

Former Oregon forward makes return for weekend matchup

Jay Anderson returned from Romania in time to play for the Chargers against Central Oregon last weekend

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Jay Anderson has barely had time to catch his breath.

He's here, though, and in a Eugene Chargers uniform for the second straight season.

The former Oregon forward flew back from a professional league in Romania a week and a half ago to New York. He visited his sister there for week, drove to his parents' home in Minneapolis for a few days and completed the trek Thursday in Bend. He made his first appearance in the Chargers' win at Central Oregon Friday night, 153-129, and made his home debut Saturday in the Chargers 147-143 loss to the same team.

"It was a long drive out here," Anderson said in an understatement.

Anderson joined a squad with high expectations and riding a 4-2 start.

"It's always fun to play here in Eugene and to play with these guys. It's fun to play with (former Oregon forward) Adam (Zahn)," Anderson said. "It's a great bunch of athletes, good players that I didn't know before I got here, so we're just getting to know each other."

Anderson and Zahn are familiar with each other's game. Three years ago, they played together for Oregon.



"We're about the same height, but we're completely different type of players so we can play well together, and I hope we can get a chance to play together a little bit more," Anderson said.

Anderson watched the Ducks march to the Elite Eight online. The 6-foot-9-inch forward had been playing for Tirgu Mures in Romania's A Division.

"I was cheering. I was jumping up and down," Anderson said. "It was a lot of fun to watch them play. They played great. Aaron (Brooks) really stepped up and had a great year."

Now, Anderson is back in Eugene and in the International Basketball League where he earned all-star honors last year. Anderson and Antwon Mills are the lone returnees from last year's team under former coach Kenya Wilkins.

Saturday night, Eugene had two large leads dwindle with the second Central Oregon comeback making the difference. The Central Oregon Hotshots utilize a small, quick lineup, which makes it a tough defensive match-up and led Chargers coach Scott Jones to make frequent substitutions.

Rod Stevenson continued his return to health after missing three games with a sore right hamstring. The prolific scorer poured in 22 points by halftime and had 10 in the second half. His 32 total points came after he poured in 30 points in Friday's win.

Stevenson took a breather with Eugene up 123-113. Central Oregon ran off a 16-2 run for 129-125 lead and never trailed again.

Eugene pulled within two, 132-130, on a tip-dunk by Lamar Harris. Hotshots guard Arthur Lewis extended it to six again, 140-134, on a three-pointer. After Chargers guard Solomon Yearby made a lay-up to cut the deficit to three, 143-140, guard Charles Easterling made a steal and launched a potential game-tying three-pointer that missed.

The Chargers beat the same team Friday night at Central Oregon.

"It's a tough deal. I figured that it could work either way," Jones said. "That we would have an advantage because we're back at home and we saw what they had last night but we just didn't focus consistently during the game. We played well in stretches and then lost our focus and we just had endless turnovers and that cost us the game in the end."

Easterling had 22 points and 16 rebounds on Saturday while Harris had 25 points and 20 rebounds. Zahn had 13 points and six rebounds and Anderson added eight points and a rebound.