Women hoopsters riding a big wave

The Oregn women's basketball team is riding a big wave right now. Don't stand in their way.

Quietly, the Ducks have constructed a 20-6 season record and after last Saturday's thumping of the University of Washington, bolstered their NorPac record to a first-place 9-1. Better yet, if the Ducks can win their remaining two games, an NCAA tournament berth should be automatic.

The key phrase here is should be automatic. A possible NCAA berth is exciting, isn't it? There is little doubt the Ducks deserve it, they've proven themselves with an explosive offense which hits like a gust of cold winter wind - unannounced and overbearing. Saturday night against the Huskies was no exception.

From the Sidelines by Joe Arndt & Dennis Fernandes

You could sense the eagerness for coach Elwin Heiny's team to get the opportunity to avenge last month's loss in Seattle. And, taking their cue from the opening tip, the Ducks just plain knocked the Huskies down.

The win, as big as it was, still places the Ducks in a delicate position: If both the Ducks and Huskies win their final games, a conference deadlock for first place will result. And only one NorPac team is granted an automatic NCAA

That leaves the final decision to the tournament committee. Under the conference's tie-breaking scheme to determine the champion, a comparison of the two teams schedules will be used. It's a formula based on the strength of each team's schedule: the caliber of teams played and how they fared.

If concluding regular season wins at Fresno State and at home against Oregon State materialize, regardless of the formula's outcome. I'd be surprised if the Ducks weren't included in the NCAA pairings. They are a team to be reckoned with if they can side-step any more injuries.

As of Saturday, the Ducks were a squad heavy with talent but lacking a point guard. It was just two weeks ago that quards Carol Drouet and Tammy Richard could be relied upon to provide the spunk and ball-handling needed to push the ball up court, set up the offense and anchor the defense.

Richard. In particular, was the team leader in steals and second in assists. But torn left knee ligaments to both. meaning the loss of each for the rest of the season, have the Ducks in a precarious position.

It will be interesting to see if the Ducks front-line people Amy Pettersen, Sue Brown, Shelly Ray and Gabi Neumann - can continue providing the points for an offense that bet-

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Sidelines Staff

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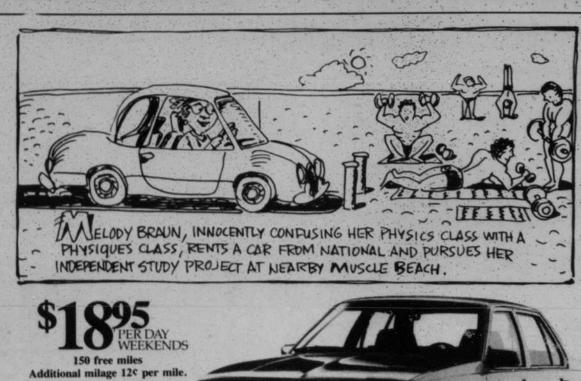
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