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Duck women buck the Broncos

By Capi Lynn
Of the Emerald

The Oregon women's basketball team evened its record at 4-4 when it bucked the visiting Broncos of Cal-Poly Pomona 80-70 Saturday night in their home opener at McArthur Court.

The Ducks' victory over the Broncos, last year's NCAA Division II national champions, revenged a one-point loss that Oregon suffered to the Broncos last season, and boosted head coach Elwin Heiny's record to 9-1 in home openers.

"I am pleased to have won, considering that the concentration on basketball is not always the best during finals week," Heiny said. "Most of our errors were pre-final jitters."

Lauri Landerholm led the victors with 23 points, while Gabi Neumann connected on 10 of 12 shots to chip in 20 points. Amy Pettersen was the only other Duck to reach double figures with 10 points for the night.

Landerholm, the Ducks' 5-foot-10 guard, also collected seven rebounds, four steals, and dished out three assists to play a vital role in the victory.

Pettersen and Neumann battled underneath to grab nine and eight rebounds respectively, although the Ducks were outrebounded as a team 49-38.

Oregon jumped out to take the early advantage as freshman Shelly Ray scored on the Ducks' opening possession. The Broncos countered with two free throw conversions, but would enjoy the tight game for only moments.

The Ducks claimed an 11-point lead with Neumann paving the way, scoring eight points in the first 6:30 minutes of the game.

Oregon led 17-6 before Cal Poly finally managed to score a field goal. The Broncos finally broke their drought with Paula Tezak's jumper

8:24 into the contest.

The Broncos put together a rally after that as they chipped away at the Ducks' lead and soon found themselves trailing by only one point, 19-18.

Landerholm then came to the forefront with a hot hand, scoring three consecutive buckets near the end of the first half to dampen the Broncos comeback.

Oregon carried a 39-30 lead into the locker room at the end of the half, a lead that would never be threatened for the remainder of the game.

"We were lacking intensity in the first half," Heiny admitted. "I thought we could have widened the lead and we didn't take advantage of the opportunity."

The Ducks took up where they left off in the second half, with Landerholm's hot hand leading the way as she scored 15 second-half points. Sue Brown added to the cause scoring eight points in the second half on six of nine from the free throw line.

Oregon enjoyed a lead as large as 18 points in the second half before the Broncos began to cut away at the advantage. But the Ducks held on and walked away with the win.

"We were very glad to get the win because they (Cal Poly) recently beat Fresno State University, a team that received votes to be one of the favorites in our conference," Heiny said.

The Ducks shot a blistering .508 from the field on the night, while the Broncos managed only .388, which easily told the story of the game.

Oregon will play again this Saturday in McArthur Court at 5:00 p.m. when it hosts Brigham Young in a non-conference game.

Life on the 'road' can be tough

By Allan Lazo
Of the Emerald

"There's no place like home, there's no place like home." Was that Dorothy as she clicked her heels in the Emerald City or David Girley as he got dressed in the basement locker room of McArthur Court?

"It's great. It's like coming home again, like you've been out in the war. It's great." Was that General MacArthur in 1945 or Keith Balderston talking about being back in Mac Court for a 81-59 win over the Wyoming Cowboys Saturday night?

Well, after doing time on the road for their last three games (and three losses), it was undoubtedly the Oregon men's basketball team that was more than relieved to finally see the homeland again Saturday.

Locker Talk

On Dec. 2, Oregon started a series of three games on the road with a 69-68 loss to Texas Tech, then followed with road losses to Northern Arizona (66-61) and Notre Dame (72-63) to put their record at 2-3 at the time.

Not only did the Ducks hit the road for three straight games, but, starting with Rutgers at home on Nov. 29, they had to play games on Friday, Saturday, Monday, Wednesday and then again Monday, Dec. 9 (that's five games in 11 days and three of them on the road).

"We didn't play that poorly on the road, either," Oregon coach Don Monson said. "We didn't get blown out or anything; we just had a tough time winning two or three games. I think particularly with a young club, an inexperienced club, the road is tough."

But when the going gets tough, the tough need to get going — if they intend to be going anywhere after the regular season.

Last season, the 15-16 Duck squad went 4-8 on the road while the Pac-10 co-champions from Washington, 22-10 overall, were 7-6 on the road and USC, 19-10 overall, was 8-2.

But just what is this mystery of "the road," and what makes it so difficult to win "out there?"

"That's a hard question," Balderston says. "I don't really know what it is. Sometimes you might almost psyche yourself out. You just have to play better than you normally would."

"There really is only a small difference between teams anymore," Monson says. And the reinforcement they get and the confidence they have when they are in familiar surroundings...

Often, those hardest hit by "the road" are the young players for whom the experience of travelling may be new.

In Saturday's game with the Cowboys, playing in only their second road game this season, at least one young player may have found the road very unfriendly.

Wyoming freshman Marco Fleming, who earlier in the game was involved in an altercation with Osborn, was assessed a technical foul when he charged off the bench to go after a fan who, Fleming said, had yelled a racial slur at him.

"He was just an inexperienced, immature freshman, plus we were frustrated and had a bad day," said Wyoming coach Jim Brandenburg.

"This was our second (road game), but you might think it was our first. We just got ourselves very disorganized," said Brandenburg, whose squad also lost their first road game this year to Colorado.

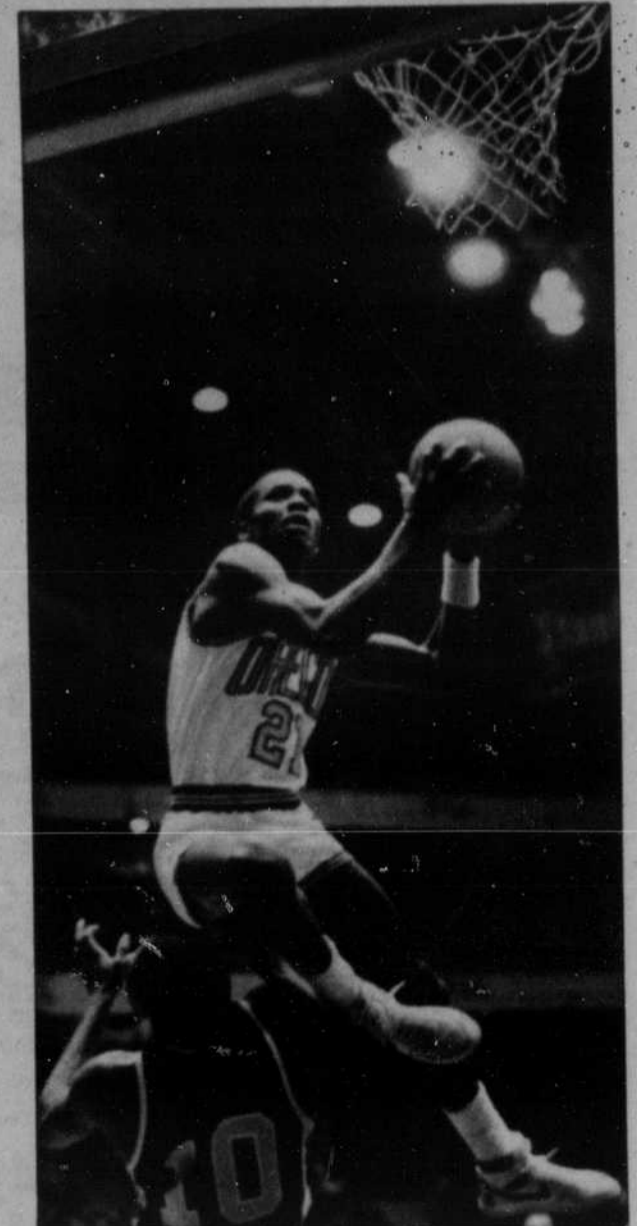


Photo by Karen Stallwood

Players say it is easier to win at home, and Anthony Taylor is not going to argue with that as he goes over Wyoming's Sean Dent Saturday night at McArthur Court where the Ducks beat the Cowboys, 81-59.