

Ducks victory over UCLA is Taylor-made

By Steve Mims
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon softball team's history against UCLA has read like a horror novel.

Entering Wednesday's meeting between the two teams, the Ducks had won only three of 27 games between the two teams. Oregon head coach Tami Brown had an even worse winning percentage against the Bruins, losing 12 of 13 contests with UCLA—including the last 11. Oregon pitcher Rachelle Taylor had always dreamed of beating UCLA, but her record against the Bruins was 0-7. No member of the Duck squad was ever part of a victory over UCLA.

Until Wednesday.

Taylor, 20-15 overall, 6-9 in the Pacific-10 Conference, pitched a complete game in game one of a doubleheader against the Bruins and sophomore Kim Kampfer gave the senior pitcher the RBI she had been waiting four years for, to lead the Ducks to a 3-2 win over the Bruins. UCLA got a split of the doubleheader, winning the night cap 2-1.

"It's been a goal of mine since I came to Oregon to beat UCLA," Taylor said.

It's not that Taylor had never

pitched well against the Bruins, but she had never got the offense her teammates provided Wednesday. Earlier this season, Taylor lost twice in a doubleheader against UCLA by scores of 1-0 and 2-0, allowing only three hits in the first game.

In fact Oregon's support of Taylor has been so bad that the three runs they provided Wednesday is more than they had combined in Taylor's seven losses to UCLA (37-11, 16-6). In those seven games, Oregon combined for two runs.

Oregon got its runs despite a strong performance by UCLA pitcher DeeDee Weiman, who allowed only five hits and struck out 15 Ducks with a mixture of rise balls and change ups.

Oregon (36-20, 12-12) took a 2-0 lead in the fourth inning on a two-run double by centerfielder Lisa Preston, but then for a moment it appeared it would be the defense behind Taylor, not the offense, that would cost her a chance for the win.

With one out in the fifth inning, UCLA's Kathi Evans hit a routine bunt down the third base line, but Oregon's Trina Salcido threw the ball away and Evans advanced to second. The next batter, Janae Deffenbaugh

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Rachelle Taylor and Laura Schmidt (18) celebrate their final regular season victory at Oregon, a 3-2 win over UCLA Wednesday.

Blair looking for the time to peak

By Dave Charbonneau
Oregon Daily Emerald

For Kelly Blair, winning is not necessarily the issue this weekend.

After all, the toughest challenger facing the reigning Pacific-10 Conference and NCAA heptathlon champion has a season high of 5,033 points in the event.

Blair's season high is 5,768, and her career high eclipses the 6,000-point mark.

So, Blair will go into this weekend's Pac-10 heptathlon competition in Pullman, Wash. as the overwhelming favorite.

The most important thing for Oregon's all-anything athlete is to get ready for the NCAA's — which she has already qualified for — and if winning the Pac-10 championship happens to be one of the preparation steps, then so be it.

"With my injuries I had earlier in the season, I had to take some time off," Blair said. "I need another heptathlon to see where I'm at physically. I think, because of the time I took off, I'm going to peak a little later than I have in the past."

A month ago, the entire women's track program held their collective breaths when Blair's foot swelled up after the Pepsi Team Invitational.

'I knew this year with all the redshirting and distance runners getting injured, I'd need to do well, especially in dual meet,'

Kelly Blair
PAC-10 and Heptathlon Champion

Slight ligament damage forced Blair to take it easy for a couple of weeks.

"Physically, I'm fine now," Blair said.

That was obvious last weekend when Blair won four events, leading the Ducks to a victory over UNLV and Boise State.

Blair has been a major contributor to the Ducks' scoring in meets this season. With injuries, redshirts and a little bad luck, Blair's importance to the team has grown.

"I knew this year with all the redshirting and

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