

Tough year ends for netters at PSU

By **MIKE RIPLINGER**
Of the Emerald

The year started out against demanding competition, and for the University of Oregon volleyball team, it ends the same way as the Ducks go into their final match against Portland State tonight in Portland.

The PSU match is a fitting end to the Ducks' season, typifying what Oregon has gone through the entire year -- playing hurt against tough competition. Oregon will probably be without the services of Therese Cooper, out with internal disorders, and Cherie Elliot, out because of a bad back.

Portland State is the third ranked team in the AIAW and has already received a bid to the national tournament.

"Portland State has one of their best teams in years," said Oregon coach Chris Voelz. "They are really a tough team and we'll have to play very well to beat them."

"Perhaps we might catch them at a lull -- they have already been invited to their national tournament and may be looking past us."

If Oregon should beat PSU, it would be a nice way to cap the Ducks' season. They began the year with a lot of hope and promise, but they ended up as a perfect illustration of Murphy's Law -- everything that can go wrong, will go wrong.

Oregon was plagued by injuries throughout the season. Sensational freshman Sue Harbour was forced to redshirt because of an achilles heel problem. Rhonda Dalthrop, another freshman who would have seen a lot of time, missed most of the year with a stress fracture of the foot. The Ducks were forced to play shorthanded because a number of players, including frontliners Karen Beamer and Kelly Dischinger, were out for part of the year with various injuries. Oregon was forced to go into most matches with only eight players and they only had six able to play in more than one of their matches.

This, combined with a tortured road schedule that saw the Ducks play most of the top teams in the country away from home, has left Oregon with a 13-31-2 record.

Cathy Hill and Karen Beamer both had exceptional years for the Ducks. They led Oregon to the top of the league in blocks, with Beamer first and Hill second. Beamer had the highest hitting percentage for the Ducks with a .279 average and Hill wasn't far behind at .238. Hill topped her teammate in kills 166 to 164 for Beamer.

"One of the highlights of this year was watching the development of Karen Beamer as she played the finest ball of her career," Voelz said. "It has been a real delight to watch her develop in her four years here from an unpolished boulder to a fine diamond."

"Both she and Hill have added a lot to this team. They have worked consistently well all year."

Oregon will be working hard to get a win to end the season. A victory could really give them some momentum for next year by adding a little pride that the Ducks may have lost this season.

"Youth, inconsistency and not enough numbers playing have taken away some of the pride we've developed in this program," said Voelz. "But if we can beat PSU it would head us in the right direction for next year."

"Some could say that it would be icing on the cake to beat Portland State, but as far as I'm concerned, it would be the whole cake."

Duck cagers face Riverside tonight at Mac

The Oregon men's basketball team takes on UC-Riverside in a non-conference game tonight at 7:30 in McArthur Court.

Riverside boasts four returning starters to a lineup that finished 13-13 last year. The Highlanders depend heavily on senior forward Dave McCracken (6'6", 230 pounds), who redshirted last year, and 6'5" senior forward Howard Holt.

Holt leads the team in scoring this year, averaging 22.5 points per game. The Highlanders are 2-0 on the season.

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