

SPORTS

Volleyball team ready for ASU, UA

By Paul Morgan
Emerald Sports Reporter

The Oregon volleyball team will get a chance to break in the new floor in McArthur Court this weekend when it faces Arizona State and Arizona in two conference matches.

The Ducks will christen the new \$53,000 floor tonight when they take on Arizona State at 7:30 p.m. Arizona will visit Mac Court at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday to finish out the weekend.

Arizona State (2-3, 8-7) is tied for fifth in the Pac-10, after a loss to Stanford and a victory over California last weekend. Oregon Coach Gerry Gregory said the Sun Devils will bring a talented back line defense and a well-trained team.

"They keep a lot of balls in play," he said. "They are similar to Oregon State in that respect. They are just a real tough, competitive team."

Arizona State's top attackers are outside hitter Mindy Gowell and middle attacker Tina Berg. Gowell leads the Pac-10 in digs with 4.33 per game, and is near the top of the conference in kills with 4.47 per game. Berg is the conference leader in blocks with 2.16 per game.

"They have good depth," Gregory said. "Gowell is a real strong attacker and she's a real challenge for us. But their setter is inexperienced. I hope we have an edge there because Molly (McGrath) is a really seasoned player."

McGrath will play this week after an illness kept her out of practice on Wednesday. Gregory said tonight she will be ready to play.

"I think she will be ready to go," he said. "She's had enough time to recover."

Arizona's primary player is Terry Lauchner, a two-time all conference selection who averages 4.72 kills and 3.63 digs per game. The Wildcats are also 2-3 in conference play after splitting with

Stanford and Cal last weekend, losing to the Cardinal and beating the Bears.

"Arizona is a big, strong, physical team," Gregory said. "They usually jump high and they're a tough and challenging team."

The Wildcats, like the Sun Devils, have an inexperienced setter.

"I think if there is an area that is less experienced," Gregory said, "that would be the situation with both teams."

When the Ducks play Arizona Saturday night, it will be a rematch of two teams that faced each other in the first round of the NCAA playoffs a year ago. Gregory said there might be a little rivalry involved.

"I think that's probably always the case," he said. "When someone beats us, we are pretty motivated to come back and play that much stronger."

Arizona State also created a lot of problems for us last year too, so we respect them," Gregory said. "They are quality opponents, and we would like to reverse the outcome from last year."

Gregory said the Ducks have been working on defensive blocking assignments, and have also been inserting some new plays into the offense. The Ducks will have to get their serves in and improve their serve receiving if they plan to win this weekend, he said.

"We've been working on our blocking, and doing some different things than we have in the past," he explained. "We are also throwing in some new offensive options in each rotation."

Although this weekend's matches are important, Gregory said, every weekend in the Pac-10 is pivotal.

"Every weekend in the Pac-10 is warfare with a projectile," he said.

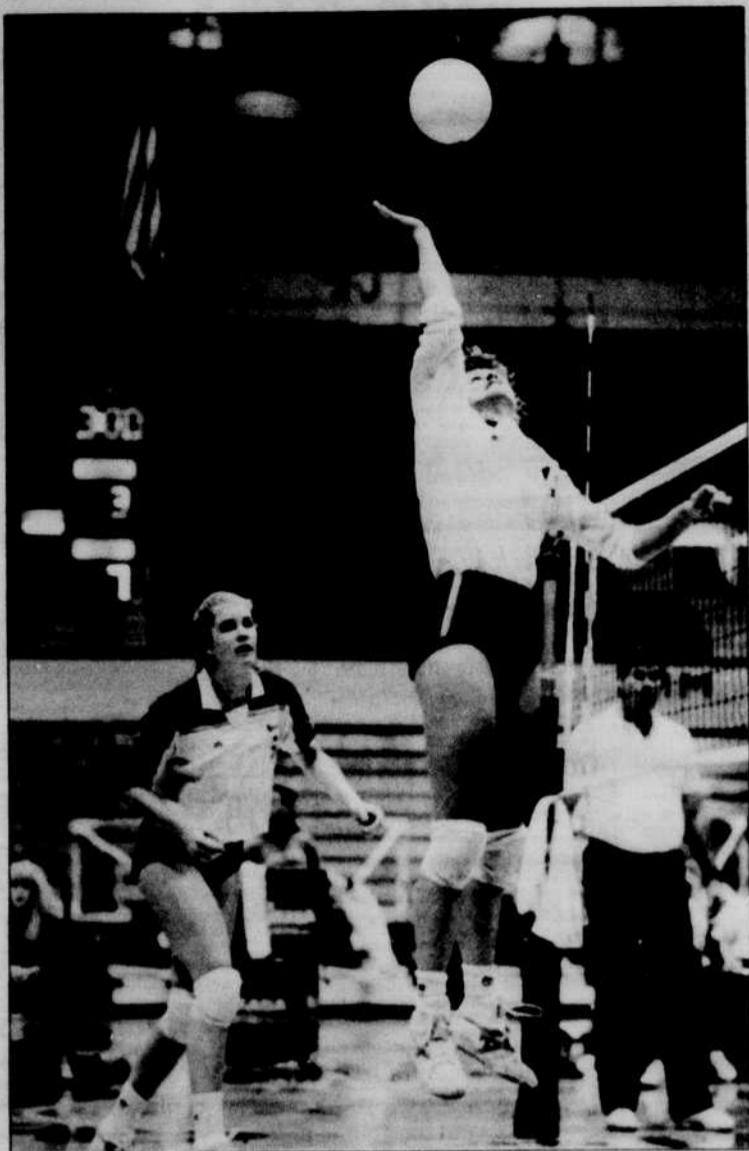


Photo by Sean Poston

Duck volleyball players Mindee Adams (at net) and Dawnn Charroin will square off against Pac-10 opponents Arizona State and Arizona this weekend at Mac Court. (F1)

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