

Sports

Ducks clip Eagles, advance to second round

By Dennis Fernandes
Of the Emerald

The Oregon women's basketball squad won their first national championship tournament game in six years by eliminating Eastern Washington University of the Mountain West Athletic Conference in a first-round, National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament game, 75-56, in McArthur Court Wednesday night.

The Ducks, seeded seventh in the Western Regional, improve their record to 23-6 and will now advance to the second round for a matchup against 10th-ranked Ohio State University, the region's second seed.

Due to a scheduling conflict on the Buckeyes' home floor back in Columbus, the game

will be played at McArthur Court Saturday night at 7:30 p.m.

Eastern Washington finished the year at 18-12 after winning 10 straight games to get to the tournament.

Although the Ducks had trouble finally disposing of the pesky Eagles late in the second half, Eastern Washington and their excellent post player, 6-foot-2 Brenda Souther, could find no answer to Oregon's height advantage in the key. The trio of Gabi Neumann, Stefanie Kasperski and Kris Glidden combined for a dominating 43 points and 31 rebounds.

Kasperski, the 6-foot-7 freshman center, set the tone for Eastern's fate at the outset when she hit the game's first bucket

on a layup and then rejected Souther's first attempt — one of five blocks for the night.

The Eagles' senior, who has been unstoppable lately while averaging 25.7 points her last 13 games, never could get on track, finishing with just 12 points on six of 18 shooting from the floor.

"Stefanie did just an outstanding job as a freshman on Souther," praised Oregon coach Elwin Heiny. "Stefanie's very big, and I don't know if she's played very many people her size, but she definitely intimidated her (Souther) inside."

Eastern coach Bill Smithpeters also noted the size advantage. "A couple of our inside players had to change their shot and that hurt our shooting percentage," he commented.

Unknown to Heiny and the Ducks, the Eagles had a few alternatives to the inside play of Souther in their offensive scheme. Susan Smith, a freshman forward, kept them in it with a game-high 20 points, mostly on long-range jumpers. Eastern's conference is blessed with a three-point line, and Smith happens to lead the league in accuracy at an eyebrow-raising 46 percent.

"We're all for the three-pointer," Smithpeters proclaimed. "It would have helped us a little bit tonight, but I'm not sure how much. That's only speculation."

Oregon never trailed, nailing the first three field goals of the contest for a quick 6-0 margin. They extended that lead to 10 at the intermission.

The closest the Eagles could get in the second half was within six, 48-42 with 11:52 left, thanks mostly to the outside threats of Smith and guard



Photo by Michael Wilhelm

Oregon point guard Carol Drouet skies above two Eastern Washington University defenders as the Ducks soar past the Eagles, 75-56, in first-round NCAA tournament action Wednesday night in McArthur Court.

Roj Johal, who tallied 12 points.

never got going."

The Ducks then managed to turn the offense into high gear and pull away. Carol Drouet hit two free throws, and both teams went scoreless for the next 2:38 until the Oregon point guard found Jacquie Semeniuk ahead of the pack, and she laid it in to make the count 52-42. Three Oregon free throws made it seven in a row and finally sent the Eagles packing.

It turns out the Ducks needed a big night out of their big people, as they only managed 12 fast break points the entire evening — two in the first half.

"I don't feel we ran well up until the game was almost over," Heiny said. "That was something we wanted to do in the second half, and we just

"I think they really slowed us down," said point guard Drouet, who still managed seven assists and 12 points despite aching knees. "When we do get into our running game, it seems the rest of our game comes into place."

The victory marks the first NCAA tournament success for the Ducks. The last time the Ducks won in post-season play, when the tourney was under the direction of the now-defunct AIAW, they defeated University of Colorado, 74-67, back in 1981.

Not much is known about the Buckeyes, except that they beat USC, the Pacific 10 Conference champion, by 20 points earlier this season.

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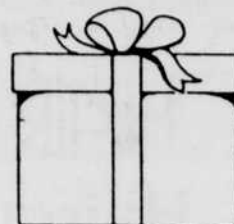
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