

Oregon beats Vandals handily

Brianne Meharry filled in for injured center Jenny Mowe to lead the Ducks with 16 points

By Alex Pond
Sports Reporter

Oregon's depth received a stiff test Friday in Moscow, Idaho, and the Ducks passed with flying colors.

The Oregon women's basketball team overcame foul trouble and an injury to starting center Jenny Mowe to hold off Idaho 78-61 for the season-opening victory.

Mowe was limited to just eight first-half minutes because of a flare-up of tendinitis in her kneecap, but she did some damage before departing, scoring 10 points and grabbing four rebounds.

Five players scored in double figures for the Ducks (1-0), with freshman Brianne Meharry's 16 points and Sonja Curtis' 15 leading the way.

Meharry was forced to play center, not her natural position, much of the second half because of the loss of Mowe and foul trouble to the 6-foot-2 Curtis and 6-foot-3 Angelina Wolvert. Curtis fouled out with six minutes, 11 seconds remaining in the game, and Wolvert fouled out with 4:09 left.

"It gave me an opportunity to come out and see what I could do on the floor," Meharry said. "It turned out pretty well."

Idaho (0-2) rallied from a 44-26 halftime deficit to pull within 10 points with a little more than six minutes remaining.

Then Meharry took over, scoring five of the Ducks' next seven points to help them build a 72-57 lead with 3:45 left.

"Bri knows how to win," Oregon head coach Jody Runge said. "She knows tempo, she understands when you've got to score and when you've got to get a stop."

In the first regular-season game of her Oregon career, Meharry showed few signs of any nervousness, connecting on seven of 11 shots from the field.

"I felt really comfortable going in and was ready to play," she said.

The Ducks broke the game open early with an 11-0 run over a 2:31 span of the first half to take a 35-18 lead on their way to the halftime advantage. They increased that lead to 22 in the second half before Idaho's mini-rally. Oregon made

six of eight free throws down the stretch to seal the victory.

"It was a rough, physical game," Runge said, "and without Jenny in the game in the second half it was a little difficult. But I think it was a sign of this team that they just really find a way to get it done. We have a lot of weapons to put out on the floor, and I think that's really going to help us down the stretch."

Runge went deep into her bench early, as 12 players got into the game in the first half.

"I'm just really trying to get a lot of these young kids a lot of playing time out on the floor so they can be ready when the crucial situations come," Runge said.

Oregon outshot Idaho 51.9 percent to 38.2 percent from the field and committed just 12 turnovers to the Vandals' 19.

"I am very pleased with the turnovers because it was a physical game and they pressed us almost the whole way," Runge said.

Jennifer Stone led Idaho with 18 points, while Oregon's Mendy Benson pulled down a game-high 12 rebounds.

Oregon will go after its second win tonight when it travels to Portland, where they will try to snap the Pilots' 24-game home court winning streak.



Ducks start season with ugly win

Henry Madden paced Oregon with 22 points and nine rebounds in its 74-67 nonconference win over BYU

By Chris Hansen
Assistant Sports Editor

A win is a win, and if Friday night's game is any indication, the Ducks will take them any way they can get them.

It wasn't pretty, and it may have left more questions asked than answered, but in the end, the Oregon men's basketball team began its 1997-98 non-conference season with a win on the road against Brigham Young (0-3).

Led by Henry Madden's team-high 22 points and nine rebounds, Oregon held off a pesky Cougar team for a 74-67 win in front of 8,350 at the Marriott Center in Provo, Utah.

It was the first counting game of the Ernie Kent era, Oregon's first-year head coach, and also the first post-Kenya Wilkins game.

Sophomore Mike McShane started the game at point guard, but Yasir Rosemond received the bulk of the playing time. Neither player was outstanding, though, with McShane scoring four points and dishing out three assists in 16 minutes, and Rosemond scoring nine with only two assists in 27 minutes.

Rosemond also had five of the teams 15 turnovers, while McShane only had two.

Terik Brown made back-to-back three-pointers at

the start of the game as Oregon scored the first eight points. But the Cougars followed with a 13-0 run of their own to take the lead and hold it for much of the first half.

Led by Madden, Oregon worked its way back on top to take a three-point lead, 34-31 at halftime, and then used Madden again to spurt out to an eight-point lead, 44-36, to start the second half. The Ducks held the lead for the remainder of the game, hitting on 12 straight free-throw attempts in the game's final minute to secure the victory.

Brown was second on the team in scoring with 19 points, the only other Oregon player in double figures. He hit five of 11 three pointers.

While a win is nice to start off the season, the fact remains that Oregon struggled to beat a team that lost to Washington State by 30 points two nights before.

Oregon also has to be concerned with the shooting of senior guard Jamar Curry, who was two for 10 from the field and never made it to the free-throw line.

But true to his word, Kent played nine players with all but forward Donte Quinine putting points on the board. In the preseason, Kent had promised he would play his entire bench and the scoring would be spread around.

The Cougars were paced by Brian Hamilton, who came off the bench to score 24 points, including six of 10 from the three-point line.



Cross country teams are ready for championships

The Ducks will take on 22 of the country's best teams at the NCAA Championships today

By Joel Hood
Sports Reporter

It's back to their old stomping ground for the Oregon cross country teams. The Ducks, who have combined for six national titles and 46 NCAA Championship appearances since 1963, return to the NCAA Championships in Greenville, S.C., Monday with similar agendas.

The men will run the 10K race at 11 a.m., followed by the women's 5K race at noon, on the Furman University Golf Course. Oregon will race against 22 of the country's elite teams in a best-of-five scoring format that puts a premium on team strength, not the strength of the individual — something the Oregon men's team has already placed a premium on this season.

The NCAA Championships is a remarkable achievement, Oregon's runners said, for a team that was expected to have to wait until next season to make an impact on the national standings.

Also remarkable because the No. 6 Ducks have been led by four different runners in five different races this season. Rob Aubrey was the first Duck to repeat as the team's top finisher this season when he finished 10th last Saturday at the West Regional Championships in Tucson, Ariz. But that could give this team an advantage, Aubrey said.

"There really isn't any pressure on us at this point," he said. "It's a nice feeling to come into a race like this and be considered an underdog. It's certainly a change from what we're used to."

Confidence has not been a problem for Oregon despite being without a standout runner much of the season. Instead, Oregon has taken a leadership-by-committee attitude into every race this season, Aubrey said, and will continue to do so at the NCAA's.

"We are in the best shape, both physically and mentally, than we have been all season," Aubrey said. "Everyone has had experience racing at a high level in their careers, it's just a matter of putting

it all together in one race."

A year removed from its last national title, No. 1 Arkansas returns as a slight favorite in the men's competition. Slight because No. 2 and defending champion Stanford returns three All-Americans and is fresh off a dominating first-place finish at the West Regional Championships.

Third-ranked Colorado, No. 4 Michigan and No. 5 Wisconsin are also expected to challenge for the top spot. The Wolverines have a pair of runners, All-Americans Kevin Sullivan and John Mortimer,

who should contend for the individual crown. The women's race is expected to be more clear-cut as No. 1 and defending national champion Stanford is the favorite to repeat in the team standings, and Arizona's Amy Skieresz is expected to defend her individual crown.

The Cardinal has been the country's top-ranked team since it ran away from the 22-team field at last season's NCAA Championships. The team's performances have been no less dominating this season. Stanford easily won the West Region's No. 1 automatic qualifying spot last Saturday at the West Regional Championships.

Finishing second to Stanford at both the regional championships and the Pacific-10 Championships was an Oregon team that, despite its No. 5 ranking, has seemed to run in Stanford's shadow the entire season.

While head coach Tom Heinonen thinks it will take a minor miracle for the Ducks to make a run at the national title, he is quick to praise a team that has overcome injuries to return to the NCAA's.

"We are going to be dinged up, but we're just going to have to run through it," Heinonen said. "We are a cohesive team that has done a good job of running with on-going physical problems. This race won't be any different."

Oregon's runners said not to discount a team that has believed in itself the entire season.



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