

Rugby team wins despite mud, sloppy play

By Steve Mims
Emerald Contributor

It wasn't pretty, but Oregon's rugby team advanced to the regional championships in Los Angeles next weekend with an 8-0 victory over Southern Oregon on Saturday.

"That was the worst game I've ever seen," Oregon head coach Bob Snyder said. "We have better athletes and more skilled players than them, but we played to their level."

The field was hit by a hard rain prior to kick-off and a steady sprinkle continued through most of the game. As a result, the field was muddy and contributed to the sloppy play of both teams.

The Ducks got a tough break on the first play of the game when all-star forward Steve Knaust suffered a bruised calf and was unable to return to the game.

"It was a loose play," Knaust said. "I was going for the ball when someone kicked me in the leg and bruised it."

Oregon overcame the loss and scored first when Dave Van Dyke took a pitch from Mark Rolland 10 yards for a try only six

minutes into the contest. Rolland, who normally plays in the backfield, was forced to move to forward after the injury to Knaust.

The Ducks had two other chances to score in the first half, but the Raiders forced them away empty-handed. The opening half was evenly played with most of the action coming in the middle of the field.

The second half was just as tight as the first, with the game in doubt until Oregon put it away on a Dick Dunn try with only two minutes left. The Ducks got possession of the ball on the five-yard line when Dunn took an inbound pass from Bob Pierce and dove over the goal to give the Ducks the 8-0 victory.

"It was a five-meter line-out, and they weren't ready," Dunn said. "I made eye contact with Bob, I got it and was able to squeak it through."

The Ducks must now face top-ranked California in the opening round of the regional championships in Los Angeles on Friday.

In other Oregon Club Sports news:

The Oregon men's club soccer team got its

spring season off on a sour note by losing to Oregon State and Willamette over the weekend.

The Ducks were encouraged by their 3-0 defeat at Oregon State on Friday, as it was a marked improvement from their 8-1 loss to the Beavers in the fall. The game was scoreless at halftime before Oregon State came out and scored three times in the second half.

The improved play against the Beavers gave Oregon an optimistic approach heading into its game on Sunday. Willamette had some trouble moving its clocks ahead in the morning and showed up one-half hour late. By the time it was over, the Ducks probably wished they hadn't waited for them.

The first half was dominated by Oregon, but the Ducks couldn't get a shot past Willamette goaltender Peter Hart, and the half ended scoreless.

Willamette came out much more aggressive in the second half and it paid off when Derek Hunera headed a crossing pass into the net for the game's only score with 10 minutes left.

Cardinal wins NCAA title again

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Stanford won its second NCAA title in three years Sunday with one veteran and one new, fresh face.

Junior center Val Whiting had 17 points and 13 rebounds and freshman forward Rachel Hemmer had 18 points and 15 rebounds as the Cardinal defeated Western Kentucky 78-62. The victory margin matched the largest ever in a women's NCAA championship game, achieved on three other occasions.

The Cardinal (30-3), members of the Pacific-10 Conference, beat the Lady Toppers (27-8), playing in their first-ever NCAA championship game, without hitting a basket in the final 9:59.

After the Cardinal took its biggest lead, 65-44, with 10:01 to play, Western Kentucky capitalized on turnovers and climbed back into the game with a 15-3 run, cutting the lead to nine on Kim Pehlke's fourth three-pointer of the day and Trina Wilson's free throw with 2:23 left to play. The Cardinal made 13 of 17 free throws after hitting its last field goal.

Junior point guard Molly Goodenbour, a member of Stanford's 1990 championship team, was named the tournament's most outstanding player, with Whiting and Hemmer making the all-tourney team, along with Pehlke and Virginia's Dawn Staley.

Goodenbour had 28 points and 12 assists in the Final Four, hitting four key three-pointers in the Cardinal's 66-65 victory over top-ranked Virginia in the semifinals.

Pehlke finished with 16 points, and Liesa Lang added 18 points and 12 rebounds.

Leading 37-27 at the half, Stanford quickly padded its lead, moving ahead 59-35 on three free throws by Chris Hedgpeth with 13:20 to play. She scored 10 points during the spurt and finished with 17.

The Cardinal took charge of the first half with a 15-6 run that turned a 17-16 Western Kentucky lead into an eight-point Stanford advantage with 4:20 left in the half.

The Toppers shot 28.6 percent in the game.

Hemmer scored 10 of the Cardinal's first 18 points and finished the period with 12. She and Chris MacMurdo controlled the boards, combining for 17 rebounds.

The Lady Toppers, who beat Southwest Missouri State 84-72 in the semifinals, played in the 1985 and '86 Final Fours, losing in the semifinals each time. This year, they entered the tournament seeded fourth in the Midwest and upset top-seeded Kentucky and No. 2 seed Maryland on the way to Los Angeles.

Stanford, which defeated Auburn to win the 1990 title, was beaten in the semis last year by eventual champion Tennessee.

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