

Sports

Women miss last chance at Cal Bears get NCAA bid

By Cam Sivesind
Emerald Sports Reporter



Vanessa Selden

The Oregon women's basketball team lost more than a disappointing game at California Saturday, 79-72 — the Ducks may have lost a tournament bid.

With the win, the Bears finished 17-11 overall and created a three-way tie for fourth in the Pacific-10 Conference between the Ducks, the Bears and Washington State. All have 9-9 conference records.

The part that really hurts the Ducks is that Cal got a bid to the NCAA tournament Sunday. Oregon, finishing at 17-12 overall, had given up all hopes of an NCAA tourney bid.

It appears now that a victory over Cal might have vaulted them into the NCAA tournament. Going in to Berkeley for the weekend, Oregon didn't appear to even have a chance at the National Women's Invitational Tournament — a tournament it won a year ago.

If there is any good to come from the news of Cal's NCAA bid, it may be that the Ducks still have a shot at the NWIT.

Oregon lost six of its last seven games to wind up a disappointing season. The stretch-run losing skid is the worst Oregon has incurred since losing seven of eight games to end the 1982-83 season.

On Saturday, the Ducks started off slow against Cal, falling behind 7-2 early.

Things got worse as Oregon coach Elwin Heiny got a technical foul for arguing over rough play inside against his senior center Stefanie Kasperski.

Guards Vanessa Selden and Michelle Eble kept the Ducks in the game with seven three-pointers between them. Selden finished with 13 points in 40 minutes of play.

Eble, one of three seniors playing in her final regular season game as a Duck, led all Oregon scorers with 16. She was 4-for-8 from three-point range.

Kasperski added 14 points, while forward Trina McCartney chipped in with 10 points and nine boards.

The Ducks and Bears fought evenly throughout the entire game, with Cal grabbing the largest lead of the game at eight early in the second half.


The Ducks did manage to grab the lead momentarily at 56-55, but Cal pulled away for the victory.

"We sort of played with Cal all night and didn't appear to have the energy to put them away or make them play our game," Heiny said. "I wish I had an explanation for why we couldn't get the players going the second half of the season."

Teresa Palmisana led all scorers with her 18 points to pace four other Cal team members in double figures.

Oregon's third senior Jacquie Semeniuk struggled from the field shooting 1-for-5 and finishing with three points. She played only 20 minutes.

The Ducks now must sit and wait to see if their season will continue with an NWIT bid.



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