



john harris

Best in the Northwest not quite enough

The Oregon women's basketball game against New Mexico Tuesday night marked two firsts. For the first time ever, the women played host to a team from outside the Northwest, and for the first time the audience had to pay to see the women play.

The point was not just to make money, yet there was certainly that motive. But for coach Elwin Heiny, the reason for playing the Lobos and charging a couple of bucks was to show some doubting Thomases that the women can play with the best and to guarantee them a degree of remuneration as well.

The Ducks are presently undefeated (having demolished New Mexico 104-71), and many people at the University and in the community are clamoring for the women to be rated in the nation's top 20. That honor has been traditionally reserved for Eastern teams, however.

On the other hand, teams from the Northwest have traditionally been known for their lack of excellence. Janet Heinonen, the

University's women's sports information director, recently drew a diagram of the nation's top teams, "and in the Northwest there was a big void," she reports.

To receive national recognition, Heiny feels he must schedule teams outside of this region, and in order to bring those teams into Mac Court he must be able to guarantee them at least room and board. (New Mexico is in the middle of an extended road trip and is paying its own bill).

So, Heiny's goal on Tuesday night was not only to beat the Lobos, but also to attract a large audience — an audience big enough to pay the visitors' motel bill.

Although Tuesday's game was a success on both counts it did not provide a convincing answer to the problem.

The Ducks easily defeated a team Heiny considers one of the best in another region of the country, but just how good were the Lobos?

"I anticipated them being better," Heiny admits. "Even warm-

ing up they didn't seem as good as we thought they were. But maybe we're just better than we think we are."

As for the size of the crowd, well, Heiny said before the game he hoped it would exceed 1,000 and maybe include as many as 2,000 fans.

"If we get more than 2,000 people we can go ahead and guarantee some things and bring people in."

Only 826 people showed up — enough for the University to make money and the largest crowd of the year, but the inclement weather may have made a difference.

"On one hand the radio was saying 'don't leave your house,' and on the other it was saying 'there's a basketball game tonight.' I was pleased with the crowd," Heiny says.

So the Ducks may be back to square one as far as gaining national recognition. The Associated Press Top 20 poll, monitored by Mel Greenberg of the Philadelphia

Inquirer, is the result of a vote of 40 coaches, and is, indeed, dominated by teams from the East and South. The only highly-ranked western team is UCLA.

Heiny would love to become a member of a league including the Bruins — a Pac-10 for women, for instance, but UCLA coach Billie Moore has vetoed that idea. She claims there's not enough competition in the Northwest. The Bruins are starting a league of their own next season that will include a number of California schools and Arizona and Arizona State.

Further complicating things for Heiny is a clause in the Northwest Women's Basketball League, of which Oregon is a member, that prohibits its members from playing any games before Dec. 1. This rule prevents the Ducks from competing in early season tournaments outside of the region, including New Mexico's Thanksgiving tournament to which Oregon was just invited.

Heiny is trying to have this rule dropped and is confident the other coaches in the league will approve.

Where does all this leave the women? To attract attention this season they will have to win their region and then play impressively in the national tournament. For the Ducks to make the top 20 or to place any players on the All-American squad, they will have to dig up some unexpected votes. But if they can be patient enough, they'll get their chance at the big girls next season. Among the teams entered in a tournament next season in Portland in addition to Oregon are UCLA and another perennial power, Texas.

While playing a waiting game, the women are by no means despairing.

"The attitude of our team is that we're looking ahead," Heiny says. "Even though we've won every game, the team is trying harder, because the players realize the possibility is there to go to the nationals."

And to bring the Northwest a little respectability.

Flying Ducks to host all stars

Many of the nation's top gymnasts will perform in Mac Court in the next four days when the University's men's squad entertains Cal-State Fullerton tonight at 8, and when the United States' all-star squad takes on its counterparts from Japan Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

Swimmers face dual competition in home meets

The University men's swim team returns from two weeks of training on the islands of Hawaii to face the Wildcats of Chico State and the Red Raiders of Southern Oregon in dual meets Thursday and Friday at Leighton Pool.

Thursday night's Chico State meet should be one of Oregon's best dual meets of the season. Last year the Wildcats set four NCAA Division II records against the Ducks, Oregon's highly touted freshmen relay team will have a chance to swim against Chico State's Division II championship team in the 800-yard freestyle relay.

One of the featured races of the meet will be the 200-yard freestyle matching NCAA Division II champion Dave Tittle of Chico State against Jeff Morgan, Sam Glass and Jim Avey of Oregon.

Both Thursday and Friday night's meets begin at 7 p.m. at Leighton Pool. Admission is free.

The undefeated Flying Ducks will meet in Fullerton what coach Bill Ballester considers the "fourth-best team in the Western Region". Last year the Titans placed eighth in the NCAA championship meet held in Mac Court, and they will be led by senior all-arounder Donnie Evans, who received a standing ovation for his performance in that meet.

On Sunday, for the second time in as many years, an all-star team from Japan, the nation that has perennially dominated the world scene, will visit Mac Court for an international competition against a contingent of some of this country's most promising young gymnasts.

The U.S. squad will be coached by Ballester and will feature Flying Duck all-arounder Gene Christensen, who holds the Oregon school record for vaulting.

The other U.S. team members will be Jim Hartung, a freshman from the University of Nebraska; Phil Cahoy, a scholastic standout from Omaha, Neb.; Jim Mikus, a USGF National Boys' Meet age-group champion; Peter Stout, the number-one-ranked junior gymnast in the nation in 1978, and Roy Palassou, a prep star from San Francisco.

Hartung and Cahoy were members of last year's American team which pulled off an upset before nearly 8,000 Mac Court fans.

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Gymnastics

The men meet Cal-State Fullerton
(tonight in Mac Court at 8 p.m.)

Intramurals

There will be a meeting for managers of
men's, women's and co-ed teams today at
3:30 p.m. in Rooms 112 and 116 of Es-
slinger Hall.