



## Oregon Ducks, especially Jovean Catron, say CBI is worth every penny

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How could Oregon say no to Jovean Catron?

Oregon will pay the CBI Tournament \$35,000 for the right to play host to Weber State on Wednesday night. If the Ducks win and are awarded another home game, they will pay \$50,000. If there's another game at Matthew Knight Arena after that, it's \$75,000.

If you ask the Ducks, it's worth every penny.

"At this particular time, I just thought it would be good for us to continue to play," Oregon coach Dana Altman told reporters this week.

Altman's Ducks will take on Weber State in the opening round of the CBI Tournament at 7 p.m. Wednesday in Matthew Knight Arena. If they beat the Wildcats, the Ducks will face either Duquesne or Montana on Monday night.

Oregon athletic director Rob Mullens said he doesn't know whether the Ducks would get any home games beyond Wednesday night's game. He said the team's resurgence in Los Angeles, winning twice in the Pacific-10 Conference Tournament, convinced him that the CBI would be a good idea.

The CBI is a third-tier tournament in its fourth year. After the NCAA Tournament (68 teams) and NIT (32) snatch 100 teams, the CBI puts together its 16 best. A fourth tournament, the CIT, includes only mid-majors.

One person in particular thought it would be good for the Ducks to continue to play in the CBI, fifth-year senior Jovean Catron.

"I think it's just great to play in the postseason, regardless of what tournament it is, just having a chance to play, taking advantage of it," Catron said. "Now we're down to no more chances to even play in a Duck uniform."

It's exam week at Oregon. Catron has one final on Wednesday, so he will be playing with the comfort of

knowing his academic career is finished and with the inspiration of knowing that his college athletic career could end the same day.

"I'll be fresh and free and just ready to go," he said.

Altman smiled when he discussed the factors that went into the season. Basically, Joevan wanted to play, so they're playing.

"Joevan was pretty passionate in that he wanted to play," Altman said. "He's given so much to our team this year, he wanted to suit it up, so that made the decision pretty easy."

So Oregon will play Weber State, a three-point firing team from the Big Sky with a solid basketball history that includes 15 NCAA Tournament appearances. The Wildcats lost by a point this season to Arizona State, a team that beat Oregon twice in the regular season.

"They can shoot the basketball," Altman said.

It is also spring break week at Weber State, which could explain why the Wildcats do not have a game at Dee Events Center after being told they would.

For the Ducks, it's another chance to play in their new arena, even if some of their fans are less than "fresh and free," having to study for exams. (Actually, it will be free for students and \$23 for seats in the lower bowl, \$18 for the upper bowl.)

"We only got to play half the season in here," Singler said. "Playing in front of thousands of people is better than working out here alone, which is what we probably would do if we weren't in the postseason."

"We went into the Pac-10 Tournament playing really free, and I think that's when we're the best. We're going to do the same thing in this tournament."

Altman said that playing a home game is the only way the Ducks would be playing in the CBI - regardless of how badly Catron wants it. With heavy exam loads on Wednesday for many players, it would have been too much to juggle.

"We told them, 'If we get a home game, we can play.' If we can't, just academically, there would be no way," Altman said.

The appearance moves Altman's streak of postseason appearances up to 14 years. His Creighton Bluejays played in the CIT last season, and Altman is clear he has higher goals.

"You never say never," Altman said. "But I hope we're never in this position again."