

Lang launches women to home wins

By Debbie Howlett
Of the Emerald

Making maximum use of their height advantage, Oregon's women cruised to a pair of easy basketball wins this weekend as Portland State and Chico State came up short at McArthur Court.

The Ducks' front line was just too tall an order for PSU and Chico's defenses to handle. Oregon cashed in on 57 percent shooting from the field Friday night to dump PSU 83-64. Saturday, the Ducks cruised by Chico 102-68 in a yawner.

Oregon was led by Alison Lang, a 6-3 junior, who burned the nets for 66 points, snagged 21 rebounds, blocked 12 shots and dished off 14 assists for the two games — while battling a fever and a touch of the flu.

But Lang wasn't the only Duck roaming far above the smaller crowd. Helen Higgs, a 6-4 junior, sparkled as she scraped up 24 rebounds and blocked eight shots on the weekend. But Higgs best effort was her shooting. She canned 14 of 18 shots from the floor and three-of-three from the line to get 31 points for the two games.

Against a shorter, intimidated PSU team, the Oregon front line combined for 65 of the team's points Friday night.

For awhile the game looked like a shoot-out between the Vikings' flashy guard C.J. Sealey, a 5-10 senior, at the perimeter, and the steady duo of Lang and Higgs from near the bucket. While Sealey hit from 23 feet at an inconsistent eight-of-22 rate, Lang and Higgs went 13-for-20 and seven-for-seven respectively.

"We were a little bit intimidated," said an obviously disappointed PSU head coach, Bev Bland. But intimidated or not, the Vikings are a team that has definitely improved over past seasons. But Bland says both she and the team are "sick of hearing that."

"You can say we're improved, but the improvement isn't showing in our record," Bland said.

Most of the Ducks intimidation came from Lang. "I like to just hang back and let them know I'm there," Lang said.

The most exciting thing about the game against Chico State was the side bets on whether the Ducks would make it to 100 points, which they did with 50 seconds left as Lisa Vetter, a 5-5 sophomore, hit an 18-foot jumper.

After Chico tied the score at 2-2, the Ducks went on a 15 point tear of lay-ins and 12-foot jumpers to take control at 17-4, and allow coach, Elwin Heiny to start substituting freely.

Lang led the Ducks with 34 points to match her career high total and come very close to breaking Debbie Adams' school record of 38. Adams is the Ducks' assistant coach this year.

"I knew she was close," Heiny said with a laugh, "because Debbie kept elbowing me and saying 'take her out.'"

Lang played only 33 minutes, her lowest total playing time this year, but her scoring seemed to click something with the rest of the team. The whole Duck offense went wild as five players scored in double figures.

But the Duck's defense and rebounding were a different matter.

The Chico team stayed with the Ducks on the boards all night, even though Oregon managed a 48-40 margin in the final stats.

"It's unfortunate we tend to get sloppy, especially against teams like this," Heiny said. "We let them score way too much and we let them post up on us."

All of the Ducks, except Tracy Beckes, a 5-9 sophomore — who suited up but is suspended indefinitely for disciplinary reasons — saw at least 11 minutes of playing time.

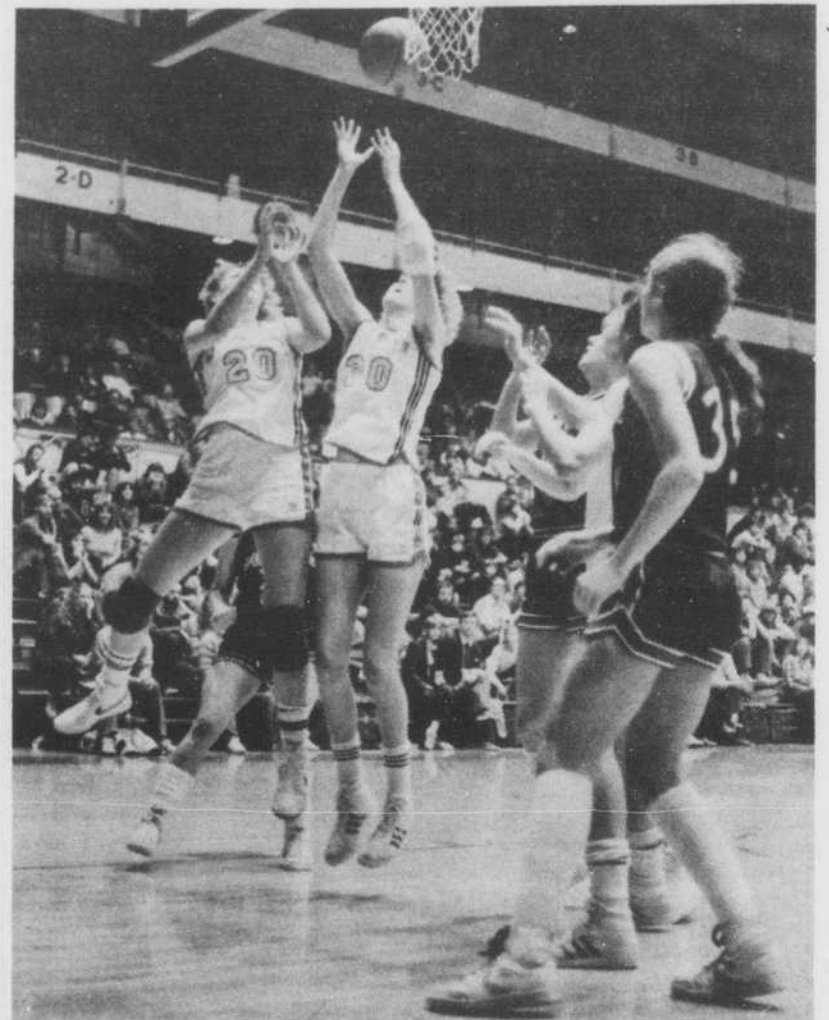


Photo by Mark Pynes

The only real competition the Oregon women had last weekend was against themselves as Chris Metzger (20) and Helen Higgs (30) sky for a rebound against Portland State Friday night.

Cagers pay for Aztec rebound, 49-47

By John Healy
Of the Emerald



Photo by Mark Pynes

Jerry Adams (from left to right) Greg Bell and Brian Trendall have San Diego State's Michael Cage surrounded, but the Aztec still managed to get the ball off on his way to scoring a game-high 15 points. The Ducks dropped a close one 49-47 Saturday night.

He can't use it as collateral on a loan, and he can't deposit it in his savings account, but Oregon basketball coach Jim Haney can certainly use Saturday night's 49-47 loss to undefeated San Diego State as a down payment on future wins.

A rebound lay-in by 6-8 forward John Martens with one second remaining assured the Aztecs of a win at McArthur Court Saturday, and nullified a comeback that brought the Ducks back from a four-point deficit with 2:04 left in the game.

It was the fourth straight loss for the Ducks to a team that earned a berth in last year's National Invitational Tournament, and because of that glaring fact, Haney believes the Ducks' rough schedule will begin to pay dividends with wins later in the season.

"At some point in this season, we'll have played more tough games than anyone else," Haney says. "Then the pendulum will start to swing to our side."

That "point" in the season was almost Saturday night. Oregon, trailing 47-43 with 2:07 left on the clock, got a jumper from the very top of the key by guard Gary Gatewood to cut the Aztecs' lead to 47-45.

Then San Diego State point guard Keith Smith was called for traveling in the backcourt, his 11th turnover of the night and the Aztecs' 21st. Gatewood got the ball again at the top of the key on a nice pass from Oregon point guard Greg Bell, and the 6-3 junior hit nothing but net from 20 feet to tie the score at 47 with 1:21 remaining.

San Diego State then ate up most of the time remaining on the clock with a delay offense, and after calling a final timeout with 29 seconds left, the Aztecs' fed Smith waiting to the right of the key and he launched a 20-footer.

His jumper dribbled off the front of the basket, and Martens, who played only seven minutes against Oregon — six of those in the first half — used his 5-inch height advantage to muscle by Gatewood, corral the rebound and lay the ball in off the glass. It was his only field goal of the night.

"They had a screen set for (Michael) Cage, and that's where I lost concept of who I was guarding," Gatewood explained. "He got a good jump and beat me to the ball."

"I should have blocked him out. I have no excuses."

Haney thought the Ducks were in a good position to take the game into overtime after Smith went up with his

20-footer.

"We were happy with the shot taken. It was from 25 feet and we had a hand in his face. But we didn't get the blockout, and as a result, they win the game, although I didn't think the game was ultimately lost there," said Haney.

"It's a tough lesson we learned tonight."

It appeared, at least for 39 minutes and 59 seconds, that Oregon would be tutoring the Aztecs on the art of college basketball. Although smaller, slower and often just plain out-talented by San Diego State, Oregon made up for its deficiencies with crisp offensive execution and a defense that contained every fiber of intensity that the "Kamikazee Kids" made famous in the mid-'70s.

Oregon built a seven-point lead with 3:36 remaining in the first half on the strength of a 6-0 spurt highlighted by two long jumpers by outside artist Bryan Trendell and a 10-foot follow by junior forward David Brantley.

It was Brantley and Trendell — the 6-6 sophomore who started at guard in place of Gatewood — that kept the Ducks in the game in the first half.

Haney had worried before the game about the Aztecs' rebounding muscle inside — they had out-rebounded their opponents by an average of 12 boards a game — and had called it a key to the game's outcome.

Brantley, though, scrapped his way to four rebounds and helped Oregon grab 10 rebounds, two less than the Aztecs in the first half. While Brantley was working inside, Trendell was letting fly from the perimeter with 15, 17, and 20-foot jumpers.

He hit six of eight from the field, the closest shot a 10-foot jumper from the right baseline.

But Trendell managed to score on only one jumper in five attempts in the second half, and Brantley could only come up with two rebounds while the Aztecs were outrebounding the Ducks 19-9.

Only senior Paul Bain — who started at forward — and his 10 second-half points, plus a near-flawless Oregon offense that committed four second-half turnovers, kept the Ducks in the game.

"We didn't execute the way we should have," said Bain, who finished with seven of ten from the field. "There was about a 10-minute period where they took control of the game, and we just kind of let it get away."

Which wasn't the case Saturday night.

But the Ducks won't give up, says Haney. "We'll have to just keep working, clawing, and scratching, until we get that win that will thrust us into the pie."