

Sun Devils shoot down Ducks in final seconds

By Kevin Allen
Emerald Sports Reporter

By this point in the season, the Oregon men's basketball team has mastered "the loss."

They learned how to do it by a big margin away from home — at Wisconsin — and they learned how to do at home by a fair margin — 77-64 against Cal-Santa Barbara on Dec. 20. The New Year meant learning new methods of getting the big "L," losing by 31 at home against UCLA on Jan. 5.

Thursday night, however, the Ducks broke new ground learning to lose a game they probably should have won. They lost it by the smallest of margins at the last second, 72-70, to the Arizona State Sun Devils in Tempe, Ariz.

Oregon fought back from eight down (67-59) with 2:28 remaining in the game to have Randy Grant hit a layup with 29 seconds remaining to tie the contest 70-70. But the effort probably should have been saved for Saturday when the Ducks will face highly ranked Arizona at McHale Center in Tucson.

For when Trent Edwards scored the two most important of his career and game-high 26 points on a layup with one second remaining, the come-back-kids became the could-have-beens.

"Things on the road are tough anyway," said Oregon coach Don Monson. "We did not shoot well enough, long enough. I thought we played well defensively but nothing went right on offense in the first half."

The loss is the Ducks fourth in five games and drops Oregon to 6-7 overall

and 1-2 in Pacific-10 Conference play. The Sun Devils snapped a five game losing streak to the Ducks, improving to 8-5 overall, 2-3 in the Pac-10.

The Webfoots and Sun Devils used the first half to exchange baskets and turnovers in a pretty even fashion. Neither team fell behind by more than four points until Alex Austin scored his third three pointer in four ASU trips down the floor with 1:32 remaining, putting the Sun Devils up by eight, 35-27.

Keith Reynolds responded with two consecutive field goals for the Ducks, but 12 turnovers and a 37 percent shooting from the field had done their damage. Oregon entered the locker room down 35-31.

Oregon came back quickly in the second half, taking the lead 53-49 by the

midway point. ASU responded with an 18-6 run over the next eight minutes nearly putting the Ducks out of the game, 67-59.

The Ducks countered with Frank Johnson sliding to steal the ball with 1:41 remaining, passing it to Reynolds, who tied the game 68-68 on two free throws (completing a 9-1 run) after being fouled by Adrian Brown.

Torin Williams' foul shots with 1:33 put Arizona State up 70-68 but Grant found room inside to score his 15th point of the night and tied the game at 70.

With 12 seconds remaining, Brown in-bounded the ball to Rich Goldberg, who was pressured back to nearly mid-court by a tough Oregon defense before finding Edwards alone underneath the basket to win the game.

Baker utilizing skills, motivation, dedication

By Jack Millikin
Emerald Sports Reporter

It was a rare sight indeed. Following Thursday morn-



File photo

One of the "best shooters" coach Elwin Heiny has ever seen, freshman guard Tori Baker is definitely headed in the right direction.

ing's practice, members of the Duck women's basketball team had the chance to brush up on a rarely needed — and even more rarely used — skill, as they could be seen competing in their own version of the NBA's Slam Dunk Contest.

Let the record also show that the north basket at MacArthur Court had been lowered from 10 to eight feet. Sorry about that, Duck fans, but they aren't quite that impressive.

Freshman guard Tori Baker was hesitant to participate in the festivities.

"I've been having problems jumping off my right leg," the 5-foot-9 Richland, Wash.-native said in regards to her latest injury. She redshirted last year because of surgery on her left ankle. "It has

slowed me down a bit. I know I can be quicker, but it hurts me to pivot."

So far in the season, Baker has given no indication that she intends to let the injury affect her play, garnering Pacific-10 Player of the Week honors for the week of Dec. 19 as a result of her 26-point, five-rebound performance against Brigham Young. Though other performances have been somewhat less impressive, Oregon head coach Elwin Heiny feels there is no reason to doubt Baker's abilities.

"I think she could become unstoppable," Heiny said. "She is one of the best shooters I have ever seen. She just needs to learn a bit more about the game in terms of getting open and knowing when to take the shot."

"I would like to be more confident," Baker said. "There are times when I get intimidated after missing a shot and on the next shot it's like 'Please go in.' I want to be at a point where any shot I take will be a smart shot."

Though Heiny said Baker could repeat her player-of-the-week performance "at any time she wants to," Baker realizes the need for consistency in her game.

"I would rather score 10 points a night on a regular basis than score 20 points one night and then five points on another," she said.

Based on her current 9.2



Tori Baker

scoring average, ranking her third on the team, it would seem she has a handle on the essentials of shot-making, upholding a respectable .457 shooting percentage. Baker's

deft touch has also earned her the opportunity to start nine of 12 games this season.

"I think it is nothing other

Turn to Baker, Page 14

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