

Lack of timely hitting plagues 0-3 Ducks

By BILL BIGELOW
Of the Emerald

Howe field was fit for real ducks Monday, when the Oregon Duck baseball game with Lewis and Clark was postponed by rain.

So, with the time off, Coach Mel Krause took a look back at his team's trio of weekend losses against the University of Washington in Seattle and a look ahead to Friday and Saturday's home games with Washington State.

"We knew they were improved," said Krause of the Huskies, "and we knew we had a better ball club, too. I guess they were improved more — this weekend."

Pitching was a part of the Ducks' downfall, Krause said.

"Our starters didn't pitch well," he said of pitchers Dean Kegler, Bill Gwinn and Mike Heil. Krause praised the Washington hurlers for scattering 22 hits and allowing only five Duck runs in the three games. "Their (Washington's) pitches are good enough to make them league contenders," he said.

"We'll need better pitching for this weekend's series with Washington State," noted Krause. The coach expressed confidence that Kegler and Gwinn will return in sharp form and reported that Mike Talia, who threw eight strong innings of relief for the Ducks over the weekend, will replace Heil, who suffered an elbow injury in Saturday's second game, for the WSU series.

"Mike pitched well enough to earn a start this weekend against the Cougars," he said.

Krause said his club's major offensive problem against the Huskies was getting hits at the right time.

"We left too many men on base. We just didn't get the important hit," he said.

Krause was disappointed with the problems his most reliable hitters had with Husky pitching. Tom Dodd, for example, entered the weekend

hitting well above .300 but had only one hit in 10 attempts.

Steve Webber led Duck hitting with six hits in 12 at-bats, including a double in the last game — one of only two extra-base hits for the Webfoots over the weekend.

The 0-3 league start could be difficult to overcome for the 8-16 Ducks, said Krause. But he isn't putting a "must win" tag on the series with the WSU Cougars who are 3-0 in league play after sweeping Oregon State last weekend.

"We've got to play game by game," said Krause, "playing to win every one. We have to win one game at a time and we can't win all three unless we win the first one."

"I'd just like to see us play some good steady baseball," added the coach. "I still feel we are capable of winning against anyone in the league."

Krause also emphasized the importance of the non-league schedule. "We need to bolster our confidence, to get into the habit of winning."

The Lewis and Clark game has not yet been rescheduled but the Ducks are slated to play Portland State today at 3 p.m. at Howe Field — weather permitting.

Women netters face Portland today

The women's tennis team will meet Portland State in its second home match of the season at 3:30 p.m. today. The team, 1-3 for the season, "should win" says coach Marty Schey.

"After the Berkeley Invitational, where we played some outstanding teams, we are looking forward to tomorrow," she says. The Duck netters lost all three matches at the tournament.

"Most of the teams at Berkeley had 10 matches on us, they start their season earlier than Oregon," Schey says. "Although we didn't do that well, we gained a lot of experience."

Four regular players for the Ducks will not be starting today. Patti McKenna, usually number one singles, Christine Tennant, Tina Mikelson and Sheryl Anderson are sidelined due to injuries. "Nothing is serious," says Schey, "they just need a little rest."

Patti Marhart will play the number one singles match. "She is a strong player, she can handle the number one spot for us."

The rest of the singles line-up is Liz Firmage, Kammy Stark, Lynn Haeckler, Suzanne Bergere and Julie Bernhardt.

Today's match is the first varsity action for Bergere, Haeckler and Bernhardt. "The experience will definitely help them," says Schey.

"They will be ready for the next one. Anytime you get a match under your wing it builds confidence."

Schey says she isn't sure what her doubles line-up will be for today's match. "I'll be putting some team members that have played before with some of the new players. I'll put styles together that will mesh well. Also I want to see who's playing well."

"We play Washington State and Washington this weekend, both will be tough. But, I would say if we play well then we could pull it off. I hate to look too far ahead. I just want to take PSU tomorrow, then go from there."

Blazers draw Suns in playoff opener

PHOENIX (AP) — Phoenix Suns coach John McLeod is wary of the Portland Trail Blazers as the two teams open their best-of-three National Basketball Association playoff series here tonight.

"They're a tremendous team," says McLeod of the Blazers. They made a great surge to get into the playoffs. Since the All-Star break Portland and Seattle have been the two best teams in the Western Conference by far."

The Suns have been using veteran Garfield Heard at power forward while Truck Robinson recovers from the mysterious virus that kept him out of the lineup for a month. Robinson gradually is playing his way back into shape and McLeod gave him a long workout in Sunday's loss to Los Angeles — keeping Heard out of the game entirely.

Portland — plagued by injuries for most of the year and lagging below the .500 mark — closed fast to make the playoffs — getting much mileage from rookies Ron Brewer and Mychal Thompson. Brewer has provided scoring punch at guard while the 6-foot-10 Thompson has excelled since Coach Jack Ramsay inserted him into the starting lineup at the "small" forward position.

"Mychal has helped us at both ends of the court —" said Ramsay. "He is quick enough to handle any of the league's small forwards defensively — and offensively his size gives them problems."

Overall — Ramsay said — "I feel the players should feel good about this season. We never really got back to full health during the season — but I think this is a team that never gives up."

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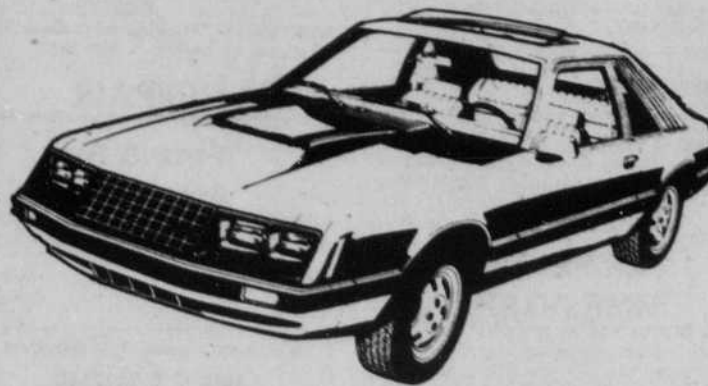
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