

Ducks go for second win over WSU

Oregon beat the Cougars in Hawaii earlier in the season by 23 points

By Ryan Frank
Sports Editor

If Oregon's meeting with Washington State earlier this season has any bearing on Saturday's contest in Pullman, the Ducks should have no trouble with the Cougars.

In a scheduling quirk that pitted the Ducks and Cougars (7-5 overall and 1-2 in the Pacific-10 Conference heading into Thursday's game against Oregon State) in a nonconference game in a tournament in Hawaii during winter break, Oregon blew the Cougars off the island.

In their 23-point win, the Ducks (7-6 overall, 3-2 Pac-10) set seven offensive team highs that still stand, including 94 points and a 63 percent clip from the field.

In short, it was a blowout. So why even play this one, right? It's no contest.

Wrong. Playing Washington State in Hawaii is one thing. Playing Washington State in Pullman has never been an easy task for Oregon.

"It's a really tough place to play, and it's not a place we have played particularly well at over the years," said Oregon head coach Jody Runge.

The Ducks have won eight of

the last nine games between the two teams and are 33-7 all-time against the Cougars, but in Pullman, it never seems to be easy.

The Cougars were never really in the game in Eugene last season, losing 80-46, but in Pullman it was just a 10-point game. The same goes for two seasons ago, when the Cougars beat Oregon in Pullman.

This season, Washington State comes into the week coming off a split of its two games in Arizona.

But it wasn't the split most people who follow the Pac-10 would have expected. The Cougars defeated then-No. 10 Arizona 64-61 on a 40-footer

from freshman Tricia Lamb at the buzzer, but lost by 20 to Arizona State two nights later.

The Ducks come into Pullman riding the high of a 17-point win over No. 13 Washington in Seattle Thursday. The win was the Ducks first in two seasons over a ranked opponent.

Yvonne Kunze, a 6-foot-4 senior who takes up a lot of space in the lane, leads Washington State in scoring at 13.2 per game, good enough for 12th in the Pac-10. She also leads the team in rebounding at 6.5 per contest.

One of the Cougars' biggest stories of the season has been that of

Alke Dietel, a 6-4 freshman from Germany. Dietel is second to Kunze in both points (11.2) and rebounding (4.4).

Dietel is one of six true freshmen who join a junior-college transfer and seven returning players.

"They have a good infusion of new players on their team, which makes them tough to deal with," Runge said.

While they have their share of newcomers, the Cougars also lost a valuable part of their team from last season when point guard Jade Hyett, the Pac-10 leader in assists and steals in 1997, left the team to return to her native Australia at the end of last season.

Harold Rhodes, in his 16th season as the Cougars' head coach, said he was impressed with Oregon guards Natalie Hughes, who scored 29 points in the last meeting between the two teams, and Lisa Bowyer.

"What makes Oregon special is Bowyer and Hughes can break you down off the dribble, whether you are in a zone or man defense," Rhodes said. "They are the best in the conference from what I have seen."

Saturday's game will be broadcast tape-delayed on Fox Sports Northwest (TCI Channel 23) at 2 p.m. Sunday.



Women: Meharry has 13

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The Ducks' lead ballooned to 15 before Washington went on an 11-2 run to pull within six. But reserve Kirsten McKnight responded with a three-point shot to put the Ducks up by nine.

"I was just sitting out there wide open and finally hit it," McKnight said.

Again the Ducks weren't pretty from the free-throw line, hitting 68.6 percent, but they were good enough, especially in the game's final minute. In the last 40 seconds of the game, they hit six of eight attempts from the foul line.

"We made them when we needed to make them," Runge said.

"It's exciting to win a game that counts — against a ranked opponent," said Oregon guard Lisa Bowyer, who scored 11 points. "It's been hard road losing so many close games."

Five of Oregon's six losses have come by eight points or less.

As a team, the Ducks had what Runge called the Ducks' best defensive performance since the middle of December, forcing the Huskies into 31 turnovers and limiting guard Jamie Redd, who came in as the conference's leading scorer at 22 per game, to just 12 points on five of 13 shooting.

The Ducks finally played the defensive game Runge was looking for, closing the driving lane for Redd and frustrating her into nine turnovers and the Huskies, the conference leader in three-pointers made, into a four-for-20 shooting performance from behind the three-point line.

"I was really pleased with

our defensive effort," Runge said. "On the perimeter we did a great job on defense."

Oregon also forced Washington into shooting 37 percent from the field and allowed the Huskies just 11 attempts from the free-throw line, compared to 35 for the Ducks.

Oregon needed all the quality shooting it could get as the Huskies, the conference leader in rebounds, dominated the glass by a 51-28 margin.

Forward Amber Hall was the only Husky who turned in her usual performance with a stellar 20-point, 18-rebound outing.

OREGON (76)

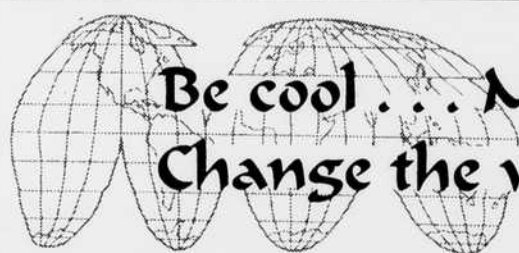
	Min	FG	FT	R	A	P
Strange	27	2-4	7-8	9	2	11
Meharry	33	5-12	3-7	4	1	13
Wolver	24	5-6	4-5	3	1	14
Hughes	29	5-12	0-1	3	2	12
Bowyer	33	3-6	4-6	1	2	11
Piers	10	1-2	0-0	0	1	2
O'Brien	4	0-1	0-0	0	0	0
McKnight	7	1-2	1-2	1	0	4
Dion	9	0-0	2-2	2	2	2
Benson	13	1-1	3-4	1	0	5
Curtis	11	1-4	0-0	4	0	2
Totals	200	24-50	24-35	28	11	76

Shooting: 48.0. 3-point: 4-9 (Meharry 0-1, Hughes 2-3, Bowyer 1-2, Piers 0-1, McKnight 1-2)

WASHINGTON (59)

	Min	FG	FT	R	A	P
Hall	31	8-16	4-6	18	2	20
Hills	30	1-8	0-0	2	4	3
Pelz	23	2-4	0-0	3	1	4
Redd	29	5-13	0-2	7	4	12
Pimley	23	1-3	0-0	3	3	2
Erickson	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Franza	27	3-10	0-0	2	2	7
Teel	11	1-1	0-0	2	1	2
Lynch	13	3-8	1-2	5	1	7
Sheets	12	1-4	0-1	1	0	2
Totals	200	25-67	19-33	51	12	59

Shooting: 37.3. 3-point: 4-20 (Hills 1-5, Redd 2-7, Franza 1-7, Sheets 0-1) *eight team rebounds



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