

# Women's basketball uses free throws to beat Bruins

By Scott Simonson  
Oregon Daily Emerald

A few dribbles, a deep breath and some concentration. Nothing but net. Repeat 28 times and beat UCLA.

Oregon's women's basketball team shot 93 percent from the free-throw line and made its last 10 free throws down the stretch to beat UCLA 82-77 at McArthur Court on Thursday night.

The Ducks outscored the Bruins 29-13 from the foul line, missing only two free throws in the game. Oregon, 7-3 and 1-0 in the Pacific-10 Conference, managed only one field goal in the final five minutes of the game but was able to stave off a late comeback by UCLA, which trailed by double figures for most of the second half.

The game was Oregon's first win in a Pac-10 opener since the 1989-90 season. Forward Debbie Sporcich had 24 points, 16 rebounds and four assists. She led the Ducks in all three categories.

"It feels good. That's the first time in four years," Sporcich said. "We're happy with the way we played. It feels great to win."

"This Pac-10 season means so much to these kids. They want to win with everything that's within them," Oregon head coach Jody Runge said. "They played hard. They played like they wanted it tonight and

fought off a strong run by UCLA."

After a 39-39 score at half-time, Sporcich scored eight points in the first five minutes of the second half to ignite an 18-5 run. The Ducks pounded the ball inside on offense, while UCLA continued to miss from the outside and to struggle with Oregon's zone defense.

Oregon appeared in control and about to cruise to victory until UCLA's perimeter shooters caught fire. The Ducks led 75-62 with more than five minutes remaining before the Bruins, led by reserve forward Allison Arredondo, scored 11 unanswered points.

After a basket by Bruin forward Natalie Williams brought UCLA within two points with 2:34 remaining, Oregon called time out. Oregon guard Missy Croshaw hit a clutch three-point basket on the ensuing possession to extend the Ducks' lead to five.

The final two minutes was a defensive struggle, with both teams making mistakes on offense. "We didn't lose our confidence. We were just mad that they were coming back," Sporcich said.

"That's where we got down and competed, which we have learned to do, and that helped us get through it," she said.

UCLA trailed by two with 1:21 remaining when Williams, who led UCLA with 18 points,

went to the foul line and missed the front end of a one-and-one. Oregon turned the ball over on its next possession and was forced to foul Williams to prevent a fast break basket.

With 17 seconds remaining, Williams made the first free throw but missed the second. Oregon forward Jessica Schutt grabbed the rebound. UCLA tried to foul Schutt to get the ball back and was called for an intentional foul.

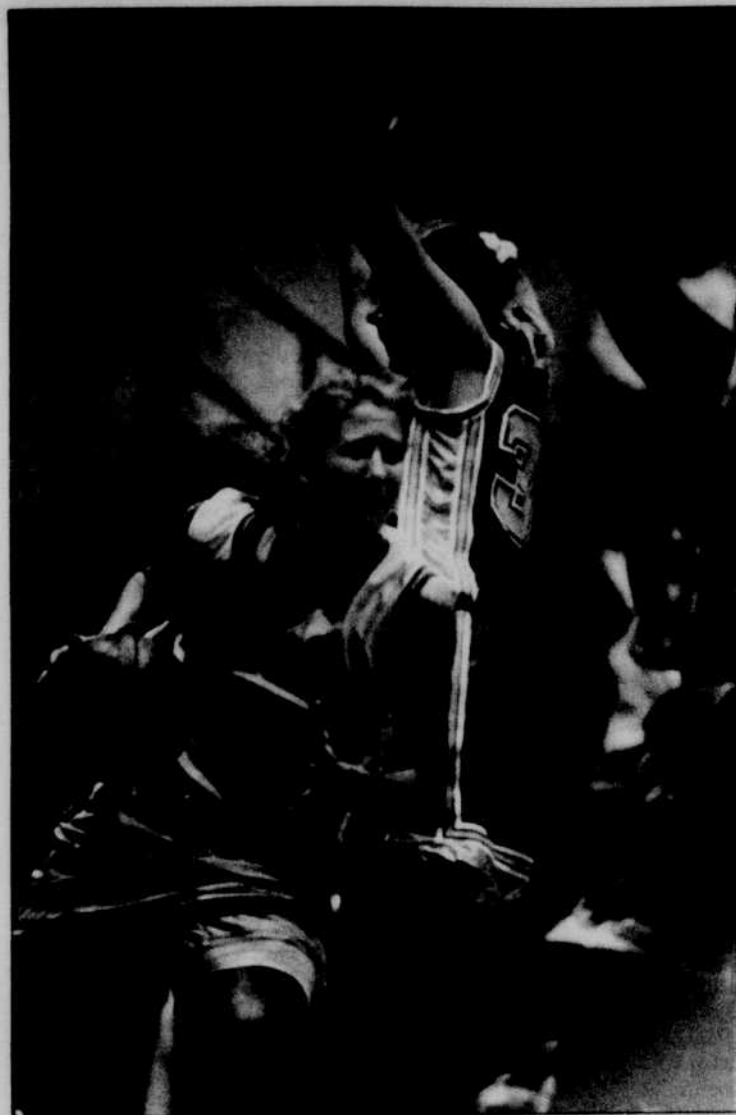
Schutt made both shots to give the Ducks an 80-77 lead. Croshaw was fouled after the inbounds pass, and her two free throws with 10 seconds left iced the game.

Oregon, shooting 66 percent from the foul line on the year, was 17 of 18 from the line in the second half.

"Coach Runge believes we're a second-half team, and I think that we believe we're a second-half team. When it comes down to it, whoever outplays each other in the second half is going to win the game," Croshaw said.

Center Sarah Wilson had 15 points and 12 rebounds for Oregon. Forward Arianne Boyer also scored 15, and Schutt and Croshaw scored 10 apiece.

Defense and rebounding were both strong points for the Ducks. Oregon held UCLA to a .384 field goal percentage, compared to .472 for Oregon, and outrebounded the Bruins 42-37.



MARK MCTYRE for the Emerald  
Forward Debbie Sporcich led Oregon in points, rebounds and assists in an 82-77 victory over UCLA on Thursday.

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