

Cougars and Ducks prepare for rematch

Game crucial for tournament hopes

Kris Henry
Oregon Daily Emerald

Saturday's matchup between Oregon and Washington State will involve two teams jockeying for position in the rugged Pacific-10 Conference.

The Cougars, 11-8 overall and 6-5 in conference, and the Ducks both find themselves nestled right in the middle of the league. A victory by either team could go far in the eyes of those determining NCAA tournament berths.

Winning on the road has not been a given for Washington State this season, as the Cougars have only one road victory this season.

Oregon nearly snuck out of Pullman with a victory in the first meeting between the two teams, but a controversial call by an official who incorrectly checked a television monitor enabled the Cougars to knock off the then 17th-ranked Ducks, 83-76.

Television monitors should be a non-factor this time around as the Ducks seek revenge on Saturday at 7:05 p.m. in McArthur Court.

Those feelings will probably focus on three key players for the Cougars: Donminic Ellison, Isaac Fontaine and Mark Hendrickson.

The trio highlight the list of Pac-10 leaders in assists, rebounds, scoring and field goal percentage.

Ellison and Hendrickson have each earned Pac-10 player of the week honors, making Washington State the only program with two different honorees this season.

Hendrickson scored nine of his 25 points in the final 1:47 in the first meeting between the two to pace the Cougars and give them their ninth win in a row on their own court. Fontaine poured in 27 points as the Cougars snuck up on the Ducks, who had been leading for a better portion of the game.



Washington State's Mark Hendrickson leads the Pac-10 in field goal percentage (.636) and is second in rebounding.

Rest and relaxation in the cards for WSU

Trevor Kearney
Oregon Daily Emerald

Going into Saturday's game against the No. 19 Oregon Ducks, Washington State coach Kevin Eastman knows he is facing a big game. But he isn't worried, though, because he has got a plan.

That plan, however, does not revolve around studying tapes of the Ducks late into the night. Nor does it involve practicing new plays around the clock. Rather, because traveling has taken a lot out of his team in the past, Eastman's plan revolves around rest and relaxation.

"It's tough to get to places," Eastman said of the team's travel schedule, adding that in a trip to Eastern Michigan, the team left Pullman early in the morning only to get to Michigan just in time for an evening practice.

"I think right now it is important for us to keep the legs fresh, minds fresh, have fun in the whole thing and play hard but relatively short," he said, adding that rigorous practices weren't in the team's near future. "When you kill people in practice, the only one who gets satisfaction is the coach. And I'm the least important factor in the equation."

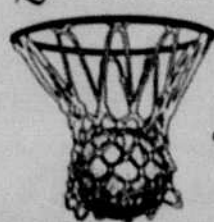
Eastman hopes that this plan can crack the pressure that McArthur Court puts on an opposing team while bringing his team out of the road slump that it has been in all season long. The Cougars have no road wins against Pac-10 opponents, and their only road win this year came against UTEP.

"The reason the road is tough in the Pac-10 is first and foremost good teams and good crowds," Eastman said. "The challenge for us is to try to win on the road. I just think it is time, and I told the players this yesterday, to produce. This is just one of those weekends where we have got to get it done."

Turn to EASTMAN, Page 12

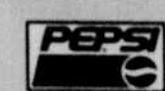
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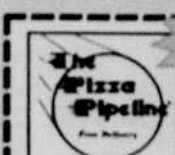


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