

Sports

Stingy Ducks face Bears

By John Healy
Of the Emerald

Can a basketball team in the Pac-10 conference go from the league's defensive cellar to being the stingiest defensive team in the conference?

Yes, if you listen to the stats that Oregon has been piling up in its nine preseason games.

The Ducks open their conference season at home tonight in McArthur Court against the California Golden Bears, then get one night of rest before facing Stanford on Saturday night.

But don't expect Cal to put 91 points on the board, as they did in their first game against Oregon last winter. Oregon is giving up a paltry 50.0 points per game this year, 31.2 points per game less than they allowed last winter.

And, after a third-place finish in the Far West Classic in Portland in late December which included a win over highly regarded Lamar, it appears the Ducks have not only a stingy defense, but a truckload of momentum to carry them into tonight's 7:35 p.m. contest with the Bears.

"After the emotional loss to Idaho, our players went beyond



David Brantley

what they thought they were capable of against Lamar," says fifth-year Oregon coach Jim Haney. "They feel better about themselves heading into the conference season."

Oregon will need that confidence against the Bears. Cal coach Dick Kuchen has im-

proved the Bears record in every season since he took the Cal coaching job in 1978, guiding the Bears from a 6-21 mark in his first year to a 14-13 record last winter.

Although Kuchen welcomed back three starters from last year's squad when Cal opened its season in November, he is without the services of the Pac-10's leading scorer last year, Mark McNamara.

The 6-11 all-Pac-10 center, who has gone onto the NBA, led the conference in scoring (22.0), rebounding (12.6) and field goal percentage (70.2).

His loss has forced the Bears to rely heavily on their backcourt, which features returning starters Michael Chavez (15.5 points per game) and Butch Hays (10.6 points).

The Bears aren't completely lacking at center, as 6-11 Michael Pitts is averaging 16.0 points and 7.1 rebounds per game after sitting out last year because of knee surgery.

But at forward, the Bears are thin, having lost starters Wes Howell and Sam Potter.

Cal is 4-3 going into tonight's game with Oregon.

Oregon out to plunder Aztecs

An experienced San Diego State lineup will welcome the Oregon women back to basketball competition Thursday after a two week holiday layoff when the Aztecs host the Ducks.

The Ducks, 5-6, will be attempting to lift their mark back to the .500 level. Oregon upended UCLA 74-59 at McArthur Court on Dec. 23 in their last outing after dropping two of three games at the Giusti Tournament of Champions in Portland.

The Aztecs, 5-5, are led by 6-3 senior center Judy Porter who was selected a preseason first-team All-American by Women's Basketball Yearbook. Porter is averaging 25.1 points and 11.6 rebounds a game for the Aztecs.

Oregon counters with its own 6-3 center in Alison Lang, who was named Northern Pacific Conference Athlete of the Month for her play in December. Lang leads the conference in scoring, blocked shots and rebounding, and is in the

top-10 in field goal percentage, free throw percentage, and assists.

Her 25.3 scoring rate is the fifth best in the nation, and she is averaging 4.6 blocked shots and 11.6 rebounds per game.

Oregon Coach Elwin Heiny is hoping that he can use Lang, along with Helen Higgs, Chris Metzger, and Gale Gatchell, to find success inside against the Aztecs, who like to run.

Heiny is also concerned with the Aztecs pressing defense. The Ducks have struggled against the press at times this season. "We hope not to let the press bother us," Heiny said before the Ducks left on a three game road trip which includes stops at Pepperdine Friday and Cal-Irvine Sunday.

"We want three victories," the coach said. "Any game on the road is tough. We are going to have to play good basketball."

Duck matmen lose on road

Cal State-Bakersfield gave Oregon a rude welcoming Wednesday night, drilling the Duck matmen 36-5 in dual meet action in the California city.

The Ducks managed just one win and a draw as they watched their dual meet record fall to 3-5, while Bakersfield improved to 9-5. It was the Ducks' second loss in three outings on their current California swing.

Oregon's only winner was junior Rick O'Shea, who decisioned Bakersfield's Troy Osborne 7-3 in the 150 pound match. The only other bright spot for the Ducks came when sophomore Charles Nutter and Bakersfield's Bob Dutton battled to a 3-3 draw in the 167 pound contest.

The Ducks started poorly with Mike Erb, Miles Hancock, and Tim Curtiss suffering big defeats in the first three matches. Lorenzo West came up with one of the better efforts, dropping a 6-4 decision to Bakersfield's Jessie Reyes at 142.

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