



"She does things that you don't think she's going to do. She kind of saves our butt."

Bill Steffen
UO head coach

Last line of defense

Oregon sophomore Amanda Fox has grown into her own at the goalkeeper position

By Alex Pond
Sports Reporter

Oregon fans can thank the sister and a childhood buddy of Amanda Fox for part of where she is now, and for where she has been for all 31 games the Oregon women's soccer team has ever played.

Where Fox has been is in front of the net as the starting goalkeeper for the Ducks, facing one blazing shot after another, making save after incredible save and almost single-handedly keeping the Ducks in several games.

This season she has saved goals at such a high rate that she leads the Pacific-10 Conference with 97 — already 11 saves more than in 1996 with still seven games remaining.

It all started when she tagged along to a friend's soccer practice many years ago.

"I first started playing when I was five, and I didn't even know what the game of soccer was," Fox says. "My best friend back in elementary school was playing, and she brought me out to a practice. Ever since then, I've just been playing the entire time."

Fox says she was endeared to soccer because it challenged her both mentally and physically.

"I think I fell in love with it because it was a lot more of a thinking game," she says, "and I needed the action and the competitiveness. I wasn't into a thinking game like chess."

Fox wasn't always a goalkeeper, though. Thank her sister Ashley for that.

"I was actually a forward until I sort of either got stuck, or just kind of grew, into the goalkeeper position," she says.

She got "stuck" in that position one day when she went to one of Ashley's soccer practices.



Amanda Fox has been a model of consistency in goal for the Ducks. She has started all 31 games during her Oregon career and played all but 16 minutes.

Turn to FOX, Page 9A

Flightless Ducks overmatched in tough Pac-10

Six women entered the Oregon women's volleyball program four years ago intent on turning around a team that had finished no better than ninth in the Pacific-10 Conference since a tie for seventh in 1990 and had not finished in the upper-division since a tie for fourth in 1987.

Four years, 107 matches and 74 losses later, the Ducks find themselves in the uncomfortable situation of rebuilding the rebuilding process. This is a team that is trying not to finish in last place for the third time in four seasons, and not doing a very good job of it.

The Ducks' poster advertises them as "The Pit Squad," but they have been playing more like the "pits" squad.

In the midst of a ninth-place, 3-15 Pac-10 finish last season, the Ducks pulled off a miraculous season sweep of the Oregon State Beavers, including the momentous five-game win in front of a McArthur Court record of 3,716 fans.

That, combined with Oregon's season-ending sweep of Alabama last year at the SEC/Pac-10 Challenge, had head coach Cathy Nelson optimistic about the team's chances in 1997, despite its 11-20 overall record last season.

"We feel great about ending the season with a win and dominating a team that we should dominate," Nelson said in the Dec. 2, 1996 issue of the Emerald. "This really gives us a boost in preparing for next season."

Oregon had six seniors return for "the best team Oregon has had in a long, long time," according to Nelson in the Aug. 20 Emerald.

Middle blocker Tia Stewart has been the most solid performer for the Ducks this season, but the other five seniors have been maddeningly inconsistent.

Setter Casey Crisler, playing the most integral position on the court, has not performed well enough to garner consistent playing time, throwing the Ducks' attack into disarray.

If you thought the football team's constant substitution at quarterback was frustrating, imagine if Jason Maas and Akili Smith switched off two or three times per drive.

OPINION



Rob Moseley

Turn to MOSELEY, Page 8A

Bellotti hopes he has solutions to Oregon's perpetual problems

Practice will focus on the nagging problems of poor tackling and missed assignments

By Chris Hansen
Assistant Sports Editor

After Saturday's 39-31 loss to UCLA, Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said his team was definitely missing something, but he just couldn't put his finger on exactly what that something was.

"We, collectively as a team, did not make the plays we needed to make when it came down to crunchtime," Bellotti said after Saturday's game. "I think that's the mark of a good football team. Maybe that's the mark of an experienced football team. I hope we're getting closer to that threshold of experience. Certainly, we're playing good football with good football teams, but we have to find a way to get over the hump."

After three straight losses — all to nationally ranked Pacific-10 Conference opponents no less — and the Ducks sitting at 3-3 overall and 1-3 in the Pac-10, Bellotti did have some idea of what the team can do to get back on the winning track.

The offense was not spectacular in the last two games against Washington State and UCLA, failing to convert on scoring opportunities and turning the ball over, particularly in the second half.

The defense, meanwhile, has given up long scoring drives in the fourth quarter of all three losses when it was crucial that it hold and get the ball back for the offense.

"We need to have other parts of the team step up and make plays when a breakdown occurs on one side or the other," Bellotti said. "Somewhere, we have to find that extra little push in the third and fourth quarter to not let them run through us."

Which is exactly what the opposition has been doing.

In Oregon's first loss this season, Stanford's Anthony Bookman and Mike Mitchell each rushed for more than 100 yards. Mitchell ran for 80 of his yards on two scoring drives in the fourth quarter when the Cardinal ran the ball 15 consecutive times.

The UCLA Bruins also had a big fourth-quarter drive where two rushes of 20-plus yards led them to a touchdown.

Bellotti blamed that on poor tackling and missed assignments and said those problems have to be fixed in practice as the Ducks prepare for this Saturday's homecoming game against Utah (3-3), a non-conference opponent.

"We've got to step it up," he said. "Obviously, our form tackling drills and the way we practice, we aren't getting it done. We're going to step up the level even at the risk of injury. We are going to increase both the speed and intensity of our one-on-one drills."

Other notes: Utah's 280-pound starting tailback, Chris Fuamatu-Ma'afala, is not expected to play in Saturday's game. He is out with an ankle injury and sore hamstring. Oregon quarterback Akili Smith is nursing a sore right shoulder, but will play on Saturday.