

Ducks shake Hornets nest . . .



Photo by Patrick Sullivan

With two minutes left in the game Oregon's starters got a rest and helped the crowd raise a din in support of Barry and Marvin Walker's slick ball handling.

. . . and walk away laughing

By KEN SANDS
Of the Emerald

It wasn't pretty or exciting, but Wednesday's basketball game with Sacramento State was a win. An 89-44 win, and it was a laugher.

After the game, coach Jim Haney may not have been laughing, but he was happy to win. "Needless to say I'm happy we won, and I'm happy to win under any circumstances," says Haney.

Circumstances were a little overwhelming for the Hornets, says Sacramento State coach Elmo Slider. "We were just outmanned. We played pretty well in the first 10 or 12 minutes, but then they started to break through our defense."

The Hornets were also missing their leading scorer, and their 6-6 center. "They stayed home because they violated the curfew and were suspended for a week," Slider explains.

Adding to their problems, the Sacramento State team was delayed in Portland by four hours, and arrived in Eugene just two hours before game time.

"It was really tough for Sacramento State, but I'd hope that the game wouldn't have been any different," Haney says.

The game was never really a contest after the Ducks scored eight straight points to take a 24-12 lead with 7:35 left in the first half. Admittedly, the Ducks had trouble maintaining intensity with such a lead.

"When you win by as many points as we did, it's hard to go out there and play intensively, but I told them at halftime that there would be times this season where they would have to go out and protect a 12 or 15 point lead," Haney says.

But what they lacked in intensity, they made up for with effectiveness. Shooting 56 percent for the game, and outrebounding the Hornets 46-23, the Ducks kept widening their lead the entire game.

"We got better as the game wore on," says Haney, "because John Murray and Rob Closs shot the ball so well outside that it forced them to come out on us."

"When the Hornet defense was drawn out, the middle was opened for passes. "In the second half we found the man open under the basket for the easy lay-in."

Lay-ins were common, and Jerome Williams woke up the crowd with a fast-break basket late in the game. The Marvin Walker/Barry Walker backcourt put on a passing and shooting exhibition that drew the night's loudest cheers.

A behind-the-back-without-looking toss from

Marvin resulted in an easy basket for Barry, and a standing ovation.

"It made me feel pretty good to be in the game at the same time as Marvin—I was glad he got to play, and I wanted to do my best at the same time," Barry says.

"I had been looking forward to playing in my first game," says Marvin. Of the pass to his brother, he says, "I knew he would be by himself — that was what I call a no-look pass."

But because of the Hornets' zone defense, says Haney, the Ducks didn't get very many of these opportunities. "I think the zone forced us to be passive on our offense — we didn't look to go on the break very much."

The biggest statistical improvement from the first game was the number of turnovers. The Ducks gave up the ball only 10 times compared to 28 against San Diego State.

"That's a deceiving figure, because in a running situation you throw the ball away more often, and the defense has more chances of intercepting passes," Haney says.

After solving the turnover problem, Haney's biggest worry was the poor execution of the offense. "In stretches we played well, and in other stretches we were fortunate to make the plays that we wouldn't have made against a taller team," he says.

What did please Haney was the defensive play of the Ducks. "The defense was a positive factor in that end of the court, and I thought Phil's (Barner) performance was more active and stronger," he says.

"We play the passing lanes, and overplay," Barner says, "and I have pretty quick hands, so I take chances and try to intercept passes."

Barner believes the Ducks can be even better, if they work hard. "We had the killer instinct, but I think that we can play better," he says.

Guard John Murray played a big part in laying the Hornets to rest, with 10 points (five-for-six) and five assists. "It's a good feeling," he says of the win. "That's a hell of a percentage to shoot."

Mike Clark agrees. "We were sticking the ball and there's no way you can stop it," he says.

Haney hopes that his new offense is unstoppable, but that isn't preventing him from celebrating this victory with more practice. "I guess this win isn't anything more than the second win of the season — we still have a lot of work to do," he says.

The work will have to be productive, because the Ducks play the powerful Athletes In Action Saturday, a team the Ducks lost to 81-56 last season.

Women gymnasts ready, but foes still preparing

The University of Denver and Oregon State squads may not consider it a regular season meet, but the Oregon women's gymnastic coach Henrietta Heiny says tonight's triangular match in Gerlinger Annex B-54 at 6:30 is the real thing.

"Those teams consider this is a pre-season meet, because they don't feel they're ready for competition yet," explains Heiny. "I personally will go ahead and count it, because once you have a meet, you have a meet. I am going to make sure all of their competitors are eligible, but I don't know if they'll count it or not."

So it goes as the Ducks open their season against two capable if not prepared opponents. Last year the Beavers were involved in a controversial finish to the regional meet, which resulted in the probation of one of the judges. Washington won the meet, besting Oregon State by .05 of a point, but no one really knows who won the title.

Denver, on the other hand, was a clear-cut fourth-place finisher in last year's small college national championship meet.

Heiny is interested in seeing how her promising new recruits will fare in their first collegiate competition. Sara Gustafson, from Parkrose High School in Portland, was the state all-around champ last year, and her new teammate Dawn Haberland, from Portland's Sunset High School, was the state runnerup.

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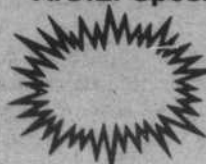
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