



Shelby Edwards (4) and the Oregon volleyball team has had reason to celebrate in recent weeks. The Ducks beat Oregon State and then beat Arizona State a week later. MARK McTYRE/Emerald

Celebrate Good Times

With two wins in their last three matches, the Ducks are ready to storm through the rest of their season

By Andrea DeYoung
Assistant Sports Editor

Does confidence breed success, or does success breed confidence?

This isn't an easy question to answer, even for the Oregon volleyball team.

The Ducks have seen a recent turnaround in their season, after beginning the Pacific-10 Conference with no wins and eight losses. Since then, Oregon has won two of its last three matches, including a victory against nationally ranked Oregon State.

Although a 2-9 record might not seem like a big accomplishment, it is for the Ducks. During the

last two seasons, Oregon had won a total of two Pac-10 games and finished last in the conference both years.

Prior to the season, head coach Cathy Nelson said the team was in the middle of a rebuilding process and Oregon's goals were to finish eighth in the Pac-10 with double-digit wins.

For the first few weeks, it seemed as if the goals would not be accomplished. But then Oregon State came to town.

In the matter of one night, the Ducks managed to improve their overall play, become more confident, and win their first conference match of the season. This proved to be the springboard toward success.

"We just needed one little edge," senior co-captain Amy Barnes said. "That gives you confidence. That's what we really needed. We have been working so hard, and it's finally paying off

now. We finally broke through the barrier. For some reason we were always being stopped before. We now know that this is fun, and it can be done."

Although the team knows what it takes to win, Nelson is quick to point out that the Ducks still have a ways to go.

"I don't know if I have found a key [to winning]," she said. "It's such a difficult thing for a team to understand. Now that we've got it, I hope we don't have to deal with these issues again. The road to rebuilding a program is long, and it takes a long time. We hope that we're past the worst part. But you never know what's going to happen the rest of the season and next year. We still have a long way to go."

For the two seniors, Barnes and Lara Weigel, the program has changed dramatically since they first

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STATS

Volleyball team statistics for the past three matches

■ **RECORD:** 2-1

■ **HITTING PERCENTAGE:** .173

■ **AVERAGE DIGS PER GAME:** 16.67

■ **AVERAGE BLOCKS PER GAME:** 3.67

WNBA announces its eight franchises

■ **BASKETBALL:**
The women's NBA begins preparations for its 28-game inaugural season

By Chris Sheridan
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Eight months from its opening tip-off, the women's professional league sponsored by the NBA awarded eight franchises Wednesday, with hopes of adding more once it establishes an identity.

The four teams in the Eastern Conference are New York, Charlotte, Cleveland and Houston. Phoenix, Utah, Sacramento and Los Angeles make up the Western Confer-

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Hockey hits the road for weekend trio

■ **PREVIEW:** The Ducks travel to Spokane for their first road trip of the season

By Alex Pond
Freelance Sports Reporter

After winning three of four games at home to start the season, Oregon's club hockey team heads to Spokane Thursday hoping to keep up the pace of its fast start.

Oregon's record stands at 3-1 after sweeping two games from Washington last weekend and will play at least three games in Spokane.

The Ducks will face Northern Arizona Thursday night, Washington State Friday and Idaho Saturday.

Oregon will play either Washington State again or Walla Walla College Sunday in the mini-tournament.

The last opponent won't be known until after the team arrives in Spokane, with there being a possibility the Sunday game will not be played at all, head coach Nick Ham said.

The Ducks are familiar with Washington State, having played two games against the Cougars two weeks ago. The Cougars beat the Ducks 7-3 on Oct. 18 to give Oregon its only loss of the season. The Ducks have gone on to win three-straight since then, including a 3-2 victory against the Cougars Oct. 19.

Both of those games featured a number of penalties by both teams and seemed to get more physical as the games went on, eventually leading to separate fights

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