

# Ducks sing a sad song, 54-51

By John Healy  
Of the Emerald

It was the same old song Saturday night at McArthur Court, but this time with a different set of lyrics as Oregon dropped a nip-and-tuck Pac-10 encounter into the hands of Washington State, 54-51.

The loss dropped the 5-9 Ducks into ninth place in the conference with a 1-4 record, barely ahead of cellar-dweller Arizona, which stayed winless after a 72-59 loss to Arizona State.

Oregon looked like it might be in the hunt Saturday when 7-0 sophomore Blair Rasmussen, who scored a career high 22 points, wedged in a five-foot baseline jumper from behind the basket with 2:27 left on the clock to give the Ducks a 47-46 lead.

And when Cougar forward Steve Harriel's jumper from near the free throw line with 2:08 remaining popped in and then fell out into the hands of three Ducks, Oregon looked like a sure winner.

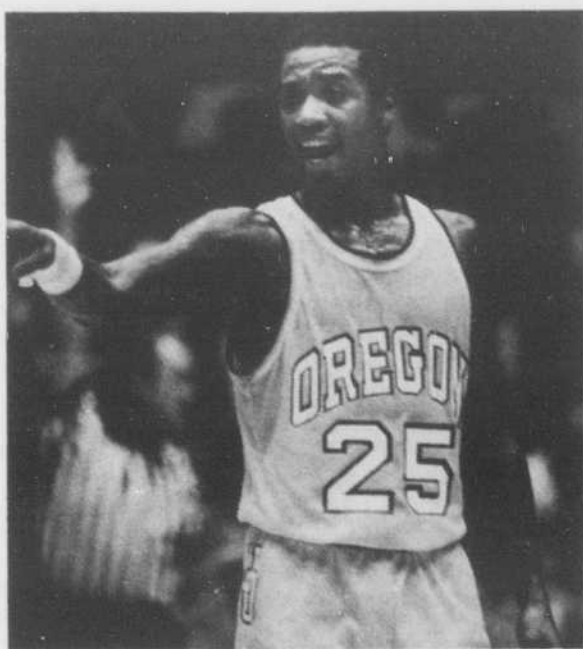
But senior guard Paul Bain got stalled at mid-court by a den of Cougars, and his cross-court pass was stolen by former McMinville star Chris Winkler, who ended up at the line after Bain fouled him on the layin attempt.

Winkler hit both free throws — he was five for five from the line for the night — to nudge Washington State into a 48-47 lead, and when guard Gary Gatewood missed a wide-open jumper at the other end, all that was left was for Harriel to hit four consecutive free throws down the stretch to keep the Ducks on ice and send them into tonight's encounter at Mac Court with Washington on the short end of a four-game losing streak.

"We fouled the wrong people tonight," said Oregon coach Jim Haney of Winkler and Harriel, who tied for team scoring honors with 13 apiece. "And we did not perform efficiently in the last two minutes."

That game-ending lack of efficiency has haunted the Ducks all season. This was Oregon's fourth loss by fewer than four points, and the fourth consecutive Pac-10 loss in which the Ducks could conceivably have won the game.

There were bright spots, namely Rasmussen's one-man offensive show. He hit nine of 17 from the floor on an endless array of



*Emerald Photo*

Gary Gatewood was one of the wounded Ducks who came up short Saturday night against Washington State. Oregon will host Washington tonight at 8 p.m. at Mac Court

short-range baseline jumpers and rolling hook shots over Washington State's densely-packed zone, which usually draped two or three Cougars around him.

"I'm not going to do this team any good if I'm tip-toeing around," said Rasmussen, who is averaging 18.2 points and 6.2 rebounds per game in conference play.

"I'm not trying to do things I'm not capable of, like I was at the beginning of the year," he said. "But I have to be aggressive because it opens other aspects of the game for us."

But with Gatewood hampered by a hyperextended right elbow and Bain's right-hand thumb wrapped in a soft cast, Oregon's other aspect — outside shooting from the guards — never materialized.

The result left Haney glum and shaken — seemingly on the verge of tears.

"We had our chances, and we didn't get it done," said Haney, wiping his eyes. "We just have to keep plugging away and try to do better."

## Blazers rake San Antonio

**SAN ANTONIO, Texas (AP)** — Calvin Natt hit a short jumper from the baseline with 25 seconds left as the Portland Trail Blazers beat the San Antonio Spurs 108-107 in National Basketball Association play Sunday night.

Natt's basket gave the Blazers a 105-104 lead and broke the momentum of a San Antonio comeback. The Spurs had rallied from a six-point deficit with 2:20 to play.

San Antonio made only two field goals over the first 10 minutes of the fourth quarter.

The Spurs saw their chances to regain control die with nine seconds left when George Gervin missed a short jump shot, which Natt rebounded. Jim Paxson added a three-point play four seconds later to put the Blazers up 108-104 with five seconds left.

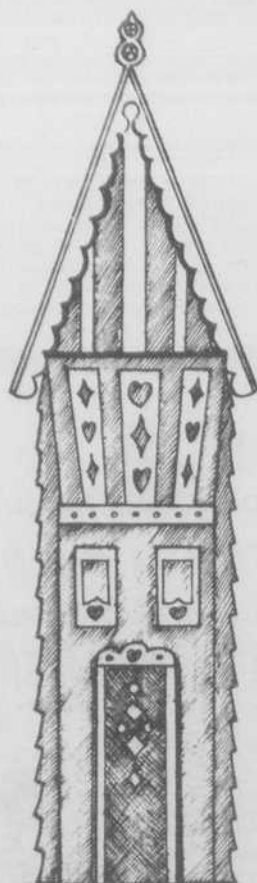
Mychal Thompson and Paxson led Portland's scoring with 25 and 23 points respectively.

Artis Gilmore and Mike Dunleavy, the prime figures in the Spurs' fourth quarter rally, finished with 24 points each.

The loss drops San Antonio into a tie with Kansas City for the Midwest Division lead.

Portland, which trails second-place Phoenix by a half game in the Pacific Division, has won nine of its last 11 games.

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