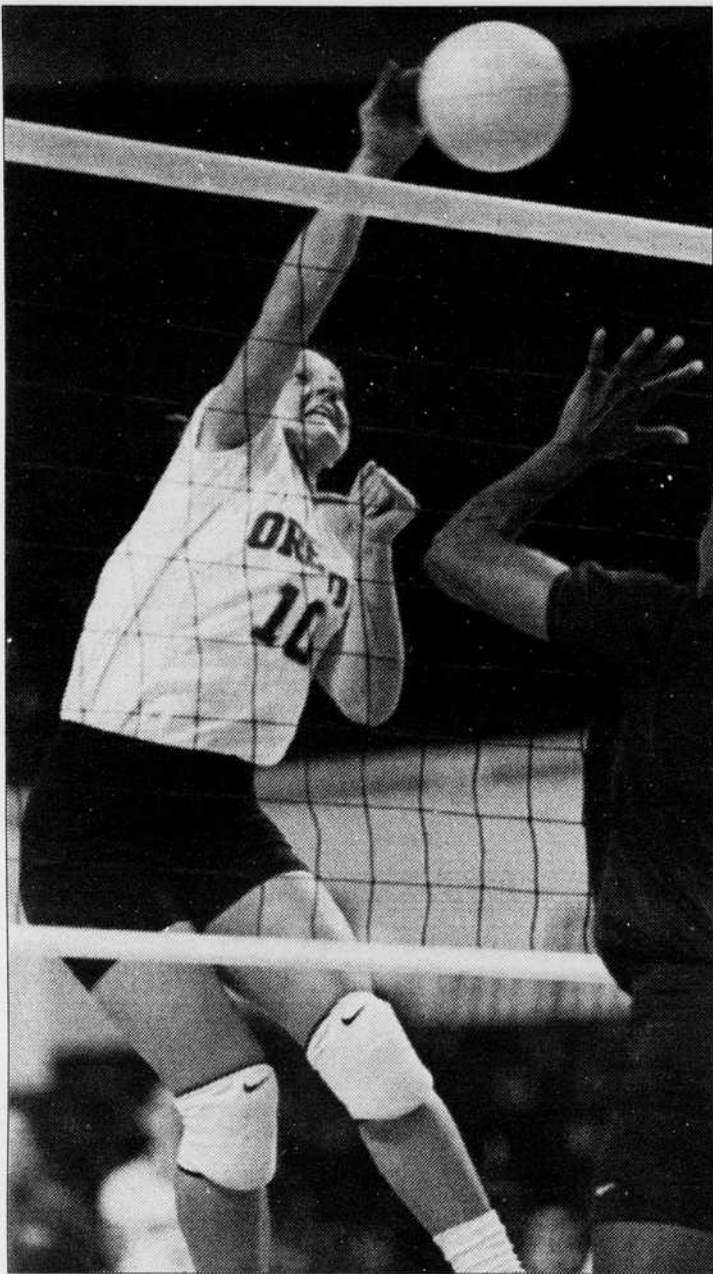




The Ducks' Tanya Minion jams one down the throats of the Wildcats for a kill in Sunday's game.

Matt Hankins/Emerald

Volleyball

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the ball to her."

For the Ducks, who didn't practice on Monday, the Portland road trip is not something they are taking lightly. Oregon has not played consistently this season. However, Nelson sees this trip as an opportunity for the team to improve before its battle with rivals Washington and Washington State this weekend.

"We all have to show up to play against Portland," Ernst said. "They are a good team, and they live for Pac-10 competition. But we can't think past them to Wash-

ington. We have to play this match as if it were a conference match."

Nelson, as well as Jayne, knows the key for both teams will be to stay focused throughout the entire match. Even though the Pilots appear to have an advantage by playing at home, Oregon has struggled both at home and away this season. The Ducks have not won a match at McArthur Court since it beat Oregon State on Sept. 18.

"It is critically important that we win," Nelson said. "We need to generate some momentum before going into Washington."

It will be the Pilots' final non-

conference match and their fourth straight home game. Four of Portland's six wins this season have come on its home court. They managed to take Oregon State to five games, proving that they can compete with Pac-10 teams.

The Pilots will be relying on middle blocker Cathy Cook, who leads the team with 203 kills and an overall attack percentage of .306.

"Ball control is going to be key for us," Jayne said. "They have a potent offensive system and we need to be able to handle the ball."

Moseley

Continued from Page 13

Joining Ernst is a group that is stronger, faster and generally more athletic than the Ducks of old. Senior Alli White is showing the middle blocking presence that injuries prevented her from providing last season, while Tanya Minion is reflecting some of the emotional strength Shelby Edwards gave the team last season.

But the real difference between this year and last is the contribution of the underclassmen. Amy Banducci has moved from a purely defensive role to showing off her powerful right hand and is third on the team in kills per game. Annie Pogue is realizing the benefits of a redshirt year by showing an on-court presence unexpected of most first-year players.

Even the true freshmen are showing the ability to be impact players in the Pac-10. Julie Gerlach has already garnered mention from head coach Cathy Nelson as potentially the best setter in school history. And outside hitter Monique Tobaggi occasionally seems like she has the athleticism to jump over the net on a kill attempt.

Nothing provides proof of the Ducks' improvement more than their showing on Sept. 12. The Ducks were playing their second match of the day, and third in two days, at the Minnesota Nike Invitational in Minneapolis. After being swept by the Go-

phers the night before, Oregon beat Missouri that morning, then faced Wake Forest that evening.

The Ducks dropped the first two games to the Demon Deacons, both 15-13, and if it had been last year, that most likely would have signaled a sweep. But a funny thing happened on the way to losing, and the Oregon women fought their way into a fifth game by winning Games 3 and 4 with scores of 15-11 and 15-12, respectively.

Despite the eventual 15-11 loss in Game 5, the fact that Oregon had enough talent and determination to force a fifth game on the road after dropping the first two games of their second match of the day is certainly indication enough that the new flock of Ducks has the ability to make some serious noise in the Pac-10. If not this season, then soon.

Of course, Oregon can't be expected to fare as well in every match, and they're sure to take their share of lumps in the name of growing pains this season. But if the matches mentioned above are any indication of things to come, then the Ducks are certainly on their way to casting a large shadow of success over the debacle that was 1997.

Rob Moseley is the assistant sports editor for the Emerald. He can be reached via e-mail at dodgrfan@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

Randall Cunningham leads Vikings in defeat of Packers

By Dave Goldberg
The Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Brilliant backup Randall Cunningham and his high-flying receivers proved Monday night who's No. 1 in the NFC.

For now, at least, it's the Minnesota Vikings.

Cunningham, out of football in 1996, threw for 442 yards and four touchdowns as the Vikings defeated the Packers 37-24 on the

muddy turf of Lambeau Field.

It was the first loss for Green Bay after four wins and left the Vikings (5-0) with Denver and Jacksonville as the NFL's only unbeaten teams. And it ended a 29-game winning streak at Lambeau Field — including four postseason games — by the Packers, who last lost here on Sept. 10, 1995, to St. Louis.

"I love playing the game again," Cunningham said. "It's about

times when things change and we have a little bit of control in our life. I'm around great people and great coaches and a great offensive line."

And, of course, three great receivers, who dominated on a muddy field, as the Vikings rolled up 545 yards in intermittent rain and occasional showers against a defense that entered the game ranked No. 1 in the NFL.

Cunningham, the 34-year-old

ex-Eagle, who signed with Minnesota as a backup last season and is replacing the injured Brad Johnson, had TD passes of 52 and 44 yards to Moss, 56 yards to Reed and 24 yards on a screen pass to Robert Smith. Three of the TDs came in the second quarter as the Vikings broke a 3-3 tie to lead 24-10 at halftime.

"Any team that plays the Vikings better get some pressure on the quarterback," said Green Bay coach

Mike Holmgren, whose team didn't get a sack of Cunningham.

"Those big receivers are going to cause a problem unless you do and we didn't get any pressure tonight."

Cunningham, who was 20-of-32 as he gained the most passing yards ever against the Packers, has 10 TD passes without an interception since replacing Johnson, who broke his right ankle in the second game of the season.

JELL-O Tuesdays!



Every Tuesday from 9pm-close

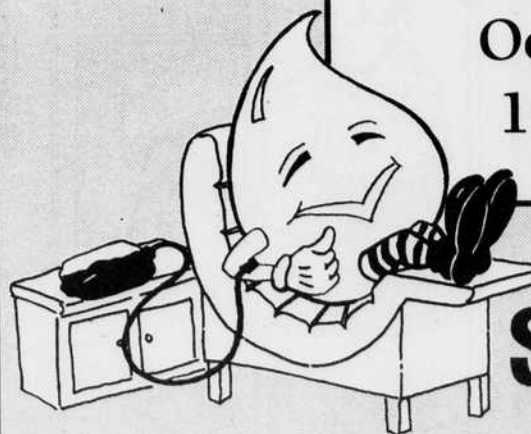
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