approved by PCC member schools , in which the series was set for March 16 ? 18 . Hobson declared that Oregon would accept an invitation to the NCAA Tournament , following hints that the PCC champion might

be passed over for a bid in favor of a PCC team that did not receive a shortened rest between games . California won the Southern Division playoff 42 ? 36 over Southern California to become the Webfoots ' opponent in the PCC championship series . Dick later noted that he considered it vital for Oregon to sweep the Golden Bears in two games , to avoid an overnight trip to San Francisco for the NCAA Tournament and secure an off day in the Webfoots ' schedule .

In front of a crowd that included members of the Webfoots ' 1919 conference championship team , which had won the title over California , Oregon took a one @-@ point halftime lead on a late 30 @-@ foot shot by Johansen . The team switched its defense from zone to man @-@ to @-@ man for the second half and went on an early second half run to open up a 14 @-@ point lead with 12 minutes left . The Golden Bears made multiple comeback bids as the half progressed , but the Webfoots held on to win 54 ? 49 and move ahead in the series . More than half of Oregon 's points were scored by Gale and Wintermute , who had 18 and 11 respectively . The second game of the series was closely contested in the first half , but Oregon opened a 25 ? 23 lead at halftime and extended their advantage to eight points before a run of three baskets by California . A stretch featuring three scores by Dick helped the Webfoots rebuild their lead later in the second half , and they clinched a two @-@ game sweep with a 53 ? 47 victory . Dick and Wintermute contributed 16 points apiece . It was Oregon 's first PCC championship in 20 seasons .

= = = NCAA Tournament = = =

Oregon received an invitation to the NCAA Tournament 's West Regional , which was held on March 20 and 21 in San Francisco . First , Oregon faced Texas in the first round , in a matchup of teams considered superior to either of their potential opponents in the regional final , according to analysts . The Webfoots scored 10 of the game 's first 12 points , led by Dick and Wintermute , and held a three @-@ point halftime advantage . After Texas had closed their deficit to one point multiple times in the second half , Oregon went on a scoring run and eventually opened a 19 @-@ point lead . The Webfoots defeated Texas by a final score of 56 ? 41 . Wintermute had 14 points in the game , and Dick added 13 . In the regional final against Oklahoma , a 10 ? 0 run to close the first half put the Webfoots in front , 21 ? 14 . Oregon took advantage of Oklahoma 's strategy of attempting to play a fast @-@ paced game and extended their lead in the second half . Dick had 14 points and Gale and Wintermute scored 11 and 10 , respectively , as Oregon advanced to the national championship game with a 55 ? 37 victory . All three of the Webfoots ' leading scorers in the regional final were selected to the all @-@ Western regional squad , as determined by Kansas head coach Phog Allen . Hobson commented on his team 's NCAA Tournament opponents that " We were head and shoulders above [both] , but not so with Washington and California . "

The title game was held on March 27 in Northwestern University 's Patten Gymnasium . Oregon 's opponent was Ohio State , who had won the East Regional by winning against Wake Forest and Villanova . Oregon took advantage of the Buckeyes ' defense , which was designed to stop Gale and Wintermute , by using Gale as " a decoy " , in his words . This created an opportunity for contributions from the Webfoots ' other players , including Dick , who led both teams by scoring 15 points . On Ohio State 's offensive possessions , the Webfoots used a match @-@ up zone defense , which held the Buckeyes ' field goal percentage to 17 percent for the game ; in addition , Oregon gained a rebounding advantage . The Webfoots held a five @-@ point lead at halftime , having led by as much as seven . After Ohio State closed to within one point , Oregon pulled away in the second half to win the national championship , 46 ? 33 . Afterward came what Dick termed " a two @-@ handed trophy presentation " ; during the game , Anet had broken a figure off the top of the championship trophy while attempting to gain possession of the ball by the sideline . On the team 's way back to the University of Oregon , a crowd of 2 @,@ 000 ? 3 @,@ 000 people greeted the Webfoots in The Dalles , Dick 's birthplace , and presented him with what Sporting News writer Joe Gergen called " the first championship watch in NCAA Tournament history . " The train stopped in several other cities on the way to Eugene , where a parade was held for the Webfoots .

= = Aftermath and legacy = =

At the end of the season , Anet , Gale , and Wintermute were selected as All @-@ Americans . In the 1939 ? 40 season , the Webfoots were unable to defend their PCC championship , finishing second behind Oregon State in the division ; the following season , all but one of the players from the championship team had graduated , and the Webfoots ended tied for third . The team did not win the Northern Division again until 1944 ? 45 . Hobson left the program before the 1947 ? 48 season to become Yale 's men 's basketball head coach . Gale and Wintermute later played professional basketball in the National Basketball League ; both were members of the same team , the Detroit Eagles , and Anet declined an offer to join them . Dick briefly played Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) basketball before embarking on a military career of over 30 years after the U.S. entered World War II . Anet and Johansen joined a Eugene , Oregon @-@ based AAU team , the Rubenstein 's Oregonians , and helped the club win a state title and reach the quarterfinals of the AAU 's national basketball tournament in 1940 . Bob Hardy and Mullen both played minor league baseball , and Mullen reached the major leagues with the Philadelphia Phillies in 1944 .

Hobson was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1965 , and Gale followed him into the Hall 12 years later . The entire 1938 ? 39 Oregon team was enshrined in the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame in 1984 , and Anet , Dick , Gale , Hobson , Johansen , and Wintermute were inducted as individuals . The University of Oregon Athletic Hall of Fame selected the team and Hobson as part of its inaugural class of inductees in 1992 . Dick and Gale (1993) , Wintermute (1994) , and Anet and Johansen (1996) were also inducted in later years . All five of the team 's starters have had their numbers retired by the university .