

Visiting Pilots bomb Ducks

Trevor Kearney
Oregon Daily Emerald

Facing a much improved University of Portland team, the Oregon volleyball squad fell to the Pilots in a four-game match on Wednesday night.

The Ducks lost the first game 15-7, but bounced back and took the momentum in the second game, winning 15-7. In the third game, after leading 7-4, the Ducks couldn't keep that momentum and ended up losing the game 15-10. The Pilots then put the match away by winning the final game 15-10.

"We just didn't hit the ball very well," head coach Gerry Gregory said. "Our mainstays were off tonight. We usually get a lot of production out of our outside hitters and right side hitters and tonight we didn't do very well with it."

"I credit Portland for some excellent defensive saves, (but) we hit a lot of balls out of bounds and some into the net."

Portland coach Patty Jayne, an Oregon assistant coach last year, has turned the program around in her first year. The team was 3-29 last year, but has improved to 13-15 so far this year.

"I think Patty Jayne's done a great job with that group," Gregory said. "She's a good coach and really has got them playing pretty near to their ability level right now."

Portland had a tough offense that seemed to be in the right place at the right time. The Pilot's middle blockers ignited the team,

as Danielle Kohl chalked up a team-high 15 kills and Gretchen Sanders had 19 digs with some clutch plays.

"We had a real tough time stopping their middle attackers," Gregory said. "(Sanders) really had a good match. I was happy to see her play well."

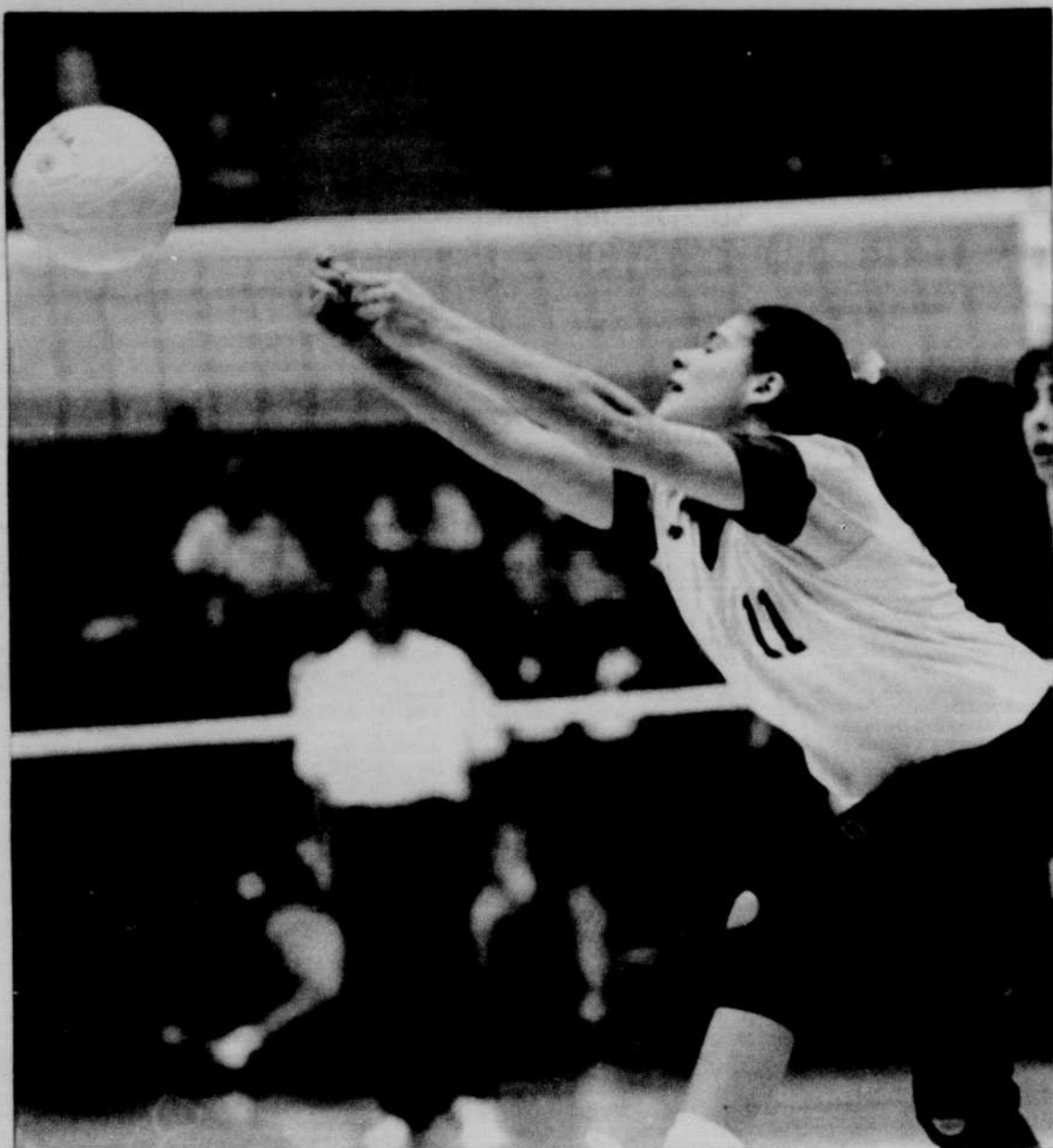
The Ducks were led to their second-game victory behind swing hitter Alison Pepe, who stepped up her play in the second game and finished with 8 kills and 15 digs overall. Bettina Roth and Angee Henderson combined for 28 kills, but the Ducks could not keep their offense consistent and played catch-up the whole match.

"I thought Allie Pepe did a good job to come in and spark us and I also thought Shelby Edwards played some great defense for us," Gregory said. "(Pepe) really sparked us, and that was the main reason why we were able to win that second game."

"We're just off a little bit on our offense and certainly our blocking wasn't there. Our defense was spotty. At times it was pretty good, but it wasn't consistently disciplined."

After losing the lead in the third game, the team's rhythm was off and they couldn't seem to get on track.

"There were lots of times when we had chances to make an easy play, to dig a ball and transition back," Gregory said. "There was miscommunication and we were not very organized."



GARY GRASS/Emerald

Defensive specialist Lara Weigel lunges for a dig in the Ducks' loss to the University of Portland on Wednesday.

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