



Tanya Minion (digging) and Lindsay Mayer will need to use teamwork like this if the Ducks are to bust out of the Pac-10 doldrums this weekend.

Volleyball team sets off to Arizona

The Ducks need to diversify their offense to beat Arizona State this Sunday, says head coach

By Allison Ross
Oregon Daily Emerald

The desert is probably not the place to replenish, but that's exactly what the Oregon volleyball team will be looking to do when it heads to Arizona this weekend.

The Ducks (6-16 overall, 1-10 Pacific-10 Conference) face No. 16 Arizona tonight and Arizona State on Sunday.

Tonight's match in Tucson will be Oregon's fourth consecutive battle against a top 25 team, but Oregon proved it can compete against ranked opponents as they took No. 25 UCLA to five games on Oct. 25.

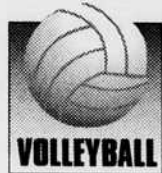
Oregon's main objective will be consistency. The Ducks have made a habit of coming out big in Game 1 only to fall flat in Game 2, as was the case their first time out against Arizona on Oct. 4 in Eugene.

"Game 1 we come out strong," Oregon outside hitter Madeline Ernst said. "I think this weekend is a good time to try and have a strong game 2."

Arizona (17-3, 8-3) is coming off a loss to No. 6 Stanford on

Oct. 25 and will be looking to rebound on its home court. The Wildcats' three losses this season were at the hands of ranked opponents, No. 8 USC and twice to Stanford.

Although unranked and struggling thus far, Oregon has made changes that have clearly improved their offense.



Freshman Monique Tobbagi, has recorded kills in double digits three times since becoming a starter. Tobbagi did not start against Arizona last time out, and her presence will only enhance the Ducks chances of winning.

Oregon seniors Ernst and Alli White combined for 43 of the Ducks 49 kills in the loss to the Wildcats. This time the Oregon will be more balanced.

"I think we need to diversify our offense to be successful," Oregon head coach Cathy Nelson said. "It can't always be Madeline and Alli, although they are going to get a bulk of the attacks. I think we have a lot of weapons that maybe we didn't have the first time we played them."

Arizona has a few weapons of its own. Freshman setter Dana

Burkholder has set an Arizona record for assists with 909 this season. Outside hitter Raelene Elam leads Arizona with 16 double digit kill matches and fellow outside hitter Allison Napier leads the team in solo blocks with 17.

"We know their setter is very offensive and aggressive at the net," Ernst said. "And they have a strong outside, so we need to focus on blocking."

On Sunday, the Ducks travel to Tempe to face Arizona State (8-10, 5-6).

The Sun Devils enter the match on a high note after ending a four game losing streak when they defeated California on Oct. 25.

Arizona State will be led by junior setter Jolynn Faatulu and sophomore outside hitter Amanda Burbridge, both of whom were selected to the Wahine Volleyball Challenge all-tournament team. Burbridge is averaging 4.63 kills per game and 2.57 digs per game.

Oregon will need to establish its offense and control its side of the net in order to win this weekend.

"I think when we pass the ball we are unstoppable," Ernst said. "We are a great team and we've got a really strong offense, but only when we pass the ball."

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