

Oregon goes to dogs in home court match

By Doug Carter
Emerald Contributor

Every basketball game consists of two twenty-minute halves. In order to win you have to be awake for both of them.

Oregon dozed off at intermission and let ninth-ranked Washington spoil the Ducks' upset dreams Saturday night, eventually falling to the 'Dawgs, 71-66, in front of McArthur Court's 1,188 spectators.

Following the game, Oregon coach Elwin Heiny tried to counteract the somber atmosphere outside the locker room by searching for a bright side. But he couldn't help but think of what might have been.

"It was a game we could've won," Heiny said. "We had too many unforced turnovers and missed a lot of easy shots."

Two misses on the front end of one-and-ones in the final five minutes cost the Ducks dearly.

That and the fact they couldn't keep the Huskies off the offensive glass.

"They go to the boards harder than most Pac-10 teams," sophomore guard Missy Stowell said. "They had more offensive rebounds (eight) than defensive (six) in the first half."

Second chances enabled the Huskies to stay in the game, as they rebounded — literally — from two first-half deficits of eight points.

Oregon coasted ahead 19-14 on the strength of a six-point run and enjoyed its biggest lead at 33-25 with the aid of a 15-4 burst, highlighted by four lay-ups and a bomb for three by Stowell.

Despite the huge difference in field-goal percentage for the half — Oregon shot 74 percent (17 of 23) to Washington's 37 percent (11 of 30) — the Ducks had just a slim four-point lead going into the locker room.

After starting the second half with a three-point play by senior guard Staci Wallenborn, the Ducks went flat.

Three minutes later the Huskies regained the lead, 43-42, in the midst of a 10-0 run. The hustling Ducks who pushed the ball up the floor for easy shots so effectively in the first half never returned.

"We need to work on coming out strong in the second half," Wallenborn said. "During the

rest period we can lose some intensity. It happened earlier in the year against Texas A&M and Washington State."

The Ducks were able to recover against the Cougars, but poor second-half shooting (10 of 32 for 31 percent), and too many turnovers make it hard to beat a top-ten national power like Washington.

"They know what to do when they get the kind of opportunities we gave them," Heiny said. "With their experience they know how to turn it on at the end."

One such Husky who answered the call was junior guard Laura Moore, who was three of six from three-point land and finished with 13 points.

"We were supposed to guard her (Moore) the minute she walked in the door," Heiny said. "She showed us her amazing range."

Wallenborn finished with a game-high 16 points for the Ducks, and junior guard Vanessa Selden added 11 points and nine assists. Sophomore forward Kelly Blair also reached double figures, finishing five of seven from the field for a total of 10 points.

The loss is the Ducks' fifth straight to Washington, which has won 10 of the last 11 meetings between the schools.

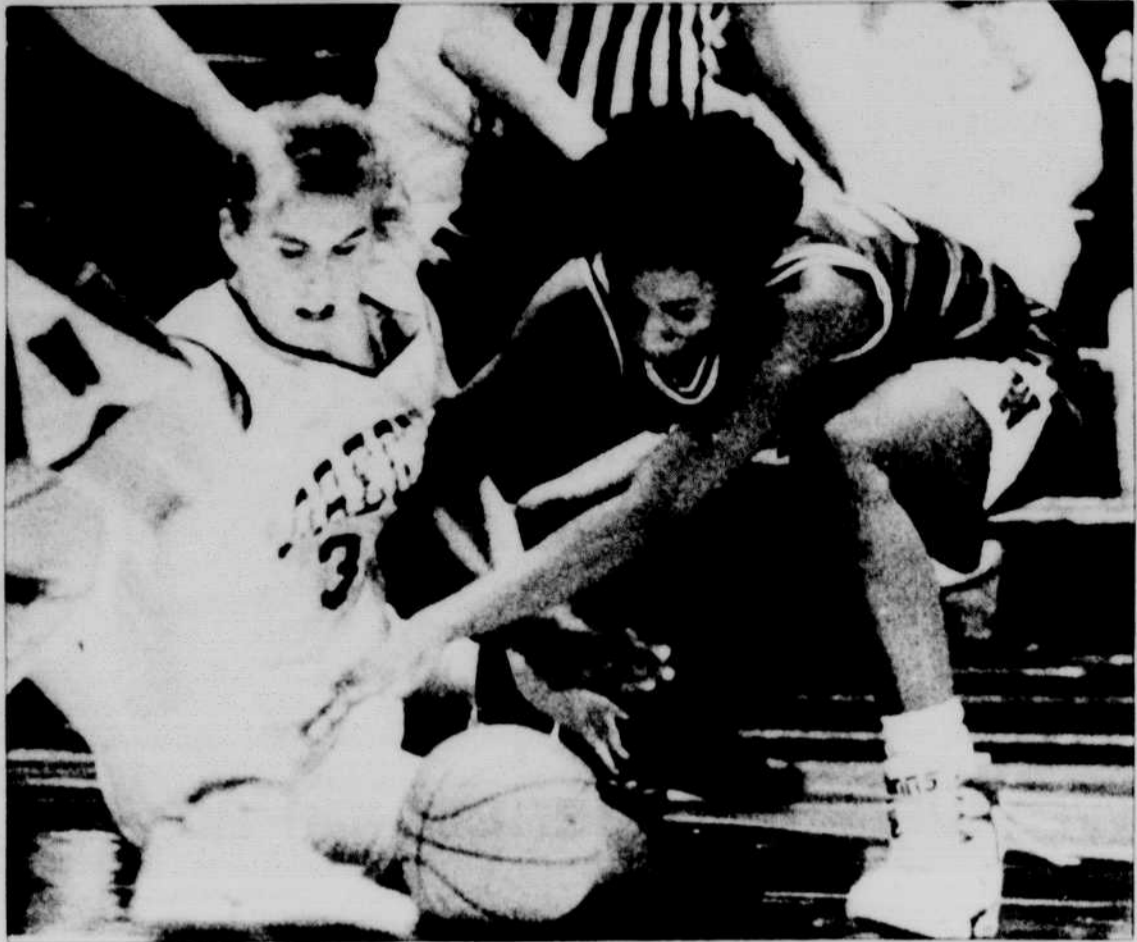
Sophomore center Sara Wilson, who collected a game-high nine rebounds in spite of an injured foot, put the game in perspective.

"It's a tough loss because we planned on winning our home games," Wilson said. "We know how tough it is to win on the road in this conference."

And this week it's off to the road for the Ducks, who open a three-game road-trip at Arizona on Thursday. Oregon won't play in Mac Court's friendly confines again until its Feb. 6 date with California.

Heiny thinks his team will be up for the challenge.

"We gave Washington a good game and had a chance to win," Heiny said. "I think we've learned something that will have us better prepared next time."



Oregon sophomore guard Cindy Murphy grapples for a ball in Saturday's Mac Court match against Washington.

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