

NBA Playoffs
L.A. Lakers at Portland,
TNT (27) 7:30 p.m.

SPORTS

Oregon Daily
Emerald

Ducks finish seventh with poor final round

The men, who entered Wednesday's final round tied for fifth, shot a 381 in the final round of the Pac-10s

By Tim Pyle
Sports Reporter

Steve Nosler was not pleased Wednesday. The Oregon men's golf team provided its head coach with little to be happy about by saving the worst for last at the Pacific-10 Conference Championships in Orinda, Calif.

The Ducks shot a final-round 381 to end the 72-hole tournament at Orinda Country Club in seventh place. Oregon entered the final round tied for fifth with UCLA.

"Quite frankly, it didn't seem like we did anything very well," Nosler said. "We weren't hitting the ball off the tee particular-

ly well. We were getting it in the tall grass, which you just can't do on that golf course off the tee.

"Then if we hit an errant second shot instead of just missing the green by a little bit, we'd go back in the tall grass again and then we weren't getting up and down. Then when we got

out on the green, I saw very few putts go in. It looked to me like we just were taking every advantage we could to shoot as high of a score as we could."



GOLF

Ben Crane's 74 was Oregon's best individual score for the day. Crane, who is ranked No. 61 in the MasterCard Collegiate Golf Rankings, also led the Ducks on the final individual leaderboard by tying for 18th with a six-over-par 294.

Arizona State completed its rise from fifth place after Monday's first two rounds by winning its fourth straight Pac-10 title. The Sun Devils were five strokes behind host California heading into the final round but shot a 356 to finish with a combined score

Leaders

■ OREGON:	
18. Crane	294
■ INDIVIDUAL:	
1. Casey	283
ASU	
■ TEAM:	
1. ASU	1,444
2. UCLA	1,455
3. Arizona	1,459
4. Calif.,	1,461
5. Wash.,	1,476

Turn to GOLF, Page 8

CIVIL WAR



Melinda Walton slides under the tag of Oregon State catcher Kim Herman in the Ducks' 7-1 Game-2 victory.

Oregon slides past OSU in Game 2

The Ducks bounced back from a 7-4 loss in Game 1 to beat the Beavers and move up in the conference standings

By Joel Hood
Sports Reporter

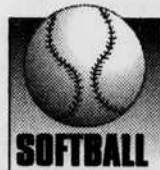
If nothing else, the Oregon softball team's Wednesday afternoon doubleheader with Oregon State will be known as the coming out party for freshman pitcher Bethany Smith.

Smith (11-8) allowed just three hits and no earned runs through five innings to lift Oregon to a critical Game-2 victory over the rival Beavers in front of 429 at Howe Field. The 7-1 win moved the Ducks into a fourth-place tie with California in the Pacific-10 Conference standings and was just the second conference victory of Smith's career.

It couldn't have come at a better time for Oregon head coach Rick Gamez, who has said his team will need to develop a solid No. 2 starter if it is to qualify for postseason play for the first time since 1994.

"This is the best she's looked on the mound in a real long time," Gamez said. "She did a great job for us."

Smith also contributed at the plate as she lined a Tarrah Beyster pitch off the left-field wall in the bottom of the second inning to score the Ducks' first run in Game 2. Oregon (36-23 overall, 8-12 Pac-10) padded its lead in the bottom of the fourth when outfielder Melisa Jeppsen singled up the middle to score two runs.

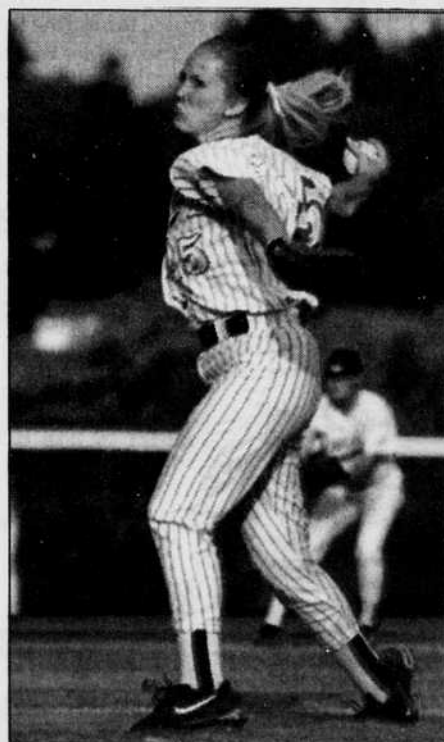


SOFTBALL

"That's the first hit I've ever had in the Pac-10s," Smith said. "I've been working real hard in practice and I guess it has paid off for me. I just got a perfect pitch to hit."

Pitching with a three-run lead in the top of the sixth, Smith allowed back-to-back singles and was forced to walk Beyster, who had hit two home runs off Oregon pitching in Corvallis on April 11th. With the bases loaded and no outs, Gamez made the decision to bring in ace Jennie Cook from the bullpen to keep Oregon State off the board.

Cook, who pitched a complete game in the Ducks' 7-4 Game-1 loss, got catcher Kim Herman to ground the ball



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Bethany Smith held Oregon State scoreless through five innings of Game 2.

Turn to UO, Page 12

Blazers grow up as a team during win

Finally, after eight preseason games, 82 regular-season games and two playoff games, the Portland Trail Blazers seemed to grow up during their 99-94 Game 3 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday night.

Throughout the season, the Blazers were labeled a bunch of immature whiners — a tag not entirely undeserved — but at least for a game they shed that label.

Fear and desperation have a funny way of doing that. Portland didn't exactly have much of a choice, after all. Down 0-2 in the best-of-five first-round NBA Playoff series, the Blazers had to either wake up and get the win or pack up for a long summer vacation.

Obviously, they chose the former and will now try to knot the series at two games apiece tonight in the Rose Garden.

The Blazers could be likened to a college kid in his first couple of terms away from home. The kid takes advantage of newfound freedom, parties way too much, and before he knows it, finds himself on academic probation, so the parents threaten to quit sending checks every month. All of the sudden, the kid shows up on the dean's list the next term.

The kid knew all along he had it in him to get good grades; he just had to reach deep within himself and find some motivation.

On Tuesday, the Blazers played with pure desire and determination not seen from a Blazers squad in quite some time.

For awhile there, I wasn't so sure the Blazers really cared if they got swept or not. With their second-half play on Tuesday, specifically late in the third and all of the fourth quarters, they proved me wrong.

I'm not talking about just the X's and O's of basketball here. It takes much more than that to win in the playoffs.

I'm talking about poise, mental toughness and the ability to handle adversity. Quite frankly, the Blazers have been terrible in those categories all season.

Sometime during Game 3, the Blazers matured.

Sure, there were several long, hard stares at the officials because of several questionable calls by the officials. But that's just my point.

That was it. Just incredulous looks. There were no temper tantrums resulting in technicals — although Arvydas Sabonis was on the edge when he slammed his mouthpiece to the floor in frustration after fouling out late in the game, but he did that on the sidelines, not on the court near a technical-happy official.

OPINION



Alex Pond

Turn to POND, Page 8