

Cal's three-pointers end Duck season at 6-21

□ Oregon's Orlando Williams shines with 27 points, but that wasn't enough to avoid a 87-76 loss

By Jayson Jacoby
Emerald Sports Reporter

Saturday night the Oregon men's basketball team tried to finish the Pacific-10 Conference season the same way it started it, but a late run fell short and the Ducks closed out the year with an 87-76 loss to California in Berkeley.

The Ducks, who beat the Golden Bears 67-57 in the league opener Jan. 9, narrowed a 14-point lead to just three at 73-70 when Johnnie Reece tipped in Antoine Stoudamire's miss.

But the Bears, who seemed to get a three-pointer whenever they needed one Saturday, got a trey from Bill Elleby and scored the next seven points to put the Ducks away.

The loss dropped Oregon's record for this long, long season to 6-21 overall. The Ducks finished last in the Pac-10 with a 2-16 mark. Cal finished at 10-18 and 4-14.

The Ducks haven't had this bad of a record since 1957, when they finished 4-21. The 1971-72 team went 6-20, and the 1988-89 squad was 8-21.

Oregon might not have been in any position to win Saturday had Orlando Williams not shown up.

The redshirt freshman guard had career-highs of 27 points and nine rebounds, including four three-pointers.

Two of those treys came in the first five minutes, as the Ducks raced to a 15-7 lead.

Cal came back to take the lead at 25-24, but Williams tipped in a Stoudamire miss to give the Ducks their last lead at 32-31.

Then Elleby and freshman K.J. Roberts hit three-pointers as the Bears went on a 10-0 run to take a commanding 41-32 lead, eventually upping the ad-

vantage to 48-36 at halftime. Cal outscored the Ducks 17-4 in the final five minutes of the half, when Oregon also had five turnovers.

The Ducks didn't fade early in the second half as they did in Thursday's 70-47 loss to Stanford, and Stoudamire's basket with 13 minutes left brought the Ducks to within a point at 57-56.

But then Oregon's offense fell apart, committing four straight turnovers, leading to a 15-2 Cal run and a 72-58 lead. Roberts and Elleby each hit three-pointers following Oregon turnovers to close out the run.

The Ducks came back again, outscoring the Bears 12-1 in just over four minutes to get within 73-70 before Cal's decisive spurt.

Saturday's loss was in many ways typical of the entire season. Oregon played very well at times but was unable to handle defensive pressure during important stretches.

"I keep saying it, but I'm really proud of the kids," Oregon coach Don Monson said. "They hung in there."

More than anything, the turnovers killed the Ducks. Oregon gave the ball up 20 times Saturday, which led several times not only to Cal baskets, but to three-point baskets.

The Ducks outshot the Bears 52 percent to 46 percent, but Cal had 11 threes to Oregon's seven.

For once Oregon didn't rely solely on Stoudamire for points, but the Ducks offensive miscues more than made up for the scoring balance, which included Stoudamire's 22 points and Reece's 11.

Oregon's lone senior, Chuck

Patterson, had nine points and seven rebounds in his final collegiate game.

In the end, though, Cal had too much balance and too many treys.

Elleby led the Bears with 20 points, including four three-pointers. And, like Oregon, Cal relies heavily on freshmen. Lamond Murray had 19 points, Roberts had 17 — including five for seven threes — and Alfred Grigsby chipped in 16 points and nine rebounds.

Monson, who may have coached Oregon for the last time Saturday, said he will

have fond memories of this season regardless of the record.

"I enjoyed this season because of the kids," Monson said. "I've had seasons where I won more games but didn't enjoy it as much. These kids are getting better in a lot of areas. I told 'em in the locker room I wished they could have won more games."

Monson said he had no excuses for the team's record, but he couldn't help speculating about what might have been had the Ducks not lost three starters, including their two leading scorers, before the Pac-

10 season started. "You take any three starters off any team and give me my full team, and I'll play anyone," Monson said.

Monson, who finished with the worst record of his 14-year career as a college coach, said the Ducks will be a team to watch in the future, whether he's at the helm or not.

"I know a lot of people were disappointed this season, but Oregon fans are great," Monson said. "As our people come back and our kids come along, they'll have a good time in Mac Court and enjoy this team."

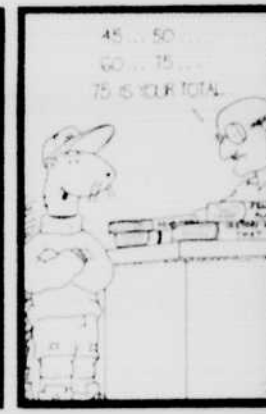
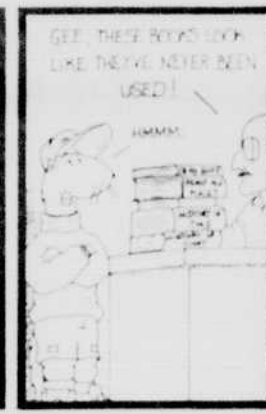
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