

# Pilots never get off ground, Oregon wins and goes 8-2

By Jake Berg  
Emerald Sports Editor

Coach Elwin Heiny knows his Oregon women's basketball team is good. The team knows it's good. Except the crowd ultimately gives the Ducks a little too much credit.

When forward Kelly Blair found herself all alone at Oregon's end of the court in Tuesday night's 85-71 win over Portland at McArthur Court, the sophomore pulled up her dribble and prepared to lay the ball in.

A young fan's voice from the stands went up with Blair.

"Dunk it!" the youngster chirped.

Sorry, kid, the Ducks are good, not gods.

But what Oregon has overcome to finish its pre-season 8-2 makes the Ducks look like they have been blessed with the graces of those above.

"I thought we did a very good job considering we played so many players," said Heiny, who let his entire roster see action in the game. "We had a number of players who played very well. I felt we really didn't lose that much with the bench. I think we may have even gained some."

The reserves, who accounted for 51 of 81 points during a win over Montana State in the Ducks' last game, again shined on the court, scoring 38 on the starters' 47. The Oregon bench more than doubled the output of the Pilots' reserves, who totaled just 18.

Freshman guard Jessica Schutt again made an impression off the bench, pouring in 14 points, including 3 of 6 three-point shooting. Schutt scored 20 off the bench against Montana State.

Center Sara Wilson, starting in her first game of the season, had the hot hand for the Ducks,

knocking down 8 of 12 shots for a team-high 20 points.

Wilson missed the Ducks' opening nine games because of mononucleosis and a foot injury, and despite her impressive statistics — which also included a game-high 14 rebounds, the sophomore said she still was not 100 percent.

"I say I was at 50 or 60 percent," Wilson said.

Not bad for running on less than full steam, and an impressive performance, being it her first start since a month-long vacation with a cast. And Wilson will be pressured to perform as well with the debut of the Pacific-10 Conference season waiting at UCLA Friday and with star forward Debbie Sporcich out for four to six weeks with a foot injury.

"Sara and Debbie add a new dimension," Heiny said. "I just hope Debbie's here for the second half of the Pac-10 season."

The Ducks did fine without Wilson, and nearly the entire pre-season, and Tuesday they looked equally at ease without Sporcich, who did not start for the first time in her collegiate career.

Oregon missed its first six shots of the game and found itself down 2-1 for the only time in the game before the offense turned up the heat. The Ducks took off from the Pilots on a 23-7 tear that gave Oregon a 30-12 cushion that was never threatened.

Portland, which saw a deficit as large as 24 points in the game, closed to within 13 in the half and even cut the lead to 13 again later, but the game was out of reach.

The Pilots' Martha Sheldon led the game with 34 points, the fourth occasion the senior has cracked the 30-point barrier.

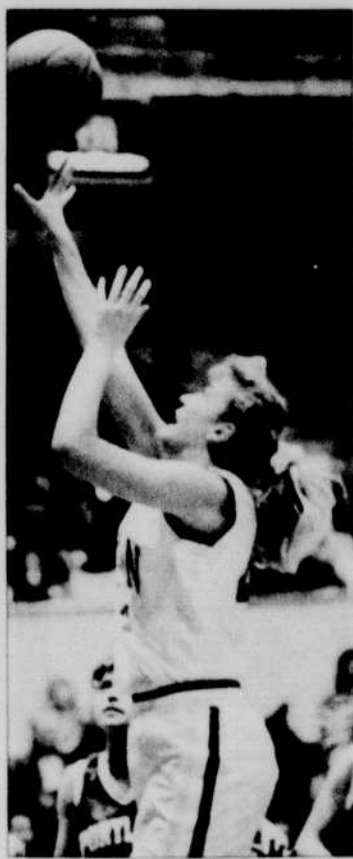
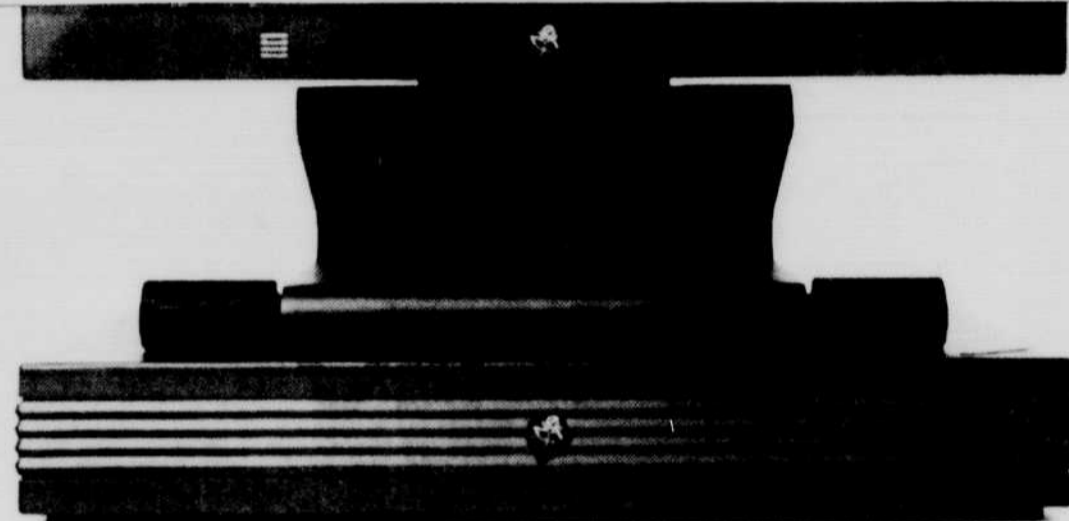
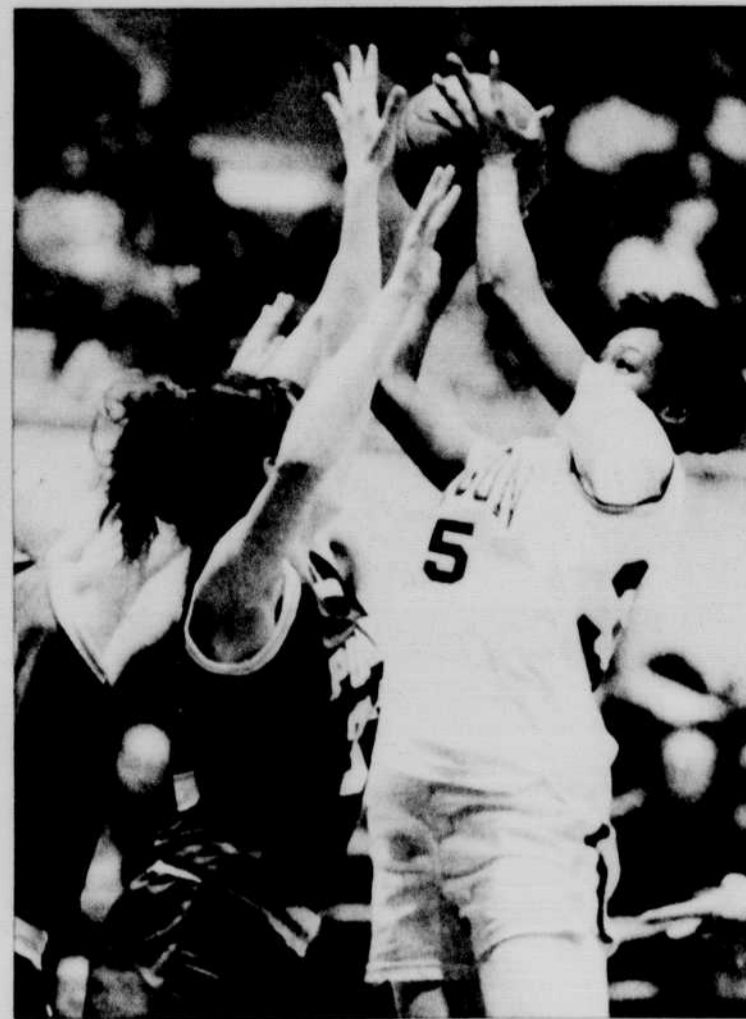


Photo by Jeff Paslay  
Sara Wilson (above) and Iesha Smith (right) helped lead the Ducks over the University of Portland 85-71 Tuesday night at Mac Court. The 8-2 Ducks will face UCLA Friday in California.



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