

Oregon seeks improvement of starting record in Arizona

Mark McTyre
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon women's basketball team will put its 24th-ranking on the line starting tonight, as the Ducks hit the road for the first time in three weeks to face Arizona and Arizona State.

Oregon (11-3, 4-1), last year's surprise team of the Pacific-10 Conference, is threatening to do it all over again as the Ducks seek to put together their best start in 13 years. After losing their only Pac-10 match-up of the season, in a one-point squeaker to USC, the Ducks have been on a hot streak. Oregon has knocked off its last three opponents by an average margin of nearly 17 points a contest, including victories over nationally-ranked Oregon State and Washington. The women haven't reached this point of the season, with only three losses, since 1988-89, and haven't won 13 of their first 16 games since 1981-82.

The Ducks' quick start can be attributed mostly to the threesome of Renae Fegent, Arianne Boyer and Sally Crowe who have each scored in double figures in the last six games. Captain Jessica Schutt made her return from the injured list three games ago, and has already made her presence felt on the court scoring in double figures the last two games.

Along with the aforementioned, the Ducks have improved in almost all of their vital numbers. They've upped their scoring average to 78.8 points a game, their shooting percentage from the field to 50.4 percent, their rebounding margin to +3.2 and their turnover ratio to +5.2.

"I've always said that if they all would play the way they were capable of playing that we would have a really good basketball team," Runge said.

The Arizona Wildcats (8-9), Oregon's first opponents of its two-game road trip, have been held back by a challenging schedule. With seven of their nine losses coming to schools ranked in this week's top-25 poll, Wildcats' head coach Joan Bonvicini is counting on the intense competition paying off in the end for a young squad which features eight newcomers and only one senior. Included within that group is



Seldom flashy, Oregon's Cindie Edamura is considered by head coach Jody Runge as the most consistent player on an 11-3 team.

freshman forward Adia Barnes who ranks ninth in the Pac-10 in scoring and fourth in rebounding, averaging 16.1 points and 7.8 rebounds per game. Guard Brenda Pantoja also ranks third in the conference in assists (5.3 avg.).

On Saturday, the Ducks will visit the Arizona State Sun Devils (7-7) who have already bettered last year's 4-22 finish. Although Arizona only has one win to show for its efforts in the Sun Devils' past six games, they do sport a balanced scoring attack as five different players have led the team during their slump. Heading three players in double figures is senior guard

Tiffany Krahenbuhl, averaging 12.9 points a game in addition to ranking seventh in the conference in field goal accuracy (52.9 percent).

The Ducks have been successful over the years when facing the Arizona schools, owning a 14-4 advantage against the Wildcats and a 13-7 margin over Arizona State.

Oregon is taking these two games seriously. Although it would be easy for the Ducks to look over the Arizona schools, Oregon is taking these two games seriously.

"Right now we're just looking forward to Arizona and Arizona State," Boyer said.

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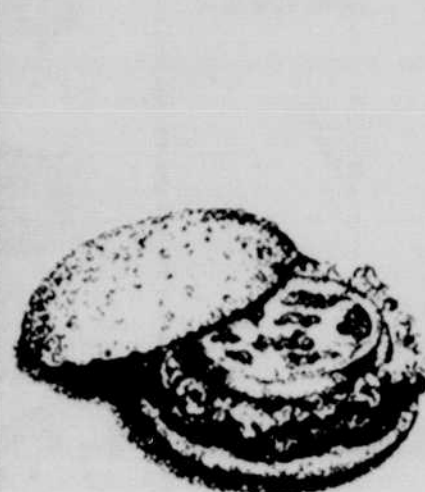
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