

Friday
April 16, 1999

Oregon Emerald SPORTS

Best Bet
NBA Basketball
Portland vs. San Antonio
7 p.m., UPN



OREGON SOFTBALL



Scott Barnett/Emerald

No. 14 Oregon will need the defensive moves of starting freshman short stop Holly Ray and company to defeat No. 1 UCLA on Saturday and No. 4 Washington on Sunday. Ray has recorded a team-high 96 assists.

Depleted Ducks face tough weekend task

Without starters Jennie Cook and Triawn Custer, No. 14 Oregon plays No. 1 UCLA and No. 4 Washington this weekend

By Tim Pyle
Oregon Daily Emerald

A staggering task awaits the Oregon softball team this weekend.

First, the No. 14 Ducks battle No. 1 UCLA at 1 p.m. Saturday at Howe Field.

Then, Oregon plays the only team to beat the Bruins this season, No. 4 Washington, at 1 p.m. Sunday.

And the Ducks (32-13 overall, 5-5 Pacific-10 Conference) are expected to be without pitching ace Jennie Cook and powerful first baseman Triawn Custer, both sidelined by injuries, for perhaps their most difficult weekend of the season.

Cook broke her right thumb when she got hit by a pitch in a game with Stanford last Sunday and is out indefinitely. Custer has been out since she had surgery on her broken pinkie finger May 24, but she had her cast removed Thursday and is day-to-day.

Even with Cook and Custer in the lineup, Oregon would need to play superbly to have

a chance at upsetting UCLA (42-1, 9-1).

"Pitching, hitting, defense — they're solid," Ducks head coach Rick Gamez said. "That's why they're ranked No. 1. They've got the whole repertoire, they've got it all."

"We can't afford to make any mistakes, whether it's on offense or on defense. We're gonna have to make sure that we play our game and stick with it for seven innings."



Offensively, the Bruins pace the Pac-10 in eight of 12 categories, including batting average, with a .351 mark, and home runs, with 53.

Sophomore Stacey Nuveman leads the way with a .479 average, nine doubles, 21 homers, 62 runs batted in and a slugging percentage of 1.082. Nuveman also tops the Pac-10 in home runs, RBIs and slugging percentage, not to mention total bases, walks drawn and on-base percentage.

And UCLA is definitely not a one-woman wonder.

Christie Ambrosi and Lupe Brambila back Nuveman up with averages of better than .400 and 18 doubles between them.

Defensively, the Bruins are permitting just 1.11 runs per game, second in the conference behind the Huskies, and opposing hitters are batting just .178.

Courtney Dale is the reigning national player of the week and tops the Pac-10 with a 21-0 record. She also has a 1.12 earned-run average and 147 strikeouts in more than 136 innings of work.

Amanda Freed completes the Bruins' one-two pitching punch. She is 18-1 with a 0.98 ERA and 109 strikeouts in more than 128 innings pitched.

Gamez said Oregon will have to play much better than it did in sweeping Portland State on Wednesday to challenge UCLA.

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On tap

WHAT: Women's softball
WHO: No. 1 UCLA vs. No. 14 Oregon
WHEN: Saturday, 1 p.m.
WHERE: Howe Field

Regular-season finales crucial for UO men, women

Both tennis teams must fare well this weekend to realize postseason hopes

By Mirjam Swanson
Oregon Daily Emerald

It's crunch time for the Oregon men's and women's tennis teams.

To have a shot at being included in the NCAA Tournament this season, the Ducks must win all of their matches this weekend. But that won't be easy, considering who they're up against.

The No. 42 women will take on No. 21 Fresno State (16-4 overall) on Saturday and Pacific (12-7) on Sunday in their final dual matches of the regular season.

"It's time to get the job done," head coach Jack Griffin said. "They need to go out and perform."

We've got to remember how to win and put it together as a team."

Oregon (10-10, 0-8 Pacific-10 Conference) had winning figured out earlier this season, when it bolted to a 9-3 start that included the biggest win in school history. The Ducks' victory over Washington was their first in 44 attempts and helped them achieve a No. 31 ranking — the highest in school history.

But since then, the Ducks have stumbled, losing seven of their last eight matches. But four of those losses were to teams ranked in the top 30.

"Dropping seven of eight was certainly no fun," Griffin said. "But it's not like we've had bad losses. And now we have one more chance at a team ranked in the top 20."

For Oregon to have success against the Bulldogs,

more of its players will have to step up like senior Shanelle Kaneshiro has lately.

The Ducks team captain swept her singles matches against UCLA and Southern California last week in addition to compiling a winning doubles mark with fellow senior Andrea Petrovic this season.

"Shanelle's playing really smart," Griffin said. "She's very hungry and fired up for this weekend. That's good for our young players to see."

The Oregon men's team (11-13, 0-8) will also need to be fired up this weekend when they travel to Washington for a rematch with the No. 15 Huskies (15-8, 2-6).

The last time the two teams met was in February, when Washington swept the Ducks in Eugene. De-

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