

Reborn Ducks take on Bears, Cards

By JOHN HEALY
Of the Emerald

Mike Clark and Ray Whiting lead a seemingly rejuvenated Oregon basketball team to the Bay Area this weekend for a game tonight against Stanford and a Saturday night encounter against California.

The last time they faced Cal and Stanford, the Ducks had just been dismantled 104-64 by Arizona State and were 0-2 in Pac-10 Conference play.

Oregon managed to split the series in McArthur Court with the Bay Area schools, downing Cal 87-80 but losing to Stanford 82-76. The Ducks at that point were in the midst of losing six of seven games.

Obviously, things were not going well for Jim Haney.

But then, with recently-returned Ray Whiting regaining his old form and Clark cleaning the boards, the Ducks proceeded to blow by Washington State and USC and play UCLA to a near-standoff.

With good games against two of the conference's top five teams (USC and UCLA) and a fairly routine win over one of the conference's cellar-dwellers, Haney proclaimed after the UCLA game that the Ducks are ready to move into the Pac-10's first division.

"If you play that way every game," says Haney of the close loss to the Bruins, "you will win sometimes against teams the caliber of UCLA and Oregon State, and lose sometimes. But against teams like Cal or Stanford, you will win those."

The key to both games could be the duo of Clark and Whiting.

Clark, the Ducks' 6-9 center, is currently leading the Pac-10 in rebounding (9.2 per game) and ranks among the leaders in scoring (16.1 per game).

"We counted on Mike to provide us with leadership in his senior year," says Haney. "But he has provided much more than that by making such an effective transition from not only forward to center, but from the ball control game we played in his first year to the fast break we now run."

Swim squad hosts SOS

Oregon's men's swimming team, which finished first in last weekend's Dolphin Invitational, will host Southern Oregon Saturday at 6 p.m. at Leighton Pool.

The meet was scheduled to be a co-ed affair, but the women's teams cancelled. The Oregon women's team will not compete until their final dual at Oregon State on Feb. 14.

Clark credits much of his offensive success this year to the Chicago Summer League, "an all-offense, run and gun, 'what's defense?' league," he says.

Whiting, for one, can attest to the importance of stamina. Out of shape after staying away from Oregon practices during his self-imposed exile from the Ducks' first 12 games, Whiting returned against Cal and had problems trying to keep up with the other nine players on the court.

But once he regained his stamina, Whiting has been a force, averaging 12.3 points in Oregon's last three games and providing Clark with timely help on the boards.

Tonight and Saturday night, the Bay Area will find out just how timely that help has been.



Photo by Steve Dykes

The resurgence of Ray Whiting has paralleled that of the entire team.

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