

Sports

Ducks struggle to pair of wins

Women sink WSU, UW

By Paul Danzer
Of the Emerald

It wasn't artistic, but the Oregon women's basketball team managed to mold a pair of wins at McArthur Court this weekend as the Ducks took their first step into NorPac Conference competition.

The Ducks held off Washington State 66-53 Friday night, then came back Saturday afternoon to sink Washington 73-63. The pair of victories raised the Ducks' overall mark to 9-7.

But it was a weekend of sputters and spurts.

With center Alison Lang strapped to the bench with foul troubles from the word go Saturday afternoon, the Ducks had trouble finding any offensive rhythm.

After a see-saw first half which ended in a tie at 33, Washington took the initiative at the outset of the second half. The Huskies lead by as much five points after Lang was called for her fourth foul and left the game with 16:30 to play.

Lang, who finished with 16 points in 21 minutes, returned to the floor three minutes later with the Ducks on the short end of a 47-44 count. Washington built the advantage to 51-46 before Oregon produced a seven point streak to take the lead.

Forwards Chris Metzger and Mary Ann Stoican led the charge as they found room to shoot on the baseline and made the most of it. Metzger was the most consistent performer for the Ducks this weekend, scoring a career high 22 points to pace Oregon Friday night and matching Lang's 16 points to lead Duck scorers against the Huskies.

But Metzger and her teammates struggled with the turnover bug all weekend. Oregon committed 49 turnovers in the two contests, which was more than enough to keep things interesting.

"We're playing in phases," said Oregon Coach Elwin Heiny, relieved to have two NorPac wins in the bank.

Fortunately for Oregon, the positive phases came when they needed them most. In both games the Ducks took charge midway through the second half.

Against WSU, Oregon built an 11 point lead with 6:42 to play, then found a 10 point spurt with three minutes left to kill the Cougars. Saturday the Ducks ran their high-low post offense to perfection down the stretch to sink Washington.

Heiny was pleased that his squad was able to hang tough with Lang saddled with fouls. "She didn't play too many minutes and we did win," said the coach. "She was out for most of the first half and we were able to stay with them."

Washington coach Sue Kruszewski said the Huskies' 11th straight loss to the Ducks was tough to swallow. "I thought we played a real good game. But we weren't scoring when we needed to towards the end of the game."

Kruszewski noted the Ducks' youth and the lack of a Bev Smith type leader as the major stumbling blocks for Oregon this season. "But, the key is winning, and they're winning."



Photo by Bob Baker

Oregon's Helen Higgs positions herself for a jump shot in Saturday's game at Mac Court while Washington's Kathy Seba attempts to defend the play.

Trojans deal men third league loss

LOS ANGELES — Blair Rasmussen again came up with the big numbers, but once again the Duck 7-foot center fouled out late in the game allowing Southern California to walk away with a 62-54 Pac-10 basketball victory over the Ducks Saturday.

Rasmussen, who finished with 16 points and four rebounds, fouled out of the game with 6:25 remaining to play and the Trojans leading 50-48. It was the second consecutive strong game for the sophomore who was a force against UCLA Thursday night before again running into foul problems.

Rasmussen got the Ducks going against the Trojans by canning five of his first six shots from the floor as the Ducks moved to a 16-9 advantage with 13:17 left in the opening half. But Rasmussen picked up his second foul at about the same time and Duck coach Jim Haney brought his big man to the bench for a break.

Southern Cal, led by the scoring of guard Jacque Hill, who finished with a game-high 20 points, rolled to a 31-30 first half advantage and clearly had the momentum heading into the locker room for the halftime break.

The Trojans quickly increased their lead to 45-34 in the second half before the Ducks got untracked. After a pair of baskets by Jerry Adams and David Brantley, the Ducks trailed just 50-44. And when Rasmussen put in a hook shot, it was 50-48 with seven minutes to play in the game.

But just seconds later, Rasmussen picked up his fifth foul.

The Trojans took advantage of Rasmussen's departure but the Ducks hung tough. Oregon only trailed by four with 2:38 left after a Gary Gatewood jump shot and had an opportunity to pull to within a bucket seconds later, but Adams was called for an offensive foul.

With the loss, Oregon falls to 1-3 in Pac-10 play while Southern Cal goes to 3-1.

Gymnasts live an up and down weekend

Injuries decimated the Oregon women's gymnastics team to only two participants in Saturday's meet in Corvallis with Oregon State and Washington. The result was a total of 58.35 points for the Ducks while OSU piled up 176.95 points and Washington tallied 173.25.

Tracy Manduchi was out with a bruised heel while Julie Tennenhouse was lost with a case of tendonitis in the wrists. That left Holly Holmes and Maureen Nolan as the only two healthy Ducks.

The letdown in Corvallis shadowed a solid performance by Oregon in a home meet Friday night against the Cougars of Washington State. The Ducks lost the team battle 162.5 to 102.75, but won three of the four individual events in the competition.

Holmes had an outstanding meet with firsts in the uneven bars (8.7), floor exercise (9.1) and a career high score of 34.8 in the all-around competition. Tennenhouse added a first place on the balance beam.

"I was really happy about my performance against Washington State. I hit most of my routines, but I still made some mistakes," Holmes said. "There still is a lot of room for improvement."

Coach Ed Boyd was pleased with his team's effort against the Cougars, but voiced his displeasure with the meet Saturday.

"Twice we have been on away situations and both times they haven't been mentally preparing for the meet," he said.

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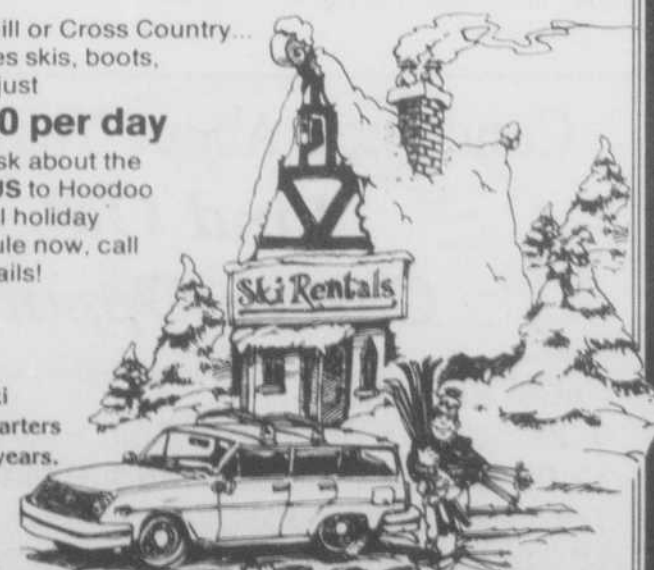
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