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Ducks: Cook vital to team's success

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batting with a .341 average. Cook is so vital to the team's success, Gamez said, that she may even be called upon to pitch in the later innings of Game 2 on Saturday.

Despite Oregon's improved pitching from last season, the key to the Ducks' early success this season has been at the plate, Gamez said. Two weeks ago, Oregon scored 59 runs during a seven-game stretch at the Troy Cox Invitational in Las Cruces, N.M. A week earlier, the Ducks exploded

for 30 runs in five games at the UNLV Softball Classic in Las Vegas.

Despite the Ducks' brilliance at the plate early on, Oregon's best results have been a pair of second-place finishes that have left Gamez and some of Oregon's players disappointed.

"We should be angry with the way we played last week," said Cook following the Ducks' second-place finish at the Santa Clara Classic. "I think we were all a little disappointed with the results because we knew the rest of the

teams were not at our level. We need to focus and make the routine plays on defense. That's what's keeping this team from being great."

Gamez agreed, but said the runner-up finishes now will make Oregon a better team in the long run.

"We're all disappointed now," he said. "But I think those disappointments will make us hungrier down the road. We need to continue to play hard and aggressive, and things will work out for us."

SPORTS BRIEFS

Two Ducks compete in NCAA indoor meet

Oregon pole vaulters Piotr Buciariski and Karina Elstrom will compete in the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships this weekend in Indianapolis at the RCA Dome.

Buciariski has posted the nation's fourth-best indoor mark this year at 18 feet, 1/2 inches. The junior's top mark is two inches short of Texas' Jacob Davis nation-leading mark of 18-2 1/2.

Buciariski had a career best of 18-4 1/2 at the European Indoors two weeks ago, which is higher than any mark in college competition this season.

"I feel pretty good about that, especially after the long journey," he said. "It gives me confidence for this weekend."

Buciariski said he is hoping to jump from 18-4 to 18-6 in this weekend's meet.

On the women's side, Elstrom has the nation's 15th best mark in the women's pole vault at 11-10. Melissa Price of Fresno State leads the nation with a vault of 13-9 1/4.

Dillon charged with drunken driving

SEATTLE (AP) — Cincinnati Bengals running back Corey Dillon, the AFC Rookie of the Year, was charged Thursday with drunken driving and other charges stemming from a hometown traffic stop last week.

Dillon, 23, has denied he was drunk when he was stopped by police in the city's Central Area at about 1 a.m. on March 3. He contends he is a victim of police harassment.

Dillon is scheduled for arraignment Wednesday in Municipal Court, said spokeswoman Lori Mayfield in the office of City Attorney Mark Sidran.

He is being charged with driving under the influence of alcohol, which carries a maximum penalty of a year in jail and a \$5,000 fine, and first-degree negligent driving and third-degree driving with a suspended license, which each carry a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

There was no immediate comment from attorney Jesse Franklin, who is representing Dillon in the matter.

The former Franklin High School football star and University of Washington Husky was pulled over by officers who reported watching him make three turns in quick succession without signaling, once running over a curb. They also said they clocked him doing about 35 mph in a 25 mph zone, and that he was uncooperative and smelled of alcohol.

Dillon was jailed briefly and released hours later on \$1,250 bail.



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