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Like shooting ducks on a pond? No, playing on UTEP home floor not that easy

by Paul Buker, The Oregonian

Tuesday March 31, 2009, 4:44 PM

Dean Wormer is REALLY p.o.'d we can't help but point out that in the hours after OSU shot 60 percent from the floor to beat UTEP Monday night, three U. of Oregon freshmen - Josh Crittle, Michael Dunigan, and Teondre Williams - were caught trying to shoot at ducks and geese with **BB guns** at Alton Baker Park in Eugene. ... obviously, the philosophy on off-season workouts differs at the two schools. ... and yes, as you would suspect seeing as how this was Oregon basketball, the police officer at the scene said it appeared that the UO players didn't hit anything.

EL PASO - Oregon State is one win away from the College Basketball Invitational championship, but consider what the Beavers are facing tonight in Game 2 of the CBI's best-of-three championship series:

- a hostile crowd of 8,000-plus at the Don Haskins Center on the Texas-El Paso campus.

- a coach - UTEP's Tony Barbee - who wasn't happy with the officiating Monday night when OSU roared to a 21-point lead in the second half, then held on for a 75-69 victory.

- a UTEP team that in Game 1 missed shot after shot it normally makes.

- a star player - UTEP's Stefon Jackson - who went an uncharacteristic 6-for-21 from the floor in Game 1 and is determined not to let it happen again. In other words, OSU (17-17) is a decided underdog in UTEP's building as it tries to win a fifth straight CBI game and finish the season with an above-.500 record.

OSU coach Craig Robinson said

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- [Oregon State tops UTEP 75-69](#) 3/30/2009, 10:04 p.m. PDT

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Memo to the ducks swimming blissfully in Alton Baker Park. Don't worry about those guys with the BB gun. They are UO basketball players. They can't shoot.

Game 1 was a must-win, considering the series finishes in El Paso, and the box score from Monday's game tells him UTEP will be a difficult task at the Haskins Center.

UTEP got off 20 more shots than OSU in Game 1, pulled down 14 offensive rebounds, outscored the Beavers in the paint 40-18, outscored the Beavers off the bench 25-4, and still managed to lose.

"We aren't good enough to say, 'OK, we've got a chance to

win one out of two there, we've got to win one out of one," said Robinson, figuring the Beavers best shot to steal the CBI championship is tonight.

"I think the longer we can stay close, the better it is for us because then the pressure's on them," said Robinson.

Barbee said he was impressed with the Beavers' shooting. OSU hit 60 percent of its shots and got double-figure scoring from four players on a night leading scorer Calvin Haynes went 1-for-6 and had just three points.

"They were unconscious on offense," said Barbee, "but we'll look at the tape, make what adjustments we have to make, and I think you'll see a totally different (Game 2)."

OSU players say they have been in hostile buildings before and this is just another road game, even if it carries championship implications.

"We've been in tough environments," said OSU point-center Roeland Schatenaar, who led the Beavers with 19 points in Game 1.

"We just have to do what we do, and not let the crowd affect us."

Notes: OSU had a long travel day Tuesday and arrived in El Paso later in the evening. ... until OSU's CBI run - which admittedly isn't comparable to the NCAA or NIT tournaments - no OSU team had won four post-season games in a season. ... the Beavers' 17 wins is the most since 2004-05. ... OSU hasn't won more than 17 games in a season since 1989-90, when Gary Payton was a senior and OSU went 22-7. ... OSU's plus-11 improvement in wins from a 6-25 mark last season is tied for the third-best turnaround in NCAA basketball behind Missouri (plus-15) and LSU (plus-14).

- PB (No animals were harmed during the production of this blog)

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