

Sports

Kramer sets sights on Stanford as NCAA playoffs get underway

By Gary Henley
Emerald Sports Reporter

For the second straight year, the Oregon women's volleyball team will face the Stanford Cardinal in the first round of the National Collegiate Athletic Association Tournament, tonight in Stanford's Maples Pavilion.

The Ducks (17-10 overall and 11-7 in the Pacific-10 Conference), were ousted from last year's playoff by Stanford in four games. Stanford also swept the Ducks in this season's series, both three-game sweeps.

The Cardinal received an automatic bid to the tournament by capturing the Pac-10 title with a 17-1 record (25-6 overall). Stanford goes into the match ranked third in the nation in both the Tachikara/American Volleyball Coaches Association and NCAA polls, while the Ducks finished 17th and 19th respectively. Oregon finished in a tie with California for fourth place in the conference.

It wouldn't be fair to write the Ducks off before the match even starts, but there's a chance it may be the final collegiate appearance for Oregon's Teri Kramer.

Kramer, along with Monica Camp and Michelle Crowston, is in her final year of a successful career at Oregon, during which she racked up some impressive stats.

Going into the tournament, Kramer's 1,762 kills rank second on the all-time Oregon list behind Sue Harbour's 2,099. This isn't bad considering Harbour was the first player in NCAA history to break the 2,000-kill barrier.

Kramer is also third on the service-ace list with 137 and has a lifetime kill percentage of .233.

At the beginning of the season, Kramer had a realistic chance at surpassing the 2,000-kill mark, but the graduate of Wilson High School in Portland knew it would be a long shot.

"I never expected to get it," Kramer said. "Our offense is much more spread out this year than it was last season."

Kramer carried much of the load last season. So much so that she led the nation in kills with 703.

"It was different last year. This season I have a lot more support around me," she said.

"The pressure's been taken off her this year," said Camp, the senior hitter/defensive specialist.

"As a freshman, she started and there was a lot of pressure on her. I think she handled it well," Camp continued. "But now she doesn't have to do as much because of the other players we have."

The Ducks have one of the strongest front lines in the Pac-10, with outside hitters Kramer and Michele Krebsbach, and middle blocker Lauri Krejcha.

In Kramer and Krebsbach, Oregon owns one of the best outside-hitting tandems in the country. "If not the best, then Oregon Daily Emerald



File photo

Senior All-Pac-10 hitter Teri Kramer rises to put the final touches on her signature, a booming kill her coach calls the hardest he's seen by a woman spiker.

close to it," said Oregon coach Gerry Gregory before the start of the season.

The "K-Attack" has combined for 590 kills in the Ducks' 27 matches this season.

"In the Pac-10, you're playing against the top competition," Gregory said. "And Teri's the one player that everyone's trying to stop in all our matches. She's the focus of all the defensive schemes."

"She's had a good year," he added. "She's overcome a lot of adversities, a lot of injuries. Her shoulder injury's been a nagging problem all year, so she's had to play with some pain."

Kramer also has been pleased

with her senior-year performance.

"I have no complaints," she said. "I've had more fun this year than any other year. The players on the team this season really made a difference."

The season isn't over yet, and Kramer, like the rest of the team, has her sights on Stanford.

"I'm just glad we're in it. It doesn't really matter that it's Stanford that we play. I'm just happy that we made it in. We have to worry about our side of the court and not what they're going to do."

Kramer is fortunate enough to

Turn to Kramer, Page 10

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