

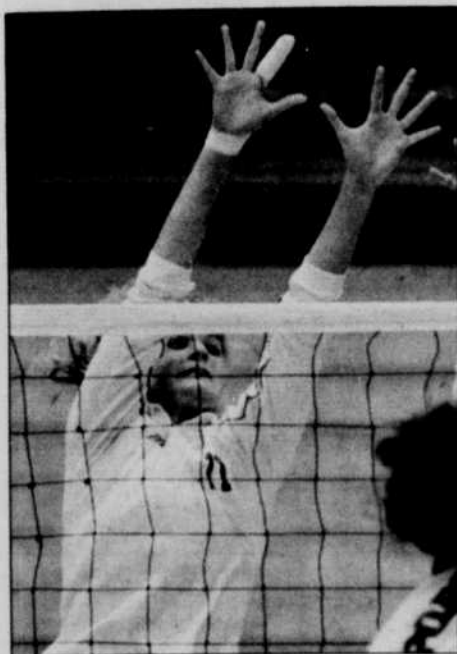
Sports

Trojans, Bruins give Ducks rough matches in California

By Gary Henley
Emerald Sports Reporter

Life is tough in the Pacific-10 Conference. Just ask the Oregon volleyball team.

At this time one month ago, the Ducks were flying high in the midst of a nine-



Lauri Krejcha

match win streak, and were sitting atop the conference in first place.

In Los Angeles during the weekend, the Ducks all but fell in the San Andreas fault. Oregon was swept by UCLA (3-15, 5-15, 8-15) and USC (13-15, 3-15, 12-15), and the Ducks have now lost four of their last six matches.

Oregon, 11-7 overall and 7-4 in the Pac-10, falls into fifth place in the conference, three games behind first-place Stanford.

UCLA went into Friday night's match as the 4th-ranked team in the nation and looking to avenge a loss to the Ducks earlier in the season at McArthur Court.

The Bruins made quick work of the match, shutting down the Oregon attack while looking impressive offensively.

UCLA had a .269 hitting percentage to the Ducks' minus .018, and held Oregon's Teri Kramer to only 11 kills.

Oregon coach Gerry Gregory gave credit where credit is due.

"UCLA played a very fine match tonight. They passed and served extremely well. Our passing was very poor and our middle threat just wasn't there. We didn't serve well enough to get them out of their offense."

The Bruins take over second place in the Pac-10 with a 9-2 conference record

and 18-5 overall after their victory over Oregon State on Saturday.

Oregon didn't fare much better on Saturday night against USC. The scores were closer but the results were the same — three up, three down.

The Ducks held a 13-3 advantage in game one, but the lead slipped away and the Trojans never looked back.

"We had a hard time hanging on to our leads tonight," Gregory said. "USC played well and really put pressure on us."

The Trojans were also looking for some revenge, after being upset by the Ducks on Sept. 27.

USC was the big winner in the Pac-10 this past week, as the Trojans defeated UCLA Wednesday and Oregon State on Friday before riding over the Ducks.

As Gregory would say after the game, the Trojans weren't about to let an opportunity for a perfect week get away.

"They took advantage of every opportunity. They are solid throughout and much improved since the last time we played," he said.

Oregon middle blocker Lauri Krejcha, the fifth leading blocker in the nation, collected six blocks, while Melissa Ter-

zian led the Ducks with 10 kills.

As a team, Oregon could manage only a .057 hitting percentage to the Trojans .241.

Lonise Norfleet, the 6-2 freshman outside hitter for USC and the 12th-ranked kill leader in the country, hammered down 14 kills.

The Ducks, ranked 13th nationally, will no doubt drop a few notches in the polls.

USC, whose 12-7 overall record is a far cry from their 2-32 (0-18 in the Pac-10) record of last season, will continue their upward climb. The Trojans were ranked 14th in the NCAA poll going into the week's action.

Gregory has stressed all season that his team's goal is to finish no lower than third in the conference, but the Ducks must now climb over Southern Cal and California (both 8-3) to move in behind 10-1 Stanford and 9-2 UCLA.

"We're struggling right now and not playing up to what we're capable of playing," Gregory said.

The Ducks return home for games this week against Washington State (1-10) on Friday and Washington (3-8) on Saturday.

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