

Duck women fall just short of upsetting USC

By Scott Simonson
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon women's basketball team came within two points of beating the No. 10 team in the nation Saturday night. The Ducks weren't at all happy with the result.

After Oregon's 47-45 loss to USC at McArthur Court, nobody talked about how close a team picked to finish near the bottom of the Pacific-10 Conference came to a major upset. It was a loss that easily could have been an Oregon victory.

The game was a sometimes ragged, sometimes ugly defensive struggle, with both teams shooting less than 30 percent from the field and less than 50 percent from the free-throw line

for the game.

"We got good shots both off our zone offense and off our man offense, and they wouldn't fall," Oregon head coach Jody Runge said. "I have no explanation for why that is except for that maybe we're just really tired and we couldn't finish."

"They just outthrustled us," USC head coach Cheryl Miller said. "We came out very sluggish in the first half, and we are damn lucky to get out of here with a 'W,'" she said.

Both teams started slowly, and neither ever caught fire. The first half featured far more turnovers (27) than field goals (16). Oregon led for the first nine minutes of the game, building as much as a five-point lead in the

early going.

The Ducks trailed 22-17 at halftime. Oregon's Sara Wilson carried the Ducks in the first half, scoring 11 points and pulling down five rebounds.

USC scored the first two baskets of the second half and took a 27-17 lead, but Oregon fought back. Guard Missy Croshaw knocked down a couple of shots from the outside, and Oregon continued to hold its own rebounding and on defense.

However, consistent offense eluded both teams. The Trojans, who are allowing opponents to shoot only 33 percent from the field on the season, were both fast and physical on defense. USC didn't shut down the Oregon offense, but it didn't allow easy



MARK McTYRE/For the Emerald

Oregon center Sara Wilson was tough inside for the Ducks, scoring 16 points and pulling down 13 rebounds, in a 47-45 loss to No. 10 USC.

shots or cheap baskets, either. Oregon's matchup zone was equally tough on the Trojans.

Oregon tied the game at 35-35 and at 38-38 but could not retake the lead. Zone defenses dominated, with neither team able to hit shots or get its high-scoring forward involved. Oregon's Debbie Sporcich made three of 15 shots and finished with 11 points. USC's Lisa Leslie was four of 16 and had 10 points.

A Wilson jumper in the lane finally put Oregon ahead 41-40 with 3:13 left before USC scored seven unanswered points. A rebound basket by Sporcich with six seconds left brought Oregon within two, but the Ducks were

unable to foul before the clock ran out.

Wilson led Oregon in scoring with 16 points. Croshaw added 15. Wilson was the leading rebounder for Oregon with 13.

"I think we were disappointed in the enthusiasm we had for the game," Croshaw said. "We were in the game, but we weren't playing as well as we could."

"Jody is a fighter. She has this team believing in themselves. They believe they can play with everyone. Not only can they, but they believe. Once you put those two together and put them on their home court, they can beat anyone," Miller said.

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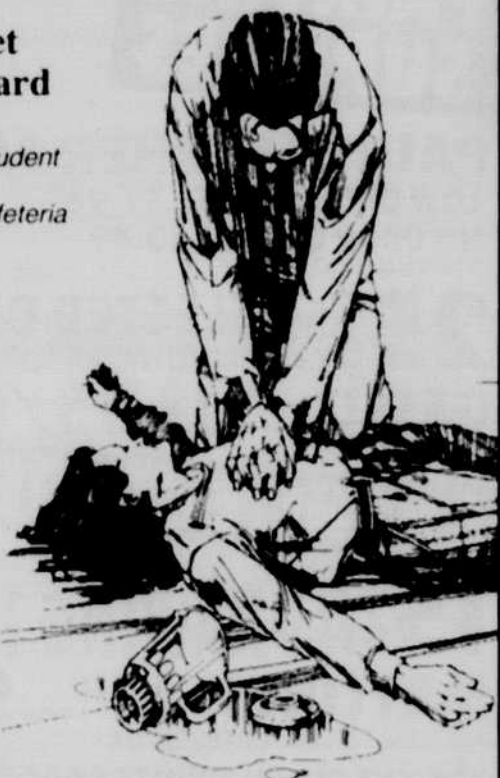
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