

Sideline

TODAY IN SPORTS

Wheaton sidelined for spring drills finale

For the Oregon football team, the bad news is that junior defensive back Kenny Wheaton will miss the spring football game after suffering a damaged medial collateral ligament in his left knee in last Saturday's scrimmage.

The good news for the Ducks — at least for now — is that it appears Wheaton will not need surgery. He will, however, be sidelined for three to six weeks.

The Ducks received more bad news, however, as three other Ducks that participated in spring drills are down with substantial injuries. Senior linebacker Derek Allen (back spasms), junior inside linebacker Jeff Branson (sprained ankle) and redshirt freshman safety Brandon McLemore (hip pointer) are all expected to miss the spring finale.

Oregon to compete at NCAA West Regional

MISSION, Kan. - Eighteen teams from the western half of the United States, including the University of Oregon, will compete for the right to advance to the NCAA Championships when they convene at The Champions Club in Omaha, Neb., May 9-11 for the NCAA West Regional.

The top 10 teams plus three individuals from the West Regional will advance to the NCAA Championships, May 22-25, at the LaQuinta Dunes Resort Course. The top eight squads and three individuals from the East Regional will also advance.

Oregon will be making its fourth-straight post-season appearance in just 10 years as a varsity program. The Ducks placed fourth at last year's regional, their best finish ever, and took 13th at the NCAA Championships to record their top national showing.

Ducks tied for 14th at Pac-10 Championship

The Oregon men's golf team finished tied for ninth through the first 36 holes in the Pacific-10 Conference Men's Golf Championships on Monday.

Leading the Ducks was freshman Derek Croskey, who shot a five-over par 149 to tie for 14th.

Stanford sophomore Tiger Woods leads the event while shooting a new course record of 61 and a 65 on the second day. His lead is at 14 strokes.

The Arizona State Sun Devils currently have the team lead with a 720 score. Oregon shot a two-day total of 764.

The tournament, hosted by USC and held at the Big Canyon Country Club in Newport Beach, Calif., continues through Wednesday.

Ducks look to get back on winning track

■ **SOFTBALL:** The doubleheader against Portland State is a make-up for a pair of rained-out games

By Chris Hansen
Sports Reporter

After a tough weekend against two of the top teams in the country, the Oregon softball team hopes to return to its winning ways when the NCAA Division II Portland State Vikings come to Howe Field for a non-conference afternoon doubleheader.

The Ducks (19-22 overall, 5-10 in the Pacific-10 Conference) and the Vikings (41-16) were first scheduled to meet this year on April 17, but the doubleheader was canceled because of rain. At that time the Ducks were on a hot streak, winners of seven straight games and 11 out of 13.

But the Vikings will meet a much different Duck team this afternoon, a team that has been afflicted with bad weather, bad bounces and bad timing.

Starting with the rainouts against Portland State, the Ducks have had nine other games canceled because of rain, including a streak of seven consecutive before this past weekend.

When the weather finally cleared up, the Ducks returned to action against Washington and UCLA, the No. 1 and No. 4 teams in the country. Oregon got swept by both teams because of some defensive errors that could be attributed to the team's inactivity.

Now the Ducks are losers of four-straight games and have not posted a victory since April 14. But what that doesn't indicate is that in those four losses, the Ducks by no means laid down and died. Those were four hard-fought victories for the winners. At times, Oregon showed signs of the spectacular play that enabled them to sweep then-No. 20 Arizona State for its most recent victories.

Portland State now must face an Oregon team that is hungry for a victory and eager to get back on the winning track.

The Vikings are led offensively by Michelle Guertin (seven home runs and 51 RBI) and defensively by pitcher Beth Stidham (22-8 and a 1.25 ERA).

The first game begins at 2 p.m., and admission is free for everyone.



EN MIN CHANG/ Emerald

Freshman catcher Jennifer Francis and the rest of the Duck squad look to gear up for today's game against Portland State.

Blazers win in OT, avoid first-round sweep

■ **NBA:** Game four will be played Wednesday night in Portland

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Buck Williams scored the go-ahead basket on an offensive rebound with 14.1 seconds left in overtime, and Portland overcame poor free-throw shooting to beat Utah 94-91 Monday night and stay alive in its first-round playoff series.

Utah still leads the best-of-5 series 2-1, with Game 4 Wednesday night in Portland's Rose Garden.

Williams grabbed a rebound off Arvydas Sabonis' missed hook shot and put back a layup to give the Trail Blazers a 93-91 lead. It was only Williams' second field goal of the game.

Utah had a chance to tie it, but John Stockton missed a 15-foot jumper and Portland's Harvey Grant grabbed the rebound with 3.5 seconds remaining.

Rod Strickland, who scored 16 of his 19 points after half-time, was fouled and made one of two free throws with 2.7 seconds left to make it 94-91. With sharpshooter Jeff Hornacek on the bench after fouling out, the Jazz got the ball to Chris Morris, whose 3-pointer from three feet beyond the top of the key was off the mark at the buzzer.

Sabonis had 27 points and 12 rebounds, but missed two crucial

Blazers annoy, should be forced out of Oregon

Thank God, the Blazers' season is on the brink of being over.

Since coming up here from California, I have encountered some annoying things. Rain, smelly people, snobby environmentalists, no Major League Baseball team. But what annoys me the most is the Portland Blazers.

I dealt with my annoyance last year. Although I couldn't stand the team, they didn't make the same type of news they are making this year.

But now, Portland is one game away from being out of the playoffs and I couldn't be happier. Soon, I won't have to listen to the talk about how wonderful the end of their season was and how that would help them get past the first round of the playoffs because they didn't. For the second year in a row, the Blazers are stinking it up and will have to go home with their tails tucked between their legs.

Now if only they would move the team in

the offseason, everything would be perfect.

Portland doesn't need a basketball team, especially the Blazers. If a state is going to have only one professional team, they shouldn't have one at all. Having one team causes people to be apathetic about professional sports. The fans don't know how to be supportive. They forget how to be fans in the off-season.

But, there will always be Blazers fans. But I can't decide which is worse — fair-weather fans who only cheer for the Blazers when they are winning or losers who always support the Blazers.

The fair-weathered fans are always annoying because they aren't true fans. They just jump

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Andrea DeYoung

free throws late in regulation.

The Blazers recovered in overtime after missing 4 of 6 free throws in the final minute of regulation.

Clifford Robinson awoke from his four-year playoff nightmare to score five of his 11 points in the overtime for Portland. He was just 2-for-11 from the field in regulation, including an ill-advised, errant 3-pointer with five seconds to go and the game

tied at 83.

Aaron McKie, scoreless in the first two games of the series, added 16 points and 10 rebounds for Portland.

Karl Malone scored 35 points on 13-for-30 shooting for Utah. His 15-footer with 21 seconds left in the fourth quarter tied the game at 83 and forced the overtime. He also missed two free throws with 1:02 left in the fourth period and the game tied

81-81.

Stockton had 13 points and 11 assists for Utah, which shot only 38 percent from the field after shooting 59 percent in the first two games in Salt Lake City.

The Blazers were even colder Monday night, shooting just 34 percent.

Portland led 37-31 at halftime. The 68 points tied the all-time NBA playoff low for the first two quarters.