

Oregon invincibility ends unexpectedly

By MIKE YORKEY
Of the Emerald

Oregon's stock portfolio in the Pacific-8 race plummeted thanks to a shoddy weekend of play which saw the Ducks split a pair of games in the opening conference series.

Oregon used mirrors and kamikaze willpower to nip Stanford, 84-83 Friday night, but languished to a 60-58 loss to the California Bears Saturday.

How the uneven weekend transpired for the previously unbeaten Ducks (1-1 in league and 10-1 overall) is a question that Dick Harter and his assistant coaches will be poring over this week.

In the Cal game, the Webfoots were beaten at their own game—hard-nosed, chin-to-chin defense—and that is what hurt.

"They didn't junk us; they played a man-to-man very effectively against us," said Harter in the lockerroom post-mortem. "I've always said it would take a tough man-to-man defense to beat us."

That's exactly what Bears went out and did.

For five crucial minutes—from 12:01 to 6:44 in the second half—the Ducks failed to register a single point as the scoring tide turned against them and their

shooting confidence slowly ebbed until the Ducks looked suddenly human and beatable.

It wasn't always that way.

Oregon started the weekend playing their charged, chaotic brand of ball against Stanford, wiping out several Cardinal leads in both halves.

Both clubs remained intense throughout the game, but Oregon's conditioning proved to be the deciding factor in the last ten minutes. Ronnie Lee's 15 second-half points—with some of the shots were bordering on the miraculous—enabled Oregon to pull ahead by six with 37 seconds remaining.

But Stanford stormed right back, and nearly sneaked off with the win before falling, 84-83. The way the Ducks won, almost backing in, later proved to be an omen that things were not all that right with the Duck machine that had rolled to nine previous victories.

"That was our gift of the year, that's for sure," said Mark Barwig, who drew the wrath and the clenched hand of Stanford's Rich Kelley during the game.

But California wasn't in the mood of playing the Three Wise-men; bearing gifts Saturday night.

The Ducks began the game playing solid, pattern basketball, were leading by 10 and the Mac Court denizens were hoping for a laughter to sit back and enjoy.

But foul trouble and Dick Harter's subsequent attempts to find able substitutes to keep the oiled machine running failed.

"We didn't get a good effort off our bench," said Harter, who added in disgust, "We all had a bad night, players, coaches..."

Three starters comprising the rebounding wall fouled out: Gerald Willett, Stu Jackson and Greg Ballard.

Added to the foul troubles was the shooting woes, especially from the free throw line. Four times in the last 10 minutes a Duck player toed the line and found concrete in their arms. And when the free throws failed to drop, the Duck offense lost its poise, and the defense began breaking down.

Furthermore, it was California who was playing the intelligent basketball in the stretch drive, boxing out on rebounds, playing keep-away from the Oregon press and sinking eight of 10 free throws.

"We had great poise, stuck with our plays," said Cal coach Dick Edwards. "We played opportunistically and just kept our poise."

As each Duck player began the slow walk to the Oregon bench after receiving the fifth foul, so the scoring load fell upon Ronnie Lee's shoulders.

For even Ronnie the Miracle Worker, the task was too great. An hour after the California loss, Lee sat hunched against his yellow locker stall. Wearing a pair of dress slacks and nothing more, Lee hung his head and folded his hands, his face etched in agony as he relived the dying moments of Oregon's first loss of 1974-75.

But not even Ronnie could bring those moments back.

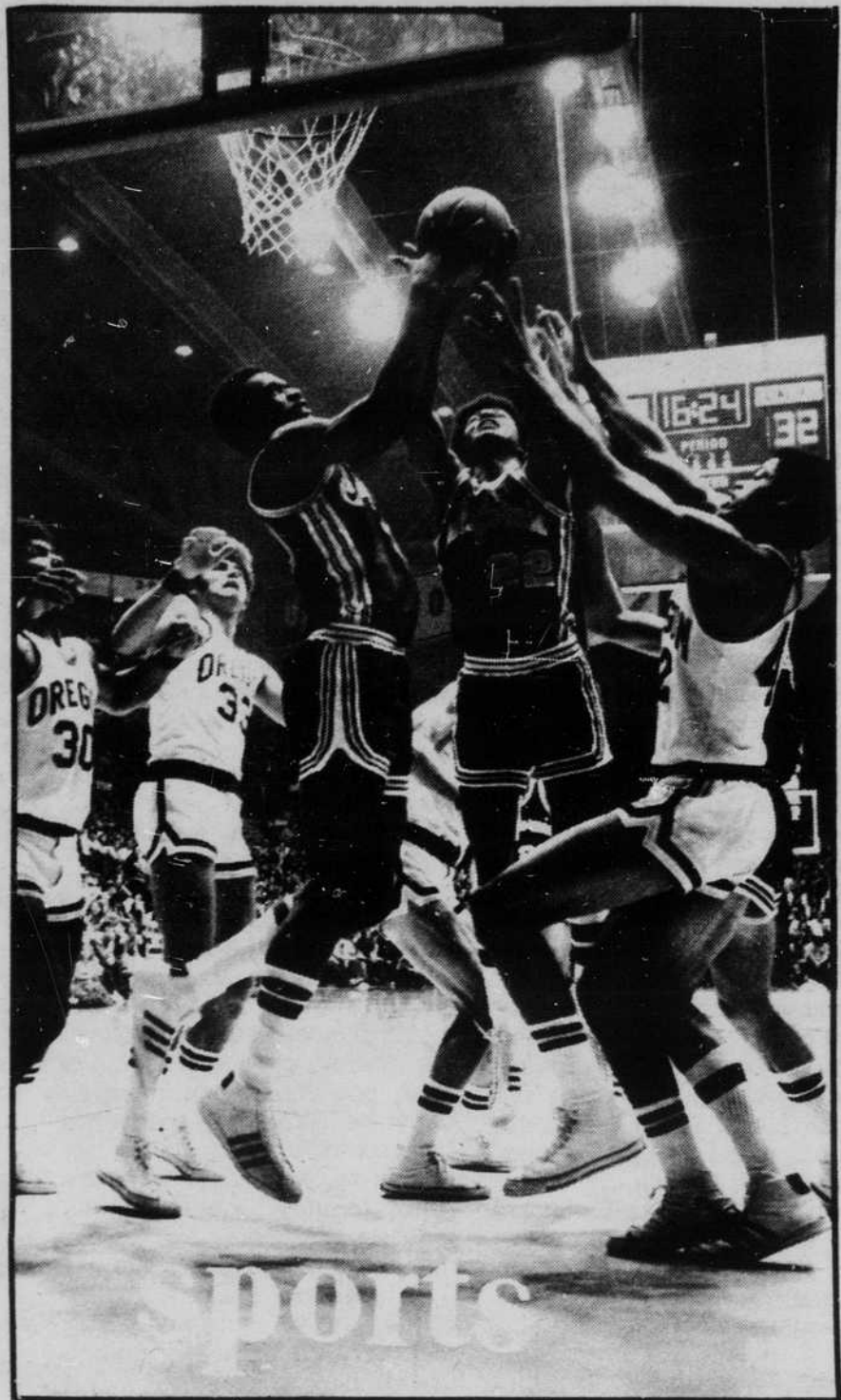


Photo by John Johns

Flatfooted Webfoots watch Carl Bird

Swimmers blitz Ashland

By JEFF NIELSON
Of the Emerald

ASHLAND—Oregon varsity swimming Coach Don Van Rossen Thursday called the Oregon-California Decathlon championships "a good training exercise."

If Doctor Don uses Ashland as a guide, the Ducks are doing fine. Gary Hidle, Roy Clark, John Hellman and John McConnochie all won two events as Oregon easily defended their title in the Southern Oregon College meet. The Ducks were first with 15

points, while SOC was a distant second place with 42 points.

For Roy Clark, the meet was especially gratifying. Clark won the 100 yd. breaststroke in 2:13.84 to capture 96 out of a possible 100 points and upset John McConnochie, the number two swimmer on the team in the final standings, 719.3 to McConnochie's 711.4.

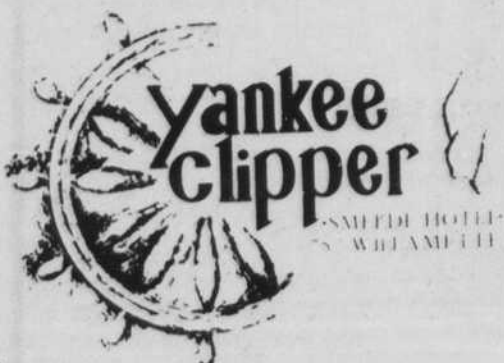
"Clark is probably the most improved swimmer on the team at this point," said Van Rossen. "He worked extremely hard during Christmas, and he's improved a lot..."

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