

## MEN

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one of the most experienced Ducks and said he felt good things were ahead for Oregon.

"I have a hope I haven't felt in a while," Potter said. "I hope we can continue to have these feelings of confidence. Our offense clicked a little better. I just think we're a better team (than last year), and it's a better atmosphere. It's going to turn around, hopefully."

Freshman point guard Kenya Wilkins had his biggest offensive output of the season against the Beavers, scoring 23 points. Wilkins made three of four three-pointers and 10 of 15 free throws. Wilkins said he is also starting to feel positive changes for the Ducks.

"Our attitude is still good," Wilkins said. "The group is tight and this tournament is going to help us. We're going to play hard and play to win."

Oregon's next objective was to end its 27-game

road losing streak against Division I opponents, and the Ducks did that two nights later with a 76-70 win over St. Mary's in Moraga, Calif.

The Ducks got a huge performance from guard Orlando Williams, who scored a career-high 33 points and grabbed eight rebounds. Williams, Oregon's best outside shooter despite having his shooting percentage hover around 40 this year, made nine of 12 shots, including six of eight from three-point range.

Oregon connected on 21 of 39 shots against the Gaels, including a five-for-five performance from forward Damon Runyon, who scored 16 points. Runyon's been the deadeye Duck lately, hitting on 13 of 15 shots during the past three games.

The Ducks will have one more chance to get things in order before the beginning of the Pacific-10 Conference season when they meet Alaska-Fairbanks tonight at McArthur Court. Following that game, the Ducks head right into the Pac-10 meat grinder with a date at UCLA Thursday.

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Ducks shot .633 from the field in the last 20 minutes, but San Diego State countered by making almost 70 percent of its field goal attempts in the second half.

Sporcich made 13 of 14 shots against the Aztecs and finished with 31 points and 11 rebounds.

"It was hard for us to simulate in practice the kind of pressure we saw in that game. We don't have the kind of quickness they do," Runge said. "It was hard to get any calls down the stretch."

Runge said Oregon's post players "have really come into their own" during the last three weeks. Sporchich and Wilson are getting help from players such as guard Missy Croshaw, .434 from three-point range, whose outside shooting has helped create scoring opportunities in the paint.

Now, Oregon turns its attention to its game against UTEP at 4:30 p.m. today. Runge expects to see another quick team that will try and press against Oregon but may have problems matching up with the Ducks' size inside.


"They will probably press us, but it's not like we haven't had to deal with pressure before. Hopefully we will react well and not dig ourselves a hole early," Runge said.



FILE PHOTO

Oregon's Debbie Sporchich made 13 of 14 shots and scored 31 points in the Ducks' loss to San Diego State last week.

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