



Friday, November 9, 2001

## Men's basketball season begins

Over the past three years, the Oakland University **men's basketball team** has posted several monumental wins, including a Mid-Continent Conference regular-season title, and its players have earned many individual accolades.

But the team has not had the opportunity to play at the Mid-Con Tournament or the NCAA Tournament – that is, until this season.

After a four-year transitional period since moving to Division I athletics, OU is now eligible for both tournaments. This means that the 2001-2002 senior class for OU basketball has one chance to reach these goals.

"Our five seniors have led us through the Division I transition and all of the heartaches and the joyful times," said head coach Greg Kampe. "We've had great wins and a league championship, but we've always been stymied at the end of the year because we couldn't go to the tournament. Now these seniors have one chance to do just that. The only thing that matters are the three days in March for this group of seniors."

Oakland will open the regular season on Friday, November 16 with a re-match at the University of Michigan. The Golden Grizzlies recorded a 97-90 victory over the Wolverines in Rochester last year and seek to defend their bragging rights.

The team's veteran leadership comes from seven players who have started a majority of the games in their careers: seniors Dan Champagne (forward), Brad Buddenberg (guard), Jason Rozycki (guard), and Mychal Covington (guard), and sophomores Kelly Williams (forward), Mike Helms (guard) and Jordan Sabourin (center).

"Leadership is a group effort with this squad," Kampe said. "This team is led by a group of guys that have been here forever. There aren't many programs around that can claim five seniors with so many years of experience. We have one sixth-year senior, two five-year seniors and two four-year starting seniors. Because of injuries over the past couple of years, we actually have seven starters back."

Champagne finished his junior season third on the team with 12.5 points per game and second with 4.9 rebounds per contest. He led the Golden Grizzlies with a .650 field goal percentage after hitting 139-214 from the field. Through the 2000-01 season he stands first in the career record books with a .622 shooting percentage. He joined the prestigious 1,000 point club last season and is 10th all-time at OU with 1,356 career points.

Buddenberg finished the 2000-01 season second on the team with 15.1 points per game and third with 4.6 rebounds per game. He joined the 1,000 point club during his junior season and is 13th in career scoring with 1,316 career points.

Rozycki was named second team All-Mid-Continent Conference for the second year in a row in 2000-01. He led the team with 18.3 points per game and was fourth with 3.0 rebounds per game. He led the Golden Grizzlies with an .868 free throw percentage and set OU individual game records when he made 18 free throws against Wright State and attempted 17 three-point shots against Missouri-Kansas City. He joined the 1,000-point club during his junior season and is 18th in career scoring with 1,182 career points.

Leading the way for the Golden Grizzlies for the fourth year in a row will be Covington, the on-the-floor captain. He played in all 28 games for OU last season and started in 26 of them, leading the squad with 155 assists. Entering his fourth year, he is at seventh all-time with 316 career assists. Among Mid-Continent Conference players, Covington was second overall in assists with 5.54 per game.

Williams played in all 28 games and started 22 of them for the Golden Grizzlies last year. He led the team in rebounding with 5.7 per game and blocked shots with 13 for the season. Williams averaged 5.6 points per game and finished the season third on the team in steals.

Helms earned Mid-Continent Conference Co-Newcomer of the Year honors as a true freshman for the Golden Grizzlies and was named to the Mid-Con All-Newcomer Team. He was fourth on the team with 11.3 points per game.

Sabourin played his true freshman season last year for OU and scored 1.8 points per game with 2.8 rebounds per game. His

top game was against Concordia when he scored a career-high 11 points and had seven rebounds.

Other returning key role players for the Golden Grizzlies are senior Ryan Williams (guard), sophomores Tim Frlick (guard) and Alex Miller (forward). Newcomers to the OU roster are redshirt freshman Ryan Hoover (guard), sophomore Rawle Marshall (guard) who has to sit out this season due to the NCAA transfer rule, freshman Pierre Dukes (guard) and junior Adrian Martin (forward).

OU will play in two tournaments this season – the University Hoops Classic in Moon Township, Penn., November 23-25 and the Boilermaker Invitational in West Lafayette, Ind., November 30-December 1.

The Golden Grizzlies will host four non-conference opponents throughout the season in St. Mary's (November 20), Detroit-Mercy (December 6), Toledo (December 27) and Western Michigan (December 29). Other road non-conference matchups include a trip to the Air Force Academy (December 8), a re-match with Wright State in Dayton, Ohio (December 11), a game at Ohio (December 15), a matchup at Michigan State (December 19) and a game at Indiana-Purdue-Ft. Wayne (January 28).

The non-conference games on the schedule will prepare the Golden Grizzlies for the chance to make a significant showing in the Mid-Con tournament.

"This may be the toughest schedule yet as a Division I program," Kampe said. "This team knows that the individual honors are not important. I think that they as a group understand it is all about what we accomplish as a team and are striving for that. This is a one chance thing and now we need to get to the NCAA tournament."

For rosters, schedules, statistics and a detailed season outlook, visit the [men's basketball](#) pages on the [Oakland University Athletics](#) Web site.

#### **SUMMARY**

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