

Women: Nygaard 5 of 8 from three

■ Continued from Page 11

to 27-9 with less than six minutes left in the first half.

"We just couldn't find a way to put it in the basket," Runge said.

After stumbling early, the Ducks stormed back with a 17-2 run over the next six minutes and trailed by just three in the final minute of the first half.

"This team has been through a lot of adversity, and they're just not going to give up," Runge said of her team's first-half comeback.

The Cardinal began the second half on an 8-0 run, but again the Ducks responded, this time with an 11-0 run to pull within four with 14 minutes, 27 seconds to play.

The Ducks stayed within four points during the next few minutes,

but Stanford scored five quick points to go up by nine and never led by less than seven the rest of the way.

"That's what killed us, we couldn't get past the three- to five-point margin," Hughes said.

Oregon made one last mini-run to get within seven, 67-60, but after Hughes missed one of two free-throw attempts, Nygaard nailed the coffin shut with her fourth three-pointer of the half to push the lead back to 10.

Nygaard hit five of eight three-pointers and seven of 10 from the field to finish with a team-high 21 points.

"She did a good job of hitting the open shot out there," said Stanford head coach Tara VanDerveer, whose team won its 22nd game over the

Ducks.

Nygaard, however, could not be credited with all the damage. Heather Owen and Kristin Folkl, also an All-American volleyball player, combined for 17 of the Cardinal's 38 rebounds and 27 points.

Hughes, the Ducks' leading scorer, made just three of her 11 shots from the field, but was the target of the Cardinal's defense.

"They did a great job defending her," Runge said. "There was not a time she caught the ball on the perimeter and the defense wasn't right on her."

As a team, the Ducks hit just 40.7 percent from the field and 37.5 in the first half, while the Cardinal hit 62.5 percent from the field in the second half.



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Natasha O'Brien looks to get around Vanessa Nygaard.

were't moving screens, but they were tough to get through."

So close, yet the Ducks came up empty.

There they were, standing on the edge of the cliff, ready to drop the anvil on the Cardinal when Nygaard came along and drove the bus that knocked the Ducks off.

Nygaard: Senior forward was left open

■ Continued from Page 11

right back and do the same thing right in our face and that can demoralize you a bit. She was clutch under pressure."

Nygaard connected on five of her seven attempts from three-point range in the second half, including two that in essence sealed the Ducks' fate.

The first came after Oregon cut a 13-point deficit to seven with four minutes, 45 seconds remaining in the game and appeared ready to make one final comeback attempt.

On the Cardinal's next possession, Nygaard nailed a three from up top to momentarily take the wind out of the Ducks' collective sails and give Stanford a 70-60 lead.

After an O'Brien jumpshot closed the gap to eight with 2:58 left, Nygaard put the proverbial dagger through the Ducks' collective hearts one last time, again from the top of the key.

"She got one off, then she just got going," Oregon head coach Jody Runge said. "It's hard to keep up when you're having trouble scoring from the three-point line and she's draining them like that."

Stanford head coach Tara VanDerveer said a minor adjustment after halftime was at least partly responsible for Nygaard's huge second half.

"We did run a little bit different things offensively for her," VanDerveer said. "The thing that seemed open was the top of the key when they were sagging off of our [power forward] that was up there, so we brought Vanessa up there and she's not shy. She really looks for her shot and she did a good job hitting her open shot up there."

For Nygaard, the second-half turnaround was rather simple.

"We set better screens and I had good, open looks," she said.

As helpless as poor Wile E. Coyote, Runge said she was frustrated with the open looks Nygaard was getting and the fact the Ducks couldn't quite overtake the Cardinal.

"It's hard to keep catching up when you're draining threes like that," she said. "It looks like pretty easy work. They were wide open [shots], and I wasn't pleased about how we got caught on the screen. I'm not sure they

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