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# Bruins beat back Ducks, 83-76

By Jake Berg  
 Emerald Sports Editor

The end of the Oregon women's basketball season Saturday did not end the questions.

What if center Sara Wilson had not been injured before the season?

What if Debbie Sporcich did not miss half of the Pacific-10 Conference season with an injury?

What if all of the Ducks finished the year with a clean bill of health?

"A lot of what ifs," Oregon coach Elwin Heiny said.

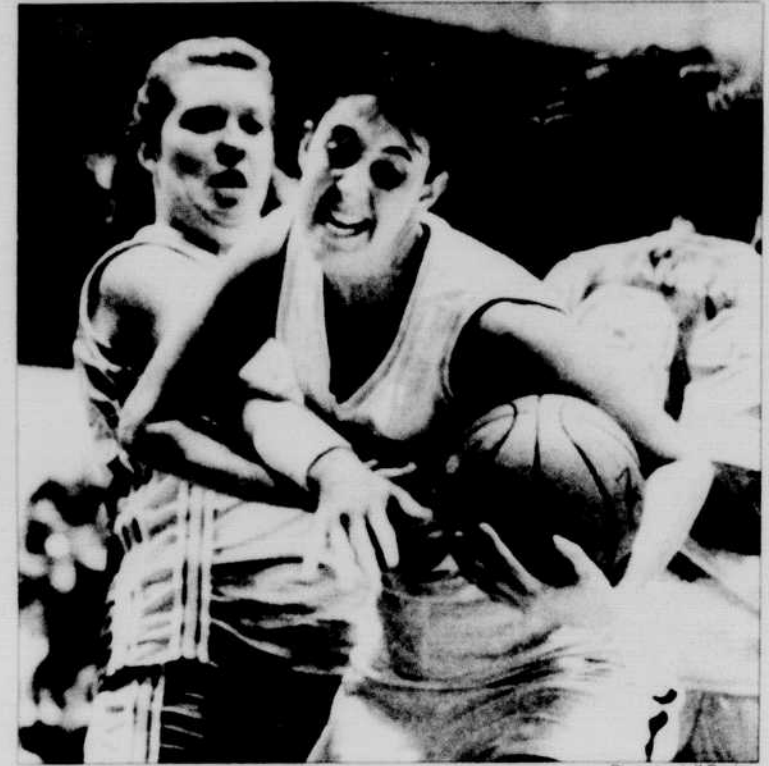
In fact, one of the few questions answered by the season-ending 83-76 loss to UCLA Saturday at McArthur Court was that the Ducks proved they could play with any team in the Pac-10, healthy or not.

Oregon may have lost nine of its final 11 contests, but rarely were the Ducks ever blown out in those games despite starting 12 different lineups before the weekend.

The Ducks played with the Bruins every minute of the game Saturday and played even closer with USC Thursday, and both teams were selected to go to the NCAA tournament Sunday morning.

"We have played well against a number of teams, even with people missing," Heiny said.

Though the record doesn't really show it, Oregon's season finished much better than one may have predicted, considering that only Missy Stowell took to the court in every game this year. The Ducks finished 14-14 overall — only the third non-winning season in Heiny's 16 years — and 6-12 for sev-



Oregon senior Marne Smith battles a Bruin for the ball in her last college game. She finished the contest with 10 points, 10 rebounds and two blocked shots.

enth place in the Pac-10.

"We didn't have a losing record," Heiny said, "and that's something."

But it could have ended on a better note. If not for an inhuman performance by UCLA sophomore Natalie Williams, who had 29 points and 22 rebounds, the Ducks may have won and bid seniors Staci Wallenborn and Marne Smith a fitting farewell.

Oregon held its largest — and last — lead of the game at 56-53 five minutes into the second half when UCLA took off. The Bruins exploded on a 12-2 run

that dimmed Oregon's hopes for an upset.

Williams began the rampage with a lay-in and ensuing free throw that tied the game at 56. The UCLA forward totaled six of the 12 points on the run, and the Ducks soon found themselves down 65-58 with only 10 minutes left in their season.

"We were at 58 ... forever," Heiny said.

It was an uphill struggle for Oregon the rest of the way, as the Bruins stretched their lead to as much as eight before win-

Turn to DUCKS, Page 13

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# Duck wrestlers have NCAA finals

By Erick Studenicka  
 Emerald Contributor

For the Oregon wrestling team, it will be "finals" week in more than one way, as five members of the squad will travel to Oklahoma City, Okla., for the 62nd Annual NCAA Wrestling Championships, March 19-21.

The five wrestlers qualified for the championships by placing in the top three at the Pacific-10 Conference meet held in McArthur Court last month. The qualifiers include conference champ Dan Vidlak and repeat NCAA qualifier Darren Gustafson, as well as Jarrett Clark, Pat Craig and Scott Myers.

Of the five, Vidlak appears to have the best shot for an individual title. The 118-pound senior has a season mark of 23-1 and dominated the Pac-10 meet, winning the conference's Most Outstanding Wrestler award.

Vidlak has already earned All-American honors twice, placing eighth and seventh in the past two NCAA tournaments. He is currently ranked second in the country.

Gustafson qualified for his second consecutive tournament by registering a 2-0 overtime win in the 158-pound third-place match at the Pac-10

meet. Of the five, Craig has had to overcome the most to qualify for the tournament. Throughout the year, he has wrestled with a dislocated shoulder and strained knee ligaments.

Two weeks before the Pac-10 tournament, doctors recommended that Craig not wrestle, but he chose to continue.

"I'll just have to get taped up and do my best," Craig said. "The worst thing about the injuries is that they force me to alter my wrestling style, so I'm not as effective as I normally would be."

Jarrett Clark, who has been ranked as high as 11th this year, could be the surprise of the tournament. Clark placed third in the Pac-10 meet behind two former All-Americans. His record this year is 24-7, second best on the Duck squad.

Myers, who took second in the Pac-10, is a senior making his first appearance in the NCAA meet. Myers took two years off from the sport before coming out again this year and finished the season with a 16-10 record.

Last year at the tournament, Oregon finished 14th, the second best finish in the school's history. Three Ducks earned All-American status last year at the tournament, the most in school history.

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