

Women ready for Pac-10

Mark McTyre
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Duck women's basketball team begins its quest to reach the NCAA tournament for a second consecutive year as it opens its Pac-10 season tonight against the UCLA Bruins in Southern California.

Oregon (7-2) closed out its non-conference schedule last Tuesday at Mac Court with a convincing win over St. Mary's, 82-51.

After a close first half, 39-35, the Ducks pulled away from St. Mary's in the second half. The Ducks went on a 34-3 run behind the shooting of Renae Fegent, Arianne Boyer and Sally Crowe. The trio combined for 58 points on the night while forward Betty Ann Boeving chipped in for 11 points, eight rebounds and four assists.

Crowe, a newly-acquired guard who hails from the same Australian state as Fegent, has made an immediate impact on the Duck squad. The 5-9 transfer from Melbourne averaged 12 points and five assists a year ago while playing for Dendenong in the Women's National Basketball League.

Since her arrival at Oregon after the Ducks' second game of the season, she has averaged 11.8 points a game. Crowe is expected to have three years of eligibility remaining.

Crowe has filled the shoes of injured starting guard Karen Healea nicely during her absence. The Ducks' senior suffered a fracture of the fourth metacarpal on the back of her right hand during a practice in early December, and is figured to be out for another three to four weeks. The Ducks' only other senior, Jessica Schutt, also is out due to an injury.

Oregon looks to begin its league schedule right where it left off. Coming off their most successful non-conference slate in three years, the Ducks now must try to score victories at UCLA and USC where their record stands at 2-19 in the last 21 visits.

Last year, solid defense proved to be the key to success and second-year head coach Judy Runge has concluded that there is no reason to stray from that formula this season.

The Ducks ranked third in the conference in field goal percentage defense (40.1 percent) last year and fourth in scoring defense (66.7 points per game). They've improved on that so far during the 1994-95 season, leading the league while allowing opponents to shoot only 37 percent from the field in addition to scoring 65.2 points per game (fourth in the Pac-10).

Like Oregon, the Bruins have been forced to deal with a lot of new faces this season after the loss of four starters. The result has been some early-season inconsistencies as only a three-game winning streak over the likes of San Diego, Georgia Tech and North Carolina-Greensboro has interrupted the pattern of alternating wins and losses.

The outlook for the Bruins this year according to second-year head coach Kathy Olivier is



Arianne Boyer scored 19 points and pulled down nine rebounds in the Ducks' final non-conference against St. Mary's Tuesday.

OREGON STARTERS

- F - Betty Ann Boeving, #32
6-1, So.
- F - Arianne Boyer, #42
6-0, So.
- C - Renae Fegent, #43
6-3, Jr.
- G - Cindie Edamura, #21
5-6, So.
- G - Sally Crowe, #25
5-9, So.

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as follows: "We will play an up-tempo game, hoping to create scoring chances off of our defense. We will press at times, even applying full court pressure; but at the same time will be prepared to execute the half-court game. To be successful with this style, we must have the players in the best shape of their careers."

In her first season at the Bruin helm, Kathy Olivier guided UCLA to a 15-12 record with five wins over NCAA tournament teams.

Four games from season's end, the Bruins were seemingly in an excellent position for a

tournament bid of their own with a 15-8 record.

In the first half of the game at Stanford, All-American Natalie Williams went down with a season-ending knee injury. Without the Pac-10 Player of the Year in the lineup, the Bruins dropped their final four games, including a loss to the Ducks at home 76-68, missing the NCAA tournament.

After the Ducks encounter the Bruins at Poly Pavilion, Oregon will then square off against USC.

Despite the loss of All-American Lisa Leslie, the Trojans (7-1) enter tonight's game against Oregon State riding a six-game winning streak and a No. 21 national ranking.

As expected, last year's conference freshman-of-the-year Tina Thompson has led the way in five of the eight encounters, averaging 20 points and 10.5 rebounds while shooting 55 percent from the field. Providing the offensive punch from the outside is guard Karleen Shields, who is averaging 16.5 points a game.

These first two road games may prove to be a tough test for the Ducks and a possible sign of things to come.

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