

Oregon's late rally overcomes Trojans; now face 'Cats

By Dennis Fernandes

Of the Emerald

Luck has failed the Ducks before, but not on this night.

Oregon held USC scoreless the last five minutes and tallied six points of their own to defeat the Trojans, 51-49, in a Pacific

10 Conference tournament preliminary round game at UCLA's Pauley Pavilion Thursday night.

The Ducks, who improve to 14-12, now advance to face the University of Arizona tonight in a 9 p.m. game. The contest will be aired on the Pac-10/Raycom network on KVAL Channel 13.

The Trojans finish the year at 9-19.

Just when it seemed the Ducks would take an early plane home and dust off their golf clubs, the defense tightened and the rebounds bounced Oregon's way.

After Chris Munk's leaning jumper put USC up 49-45,

Oregon didn't look to have the offense to even keep up with the Trojans, let alone catch them.

But an alley-oop slam by Anthony Taylor must have woken up the slumbering Ducks because they got key buckets, and USC didn't score a point the rest of the game.

That cut the lead to two, 49-47. Keith Balderston hit one of two free throws to draw within a point, and Sprague deflected a lay-in on the defensive end, resulting in David Girley's quick jumper at the other end to give Oregon a one-point cushion, 50-49, with just 2:05 remaining.

Nobody scored again until

Taylor hit the front end of a one-on-one to make it 51-49 with just eight seconds on the clock.

He missed the second, and USC hurried the ball up the court. USC's Brad Winslow missed a three-pointer, and Derrick Dowell's tip-in at the buzzer also fell short.

"I'm just real tickled for my kids. Maybe this will be a springboard for tomorrow," said Oregon coach Don Monson during his post-game show. "The rebounds and the defense the last four or five possessions really made the difference."

The Ducks almost blew this one. They ran to a 6-0 score at the outset behind Sven Meyer's

three buckets, and were in a comfortable position at 24-10 with 6:43 left.

The Trojans then clawed back on a 14-2 run. Despite that, the Ducks played impressive defense — on everyone except Dowell. The 6-foot-6 senior forward scored all of USC's field goals up until the 5:56 mark of the second half, and was responsible for 16 of their first 26 points.

But somehow the Ducks put the clamps on him (Dowell finished with 22 points), while maintaining the solid defense on the rest of the team, and that carried Oregon since their own offense was sputtering.

Oregon makes Stanford 11th straight victim

By Dennis Fernandes

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The Oregon women's basketball team kept their Pacific 10 Conference title hopes alive by turning back upset-minded Stanford University, 63-54, down in Palo Alto, Calif. Thursday night.

The 18th-ranked Ducks are

now tied with USC for first place in the Pac-10 with identical 14-3 marks. The Trojans motored over University of Washington 91-67 to break up a three-way tie for the top spot.

The Ducks can guarantee themselves a share for the title by winning their last regular season game against the Univer-

sity of California in Berkeley tomorrow night. If USC loses their last game and Oregon wins, the Ducks will be crowned the champion, and vice-versa.

Oregon's 11th-straight win over this physical Cardinal team did not come easy. The Ducks needed a 10-1 spurt the last 4:30

to pull away from a tie at 53 points.

Oregon saw eight-point leads get squandered away in both halves, thanks mostly to the rough nature of the game and the 6-foot-6 presence of Jill Yanke. That combination took Oregon away from its height advantage of Stefanie Kasperki, Gabi Neumann and Kris Glidden, as those three combined for a mere 25 points (they normally average over 36 points together).

"The physical nature of the game took our post players out of it," explained Oregon coach Elwin Heiny. "Stefanie had the 6-foot-6 player on her, and that made her rush her shots."

The responsibility for Oregon's offensive output fell upon their ace, Pac-10 Player of the Year Lauri Landerholm, and she responded with a game-high 16 points. But it was probably forward Sheila Sattiewwhite's play off the bench that sparked the Ducks.

She almost captured a "triple-double" (double figures in points, rebounds and assists) with 10 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists. "She also did a good job defensively and got some key rebounds down the stretch for us," Heiny said.

Heiny also got a clutch performance out of Carol Drouet, who had to play almost the entire game on sore knees after backup guard Jacquie Semeniuk went down with an ankle injury just two minutes into the contest. The 5-foot-4 junior got 12 points and hit all eight of her free throws.

Semeniuk's status is unknown for tomorrow's finale with Cal, and her absence would make things that much tougher for the Ducks. The Golden Bears improved their league mark to 9-8 after drubbing Oregon State University Thursday night, 94-71.

Cal has already upset two of the Pac-10's top teams, USC and Washington, on their home floor and are licking their chops in anticipation for the Oregon game. In addition, the word out of Berkeley is that Cal supporters are a little miffed that Landerholm got the nod as Player of the Year over their standout, Jennifer Bennett.

"It's going to be a real battle," Heiny said.

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