

# Ducks wake just in time to win

By Cam Sivesind  
Emerald Sports Reporter

A tired bunch of Oregon basketball players pulled out an ugly 82-81 victory by defeating Portland Saturday night at McArthur Court.

In a game that had the crowd yawning in the first half and on the edge of its seat at the end of the second half, a well-traveled Duck basketball squad avoided an upset and kept their win streak at Mac Court alive.

The Ducks have won their first four home games, equaling a 1985-86 streak. The contest against Portland was the team's third game this week, and the strain showed on all.

"Well, let's say I'm glad that game is over and I'm glad the week's over," Oregon coach Don Monson said. "And I'm glad we won. These kids make an old man older. We just didn't play very well."

Oregon started the game in style with a dunk from senior center Eric Dunn. Junior big man Richard Lucas followed with a left hook and junior transfer guard Kevin Mixon nailed a three-pointer to give the Ducks a 7-0 lead.

The Ducks kept that margin at 9-2 before the Pilots made a run. Portland climbed back into the game behind the play of senior guard Josh Lowery, taking their first lead at 11-12.

Both teams remained even for the next four minutes, knotting the score at 20 with 12:06 remaining in the half.

Oregon then made a run of its own, outscoring the Pilots 17-7 in the next six minutes and grabbing a 37-27 lead. The Ducks held on to a nine-point lead at 40-31 with 4:11 remaining in the half.

The defense for Oregon was slow to react all night and the end of the first half was a perfect example, as the Pilots rattled off eight straight points to close the gap to one at 40-39 with 43 seconds to go.

Oregon's sophomore wonder guard Terrell Brandon countered with a three-point play after being fouled on a 15-foot jumper. That was all for first-half scoring and the Ducks went into the locker room leading 43-39.

Brandon led Oregon scoring at the half with 14 while Dunn knocked in 10. Lowery led the Pilots at the break with 12.

Oregon began the second half as it did the first with a scoring run, jumping to a 50-41 lead. The Ducks sputtered defensively once again, allowing the Pilots to cut the lead to four at 56-52.

Portland then took the lead 59-56 behind a three-point play by senior forward Will McDowell, a breakaway layup by Lowery, and a couple of free throws by sophomore guard Erik Spoelstra.

The Pilots went on to their largest lead of the game at 69-63 with 5:58 to play.

The Ducks battled back with some help off the bench from junior guard Mike Helms, who tied the score at 71-71 with a three-point play. A basket by Mixon and a pair of free throws from Lucas gave the Ducks a 75-71 lead with 2:49 left.

A three-point shot by Mixon, a free throw from Lucas and a driving layup from Brandon provided the Ducks with a six-point cushion with 41 seconds remaining.

A three-pointer by Lowery chopped the Ducks' lead to three. Dunn sunk a free throw to up Oregon's lead to four

with 16 seconds left.

The Pilots gave Oregon fans fits after forward Eric Mobley canned a three-pointer making the score 82-81 with six seconds left in the game.

Oregon successfully ran out the clock when Helms dribbled his way free of Pilot defenders to seal the win for the Ducks.

"We knew that they were coming in pumped up, but our defense was terrible," Mixon said. "Our transition defense really wasn't working for us at all. We weren't getting back on defense."

The defense was rather lackluster for the Ducks. Of the Pilots' 16 shots made in the first half, 11 of those were layups or dunks.

"Our transition defense was real bad tonight. I don't know if it was because we were tired," Helms said. "I think a lot of guys were just lazy. We played in spurts and didn't put them away when we should have."

Monson described his team's transition defense as "horrendous."

"When we get 10 up in our own place, we've got to put people away," Monson said. "We can't keep letting them hang in there and hang in there. Every game we've won has been close. It just shouldn't be."

Brandon led all scoring with 23. Mixon added 20 for the Ducks and Dunn chipped in 17.

As a team, the Ducks shot an impressive 60.4 percent from the field.

The Pilots were led by Lowery with 20 and McDowell with 18.



Photo by Kate Joost

Oregon's Mike Helms comes off the bench to drive the sluggish, game-weary Ducks to an ugly 82-81 win.

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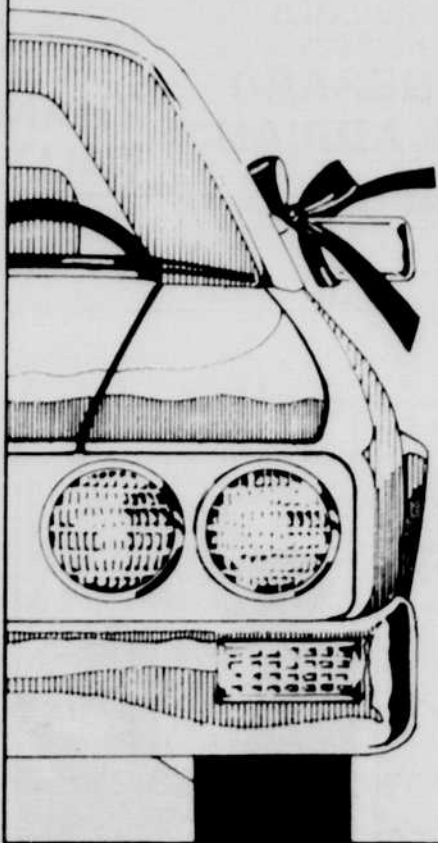
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