

# Women to meet improved WSU

By Cam Sivesind  
Emerald Sports Reporter

The Washington schools invade McArthur Court tonight and Saturday for what looks to be two of the Oregon women's basketball team's toughest contests of the year.

The Ducks face Washington State tonight at 7:30. The Cougars are looking at attaining their finest season ever under head coach Harold Rhodes, who is in his eighth year at Washington State.

At 13-8 overall, the Cougars are one win shy of their best effort under Rhodes, and are two wins away from their first winning season since 1982. The Cougars are currently tied for fifth in the Pacific 10 Conference race.

"(The Cougars) are better than they've ever been," Oregon coach Elwin Heiny said. "They will have their best season ever."

The Ducks and Cougars clashed earlier this season in Pullman where Oregon squeaked by with a 68-65 victory. The Ducks were lucky to come away with a win, Heiny said.

Cougar forward Angie Miller leads her team in scoring (16.1 per game) and rebounds (6.9), and has been on a roll in recent outings. Miller is coming off a 30-point, 10-rebound effort against California.

Center Kristin Metson follows Miller with a 13.6 scoring average while shooting 52 percent from the field.

Key players that Oregon must focus on stopping are Miller, forward Kristal Stahl, and guard Dawn Allinger, Heiny said.

"They're probably the most improved team in the league," Heiny said.

And things look to get only better at Washington State. The Cougars have two sophomores and three juniors on their starting unit.

Oregon leads the series with Washington State 21-3, and are 13-1 against Rhodes.

Saturday night, the fifth-ranked Washington Huskies pay Oregon a visit. The Huskies are hot off an upset victory of then No. 2 Stanford last weekend in Seattle.

The Huskies are 19-2 this season, with road losses to DePaul and Stanford the only blemishes on their record. And the Cardinal has been the only team to score more than 70 points against a swarming Husky defense.

In the last meeting, a short-handed Duck squad was defeated by Washington 73-57 in Seattle. The Huskies own a 19-17 series edge with the Ducks, winning eight of their last 11 meetings.

"Washington looked very sharp in beating Stanford," Heiny said. "I was really impressed with their intensity."

Turnovers are a key to Oregon having success against the Huskies. A turnover will always result in two points at the other end against Washington, Heiny said.

Washington forward Traci Thirdgill is a player Heiny notes as important for his team to contain. Thirdgill averages 9.2 points and 5.9 rebounds a game, placing her fourth on the team in scoring.

Center Amy Mickelson averages 15.4 points a game to lead Washington in scoring, followed by forward Karen Deden (14.4) and guard Laurie Merlino (12.2).

Deden pulls down 9.1 rebounds per game as well to lead her team in that department.

Heiny believes this home stand against the Washington schools is vital to post-season aspirations.

"We are determining our own destiny," Heiny said. "Beating Washington would draw attention for (post-season) seeding."

No one expects the Ducks to beat Washington, except the Ducks, Heiny said.

Oregon is coming off an 82-63 dousing of Oregon State last weekend. Tied for third place in the Pac-10 with a 7-3



Angie Miller

conference mark. Oregon is riding a four-game homecourt winning streak and is 15-6 overall.

Center Stefanie Kasperski broke Pac-10 career records for field goals and rebounds against Oregon State while adding to her career blocked shots mark.

Oregon has been winning games with a balanced scoring attack, however, with three players scoring nine points and two others adding seven against the Beavers.

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