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Beavers must contain Vermont's Marqus Blakely if they want to survive CBI quarterfinals,

Posted by [Paul Buker, The Oregonian](#) March 22, 2009 10:54AM

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May we interrupt March Madness to offer some CBI coverage?

Monday night's CBI quarterfinals:

Charleston (27-8) at Richmond (19-15)
Stanford (19-13) at Wichita St. (17-16)
Northeastern (19-12) at UTEP 20-12
Vermont (24-8) at **Oregon St.** (14-17)
- Teams will be SEEDED into Wednesday night's semifinals.

Here is the advance running in Monday's O. ...

CORVALLIS - He is a player no one on the Oregon State team knew about until a few days ago, but the Beavers' survival in tonight's College Basketball Invitational quarterfinal game at Gill Coliseum may depend on how well they defend him.



Vermont's Marqus Blakely, maybe the best player you've never heard of, will be a major issue for Oregon State in Monday's CBI quarterfinal game.

On paper, 6-foot-5, 225-pound junior forward **Marqus Blakely** is an undersized big man on a mid-major Vermont team that is still kicking itself for blowing its shot at making the NCAA tournament.

In person, Blakely is something else entirely, as fourth-ranked Pitt, or Maryland, or George Mason found out.

"A tremendous college player," said Catamounts' coach Mike Lonergan. "He's probably one of the best under-the-radar players in the whole country."

OSU (14-17) and Vermont (24-8) will meet on a deserted OSU campus - it's spring break - to decide who gets a spot in the CBI semifinals and Beavers' coach Craig Robinson said job one for the Beavers is, "making sure Blakely doesn't control the game."

The Catamounts, who have won eight of their last nine road games, aren't afraid to schedule big-time programs and Blakely - a two-time offensive and defensive player of the year in his conference - has put up some huge numbers in that kind of atmosphere.

He had 23 points, 11 rebounds, and four blocked shots in Vermont's 89-74 overtime loss at Maryland and he had 19 points, 14 rebounds, five assists and five blocked shots in an 80-51 loss at Pitt, currently the nation's fourth-ranked team.

In an 80-79 overtime loss to George Mason, a high-profile mid-major that was once the upset darling of the NCAAs, Blakely put up 24 points, eight rebounds, and four blocks.

No wonder he has OSU's undivided attention.

"Most teams doubled him, even Maryland and Pitt," said Lonergan.

"I'm sure Oregon State will try to come up with something to try and shut him down."

Robinson worked on that all weekend.

The game may boil down to how successful the Beavers are at limiting the damage Blakely does inside.

Vermont will feed Blakely the ball over and over, and when he gets doubled, he will kick it out to several excellent shooters.

Lonergan said Blakely is a good passer.

The rest will be up to his teammates, who shot well enough to get the Catamounts past Wisconsin-Green Bay in the first round although Blakely did most of the heaving lifting with 22 points, 11 rebounds, three blocks and four steals.

"I know we'll have to shoot well because we're going to see a lot of zone," said Lonergan, mindful that OSU's most effective defense has been its trapping 1-3-1.

Robinson said point-center Roeland Schaftenaar and defensive stopper Seth Tarver could find themselves matched up with Blakely tonight. There may also be times when sophomore forwards Omari Johnson and Daniel Deane take turns on him.

"We know he's a big-time athlete, and we've played a lot of big-time athletes," said Seth Tarver. "We just have to prepare the same way we've done with every other big-time athlete."

Yes, but will it be enough?

Notes: On the season, Blakely is averaging 16.1 points and 9.1 rebounds. ... as we noted yesterday, coach Rob said that overall, OSU actually has more athleticism than Vermont. ... how many times has he said that this season? ... OSU drew 3,511 for its first-round game with Houston, and that was the second-best crowd of all the CBI games. ... Wichita St. drew 6,647, Wisconsin-Green Bay 2,611, Richmond 2,171, Stanford (1,243) and Troy 1,045. ... more on Stanford. ... local media wondered if maybe the CBI was **beneath Stanford's dignity**, considering