

Sports

Ducks wake up in second half to win opener

By Gary Henley
Emerald Sports Reporter

The scrimmages and exhibitions are over. The games count now for the Oregon men's basketball team regardless of whether its ready, as the Ducks opened their regular season Saturday night at McArthur Court in front of a crowd of 6,975.

The Ducks showed they were plenty ready for the University of Portland, as Oregon, with Anthony Taylor at the controls, shot down the Pilots 81-70 in a non-conference game.

The contest was the season opener for



Photo by Shu-Shing Chen

Transfer Randy Grant contributed eight rebounds and 12 points as a starter in the Ducks win on Saturday.

both clubs, and marked the coaching debut of former Trail Blazer Larry Steele of Portland.

With eight newcomers, Steele's team won't be blazing many trails this season. The Pilots, 14-14 overall last year, are being picked by many to finish near the bottom of the West Coast Athletic Conference.

In the first half however, the Ducks seemed to be doing whatever they could to get Steele off to a good start.

Oregon's Keith Balderston put the Ducks on the board with a layup just 12 seconds into the game, but Oregon struggled offensively for the rest of the half, finishing with a .333 team shooting percentage at intermission.

The Pilots held leads of 15-9 and 29-23, but the Ducks stayed close despite their cold shooting. The lead changed hands 12 times in the first half alone, with the last lead change coming on a Robert Phillips three-point shot with one second left to give Portland a 34-32 halftime advantage.

The three-pointers made the difference in the first half, as the Pilots hit five three pointers, with Phillips alone going 3-4 from the three-point line.

Taylor, who would finish with a game-high 24 points, said the Ducks were concerned at halftime.

"We were down by two. He (Oregon coach Don Monson) didn't tell us that much at the half. We knew where we were. We just needed to get things going and we had to start playing with more intensity. In the first half, I was just walking the ball up the floor, but I pushed it up harder in the second half and we started to run more."

Oregon's rugged power forward Randy Grant, a junior college transfer from New York City, scored and was fouled three minutes into the second half to break a 34-34 deadlock.

The play ignited the Ducks, who tore off on a 41-17 run to build a 75-51 lead.

Taylor continued to untie Portland's shoelaces with his electrifying moves. Time after time, Taylor wove through the Pilots' defense and scored 20 second half points to seemingly put the game



Photo by Shu-Shing Chen

Anthony Taylor led the Ducks with 24 points, but this time he used his penetration to dish off for one of his two assists.

away.

But as the saying goes, "you're never out of it with the three-point shot."

Portland took full advantage of the shot, as the Pilots started dropping bombs from three-point range to cut the Ducks' 24-point lead down to eight in a span of just two minutes.

Monson brought his starters back in off the bench. Taylor hit two foul shots, and Oregon held on for the win.

"We played well for 15 minutes of the second half," Monson said afterwards. "It's too bad the other kids (the Duck reserves) couldn't hold on to the lead. I can't remember the last time I had to put the starters back into a game. The three-point shot changes it."

The Ducks had seven new faces in uniform, including Grant, who started.

"Randy does two things well," Mon-

son said. "He passes the ball well and he has a nose for the ball. But right now he doesn't have good concentration when he has the ball, and he's a nightmare on defense. He's a strong player though."

Balderston finished with 21 points and cleaned the windows with a game-high 11 rebounds.

"Balderston kept us in the game in the first half. He was real active and had a great game," Monson said.

"He's a good athlete," Taylor added. "Keith has always been intense. He was trying to get us into the game in the first half." (Balderston had 17 points and seven boards at the half).

Phillips finished with 16 points for Portland.

The Ducks face the Central Michigan Chippewas Tuesday at Mac Court, game time at 7:35 p.m.

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and the fun. Also thanks to Karen and
Cyndy. RICH AND SCOTT 11-30

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12-2

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CHRIS PEAKE
Hope you had a
Happy 21'er Roomy!
Love, Sandy

11-30*

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all of the new
members
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Love, Rock and Laura

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