

SPORTS

Ducks once again plagued by errors in losses

Oregon swept in two doubleheaders

By Jason McAllister
Emerald Contributor

Nobody said life in the Pacific-10 Conference would be easy.

The Oregon softball team is discovering just how brutal a league featuring four top 10 teams can be as they were swept at home over the weekend by third-ranked Arizona and eighth-ranked Arizona State.

Arizona stopped the Ducks on Saturday, 3-2 and 5-0, and Arizona State followed with a 6-5, 4-1 sweep on Sunday. Oregon is now 0-8 in Pac-10 play and 17-19 overall.

Defense has been Oregon's weakness all year, and errors played a key role in both doubleheaders.

In game one against Arizona State, a mishandled throw on a potential double play ball led to two Sun Devil runs in the top of the seventh inning.

Oregon rallied for two runs of its own in the bottom of the inning on singles by Marnie McCall and Anna Poore, but with the tying run on second base, Arizona State pitcher Karey James came on to strike out Laurie Fleischauer and Kelly Finley to end the game. Oregon's Rachelle Taylor (8-9) took the loss, surrendering 10 hits and four earned runs.

"Errors were our downfall again," Coach Tami Brown said. "When (the players) learn their positions better, we'll be successful."

Brown has made several changes recently with Kim Manning and Patty Pyles traded positions to centerfield and shortstop, respectively, while backup catcher Laura Schmidt moved to the starting third base job. Oregon committed 11 errors in the four games.

Sunday's second game wasn't as close, as the Sun Devils slammed 11 hits off pitcher Natasha Dumoski (2-3). Meanwhile, the Ducks were held to only four hits.

Saturday's action also featured a tight first game, as Oregon rallied from a 3-0 deficit to pull within 3-2 with the bases loaded in the sixth inning, but couldn't produce the key hit.

| Pac-10 Softball | | | |
|-----------------|------|---------|--------|
| | Conf | Overall | Games |
| | W-L | W-L | Behind |
| UCLA | 7-2 | 39-3 | — |
| Arizona State | 6-2 | 34-11 | ½ |
| California | 7-3 | 35-13 | ½ |
| Arizona | 5-3 | 43-8 | 1½ |
| Oregon St. | 0-7 | 9-22 | 6 |
| Oregon | 0-8 | 17-19 | 6½ |

"Unearned runs have hurt us all year," Brown said. "The pitchers are doing a great job, and we hit the ball a ton. We have to start doing everything right instead of just some things right."

In the second game against the Wildcats, the Ducks were victimized by four errors. Taylor, the game one loser, started game two as well, but allowed three hits and four runs, three of them unearned, before Dumoski came on to shut down Arizona. Oregon had just three hits in being shutout.

Oregon did fare better against Stanford Friday. The Cardinal, playing softball for the first time since 1985, isn't in the Pac-10 in the sport.

The Ducks showed their strength with 11-0 and 12-0 victories, respectively.

Oregon took advantage of an inexperienced Cardinal pitching staff, hammering out 21 hits in the doubleheader.

Taylor threw a no-hitter in the first game, striking out six. At the plate, Anna Poore had three hits, including a two-run home run to end the game, and finished with seven RBI.

At 17-19 overall, Oregon will be hard pressed to earn a third straight invitation to the NCAA Tournament with 16 games left to play, mostly against higher ranked conference foes.

Regardless of Oregon's post-season chances, Brown said her goal remains the same.

"I just want to get the kids to play the best ball they can play," she said. "We'll come around, I know we will."

| First Game | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------|--|
| Arizona St. | 1 0 0 0 3 0 2 | — 6 10 4 | |
| Oregon | 1 0 0 0 2 0 2 | — 5 8 3 | |


| Second Game | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------|--|
| Arizona St. | 0 2 0 2 0 0 0 | — 4 11 1 | |
| Oregon | 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 | — 1 4 2 | |

James, Wood (6) and Serritella, Dumoski and Simmons. W - James. L - Dumoski (2-3).



Oregon's Kim Manning slides safely into second base in Sunday's doubleheader loss to Arizona State.

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