

## Hansen: UCLA's history makes game more exciting

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home game of the year. And even though neither the Ducks nor the Bruins are ranked and UCLA coach Jim Harrick was fired at the beginning of the year, there still is electricity in the air.

"I think the number of national championships they have probably has helped that," Oregon head coach Jerry Green said. "They've always been the kind of team that everybody wants to be like. They are a high profile team and everybody knows their players."

Players like Johnson and

O'Bannon, who will be returning to Mac Court Thursday night. And even though UCLA is not ranked, it is once again sitting on top of the Pacific-10 Conference standings.

So this game still has plenty of meaning and consequences for the Ducks and their hopes of a NCAA tournament bid. And beating teams like UCLA at home is essential.

*Chris Hansen is a sports reporter for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.*

## Club Sports: Ducks get a five-point penalty in final match

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nex, B54, at 7:30.

The women saw tournament action for the first time this year at the Columbia Empire Volleyball Association (CEVBA) tournament, hosted by Pacific in Forest Grove Saturday.

The Ducks were part of a three-team pool to start the day. By placing second in the pool, Oregon moved into the championship bracket of the A division; a tournament format comprised of the morning's top teams.

Head coach Kelly Sunada cited the strong all-around play of middle blocker Julie Schmidt and the smart hitting of Lisa Chinn as imperative to the Ducks earning a place in the championship match.

The final match had no small amount of controversy. With victory in sight for the Ducks, the team was assessed a five-point penalty by the officials. A Duck

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— Kelly Sunada  
Club Sports Volleyball Coach

player had carried a sports bottle filled with something other than water into the gym, costing Oregon the match, and thus the tournament.

Sunada took it in stride. "It was a horrible call by the official," Sunada said, "but although we lost the final match, we played really well as a team all day. I was really pleased."

The women see action in another CEVBA tournament on Feb. 9 at the SportsNation facility in Tigard.

## Saints announce hiring of Ditka

■ NFL: Mike Ditka says there will be changes to improve New Orleans

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Mike Ditka, once the snarling symbol of football in Chicago, returned to the NFL today as coach of a New Orleans Saints team that went 3-13 last season.

Ditka, who led the Bears to a Super Bowl title in 1986, was fired after the 1992 season and became a television analyst. He succeeds interim coach Rick Venturi, who took over when Jim Mora quit in mid-season.

"There are going to be changes made," Ditka said. "... but the people who stay, I think, are going to enjoy it."

The announcement was made by Bill Kuharich, who will re-

main as chief operating officer, president and general manager. Saints owner Tom Benson said Ditka will report to Kuharich.

"He's a winner," Kuharich said. "That's the bottom line."

Ditka, known as Iron Mike for his tough, no-nonsense style, came to the news conference with tears in his eyes.

He spent Monday evening at a suburban hotel near New Orleans International airport, as the Saints tried futilely to keep their negotiations secret.

Ditka, 57, said he was called earlier in the day by Mora. Mora resigned halfway through the season, after the team fell to 2-6. He cited personal reasons.

"I really appreciate what he had to say," Ditka said. "I appreciate what his contribution to the National Football League has been. I hope to have the type of

success he had in this town."

Ditka said while his goal is to win games, he plans to have fun doing it. Winning, however, is not familiar territory to the Saints.

Four seasons ago, after starting off with a five-game winning streak, the Saints finished 8-8. Since then, they have had three straight losing seasons. This year, the Saints had the second-worst record in the league.

With Venturi as interim coach, the Saints lost seven of their last eight games while playing the league's easiest schedule. The Saints did not sell out a home game last season and season ticket sales fell as well.

Ditka said he has hired Danny Abramowicz as offensive coordinator and Zaven Yarian as defensive coordinator.

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