

Sun Devils slip by Oregon in overtime

By JODY MURRAY
Of the Emerald

Oregon put the fifth-ranked basketball team in the country on its heels in the first half only to lose to Arizona State in overtime, 78-77, in a cardiac-arresting Pacific-10 Conference contest.

"It was a heartbreaking loss, and typifies the way this season

has gone," said coach Jim Haney, referring to the seemingly endless number of games the Ducks have dropped in the closing minutes.

The Ducks, now 12-14 and 5-12 in the conference, led by 10 at the break after a scorching .633 shooting performance compared to .462 for ASU.

But the Sun Devils slowly cut the lead in the second half and

finally went ahead 71-69 with 18 seconds to go.

After John Greig missed a 10 footer on Oregon's end, a Sun Devil batted the ball out of bounds with five ticks to go. Fred Cofield took the inbound pass, dribbled twice and sank a 20 footer with a second left to force the overtime.

In the overtime, ASU went ahead 73-71 on Walt Stone's 18-foot jumper with 3:12 left. Cofield countered quickly with an 18 footer. Then ASU's Lafayette Lever grabbed Ray Whiting, who dropped in two with a minute left.

Sun Devil center Alton Lister then muscled in for a layup, missed, but was fouled by John Grieg. With 8,906 Mac Court fans blistering his ears, Lister made one of the two and Oregon was still up by one, 75-74.

Both teams then traded two quick baskets — a 15-footer by Walt Stone followed by a 20-footer by John Greig — and Oregon remained ahead, 77-76, with nine seconds left.

But Stone, ASU's Sun Devil of the hour, dropped one in from 18 feet with five seconds left to end Oregon's dreams of a stunning upset and winning season.

"My man (Mike Clark) didn't respect me enough. I was open, that's my shot, so I shot," Stone said matter-of-factly.

Stone's "man" disagreed about his coverage. "I couldn't get any closer without fouling him."

Haney agreed with his senior center. "Stone hits a shot with Mike Clark right in his face. It's not the shot you would take with so little time left, but he took it and it went in the hole."

Oregon still had five seconds to pull it off, but the Sun Devils smothered the possibility of a long inbounds pass Cofield was forced to drive up the court and launch a 30-foot prayer on the left side that brushed the net.

"I wanted to go down mid-court, but there was too much



Photo by Steve Dykes

Oregon defenders Mike Clark and Ray Whiting made Arizona State's Alton Lister work for all of his 21 points.

pressure," Cofield said. "I saw I had only had a couple seconds, so I took what I could."

The game was a stark turnaround from the 104-64 loss to ASU two months ago, but Clark wasn't satisfied with whatever measure of respect Oregon may have regained from Thursday's game.

"Screw respect," Clark said. "To always be on the losing end

(of the close games) is really frustrating. Every game we lose, it seems to hurt a little bit more."

Seniors Clark and Felton Sealey have one more game, against Arizona Saturday. Clark's pain and a team's pride will be on the line.

"We've played with class all year," Haney said, "and we will bounce back Saturday with class and dignity."



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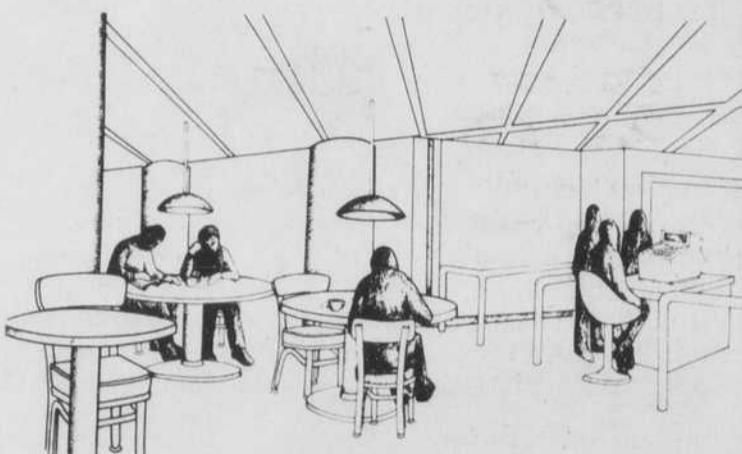
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