

Bruins win again, but it wasn't easy

By JOHN HEALY
Of the Emerald

Oregon came within four minutes of dumping UCLA at McArthur Court Saturday night, but a pair of Bruins — Rod Foster and Mike Sanders — got in the way.

Sanders pumped in six of his game-high 22 points and Foster added a bucket from 20 feet in the last few minutes as the Bruins roared back from a brief 63-62 Oregon lead to nab their sixth conference win by a 75-69 margin.

"Two good basketball teams performed here tonight," said Oregon coach Jim Haney, who has yet to beat the Bruins in three seasons at the Oregon helm. "Unfortunately, UCLA made the plays down the stretch while we did not."

"It was certainly a disappointing loss," added Haney. "But if we go out and play all out like we did tonight then we will win a lot of basketball games."

UCLA coach Larry Brown agreed with Haney's assessment of the Ducks. "The way Oregon is playing — and with the crowd — I don't think there are many teams who could come in here and dominate."

Saturday's game had all the earmarks of past Oregon-UCLA encounters, including a deafening McArthur Court crowd and an almost palpable intensity on the court.

"I love the crowd enthusiasm," said Brown. "This is what I dream Pauley Pavilion to be like, but the fans are too sophisticated. The crowd here was such a factor."

"It's a game of inches and we learned that tonight," said Oregon center Mike Clark, who paced the Ducks with 18 points and 12 rebounds. "A couple of bounces our way and it could have been ours."

All the bounces went the Bruins' way near the end of the game, as Sanders' perfect six-for-six from the free throw line in the last few minutes and Foster's bomb saddled the Ducks with a loss,

dropping them to 3-6 in the conference and 10-8 on the year.

"You have to have guys willing to take control down the stretch, and they did tonight," explained Brown, as the Bruins improved their season mark to 12-4. "In the first half, we were impatient when we had the lead. In the second half, they were in contact all the way, but we executed well down the stretch."

Oregon opened the night on an 18-foot jumper by freshman Fred Cofield, then watched the Bruins bolt to a 16-12 lead. The Ducks tied it at 16-16, fell behind 24-18, then pulled to within one, 26-25 on a lay-in and free throw by Ray Whiting, who finished with 17 points.

UCLA then ran off nine unanswered points before the Ducks closed to 36-34, but the Bruins left the court at the half with a 38-35 lead.

The first seven minutes of the second half heralded the reappearance of Clark, who had been all but invisible in the first half, scoring five points and attempting but two field goals.

"They were denying our forwards the pass up top and taking the lob away," said Clark in describing the Bruins early defensive efforts. "We started to pull the ball to the guard on the side (in the second half) and I got a couple of lobs."

Clark put the Ducks on top 41-40 at the 18:15 mark in the second half as the Ducks came roaring back from their halftime deficit.

But Foster, who had problems all night with the tenacious defense of the Ducks' Barry Walker, hit a 10-foot jumper and two free throws to push UCLA's lead to 58-53.

John Greig put the Ducks back on top with a driving lay-in and subsequent free throw. Oregon led 63-62, and Haney was on his feet, waving his arms trying to exhort the Pit to higher decibel levels.

"We needed every ally we could get," said Haney. "I tried to keep the crowd active to put pressure on them (UCLA), and they responded well."

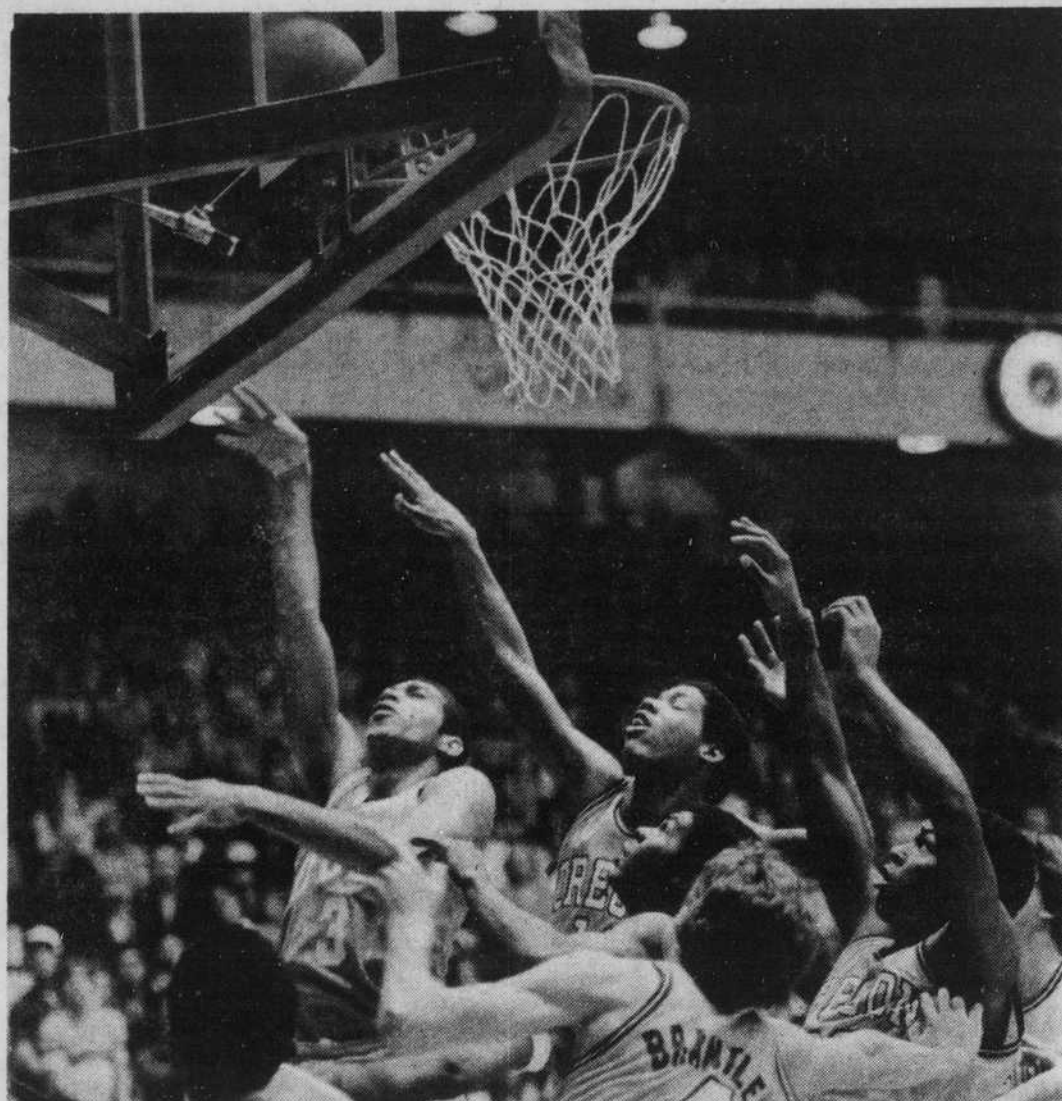


Photo by Steve Dykes

Oregon's Fred Cofield (center), David Brantley (foreground) and Ray Whiting (right) fight to keep UCLA's Ralph Jackson (3) and Mike Sanders (center) from scoring.

But Greig's three-point play was the last run at the Bruins the Ducks would make, as Sanders hit on three one-and-one situations from the foul line to insure UCLA's win.

"We didn't do a couple of things right tonight," said Cofield, who had eight points and a season-high six assists while playing the entire forty minutes.

"But I think we're more of a team than UCLA. They rely on one-on-one plays a lot."

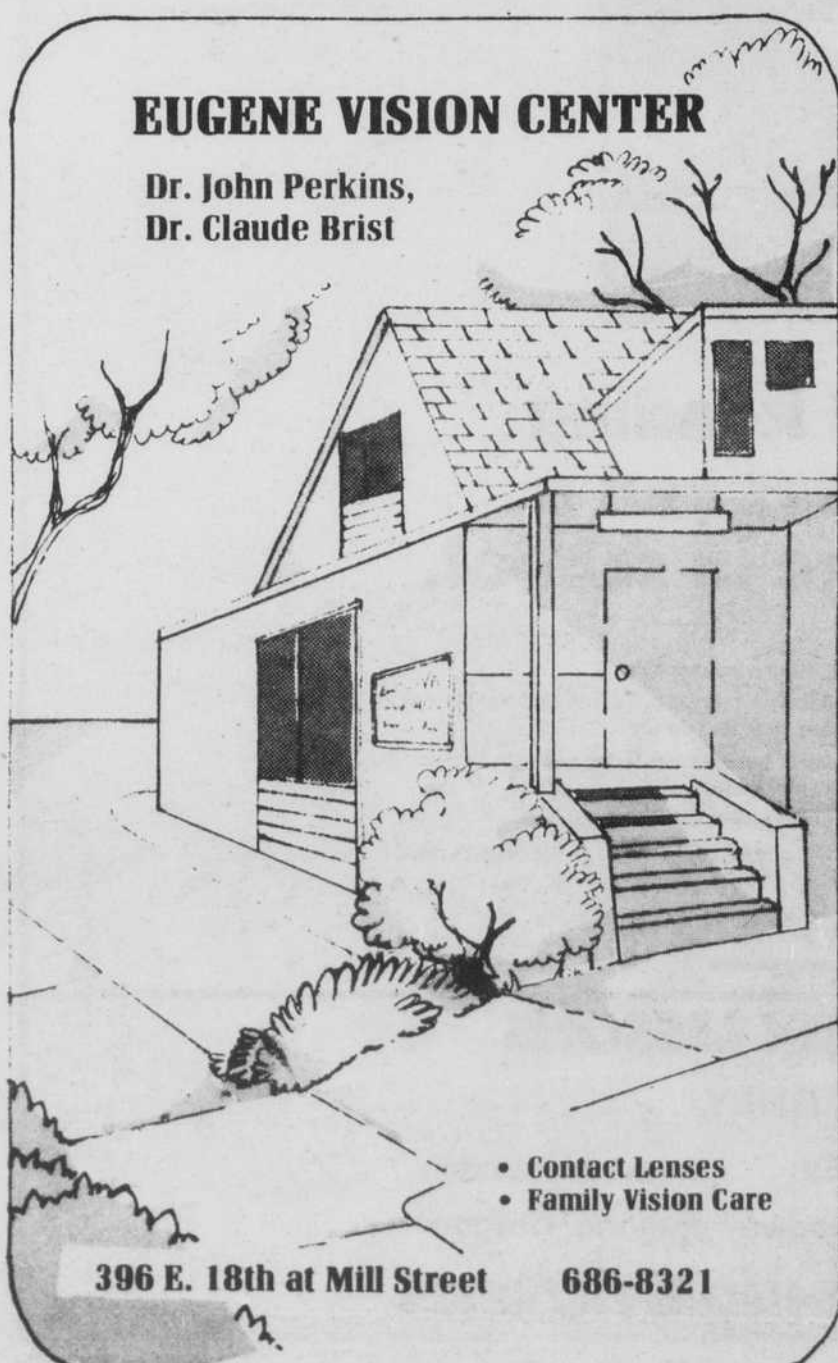
"But then, they win with it."

Oregon — Greig 3 1-1 7, Whiting 8 1-1 17, Clark 7 4-8 18, Cofield 4 8, Sealey 3 6, Brantley 2 4, Walker 3 3-4 9. Total — 30 9-14 69.

UCLA — 7 8-8 22 Sanders, Daye 4 4-5 12, Fields 3 6, Foster 8 4-4 20, Holton 2-2 2, Jackson 2 4, Pruitt 3 3-4 9. Total 27 21-24 75.

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