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American Red Cross

UO women

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who come to play tonight are not the same Ducks who blew a 26-point lead at Stanford, only to lose by 16. It seems as if they'd rather see a team that routed its way to No. 9 in the nation — not a team that slipped out of the polls altogether.

Before the road trip, Oregon won its first five games by an average of 21 points.

Since then Oregon holds a mere 5.4-point advantage over its last 10 opponents.

"We have to get focused back on doing the little things right and executing on offense," head coach Jody Runge said. "In particular, staying with things. We had a lot of kids that were trying to make things up, and that's not the way this team functions best."

The Ducks seem to function best when sophomore point guard Shaquala Williams puts up big numbers. Oregon performed well at Mac Court on Jan. 15 last season, beating the Huskies 70-56 in Williams' first start for the Ducks.

Recent encounters, however, with zone defenses have limited Williams' shot selection.

"I always remember Washington as one school that I've always played well against," Williams said. "That's something I can go in with in the back of my mind. Right

**“What do they say?
 ‘Huck the fuskies’? It’s going to be a lot of fun.”**

**Jenny Mowe
 center**

now, it's kind of a game where I'm going to use it to get back on track because I've been slumping lately.

"I'm not shooting the ball as well as I'd like to. I think a lot of it is just because I'm living at the three-point line, and if I'm not hitting those threes I'm not going to play well, as far as shooting percentage, so I have to get off and do other things."

One Duck who loves living on the 3-point line is Jamie Craighead. The sophomore guard/forward scored 15 points, all from behind the arc, in her first career start last Saturday.

Craighead will start against Washington in place of junior Lindsey Dion, who sat out the Stanford game with a concussion but is

available against Washington.

Washington is led by the red-hot duo of junior Megan Franza and freshman Loree Payne, whose respective averages of 19.7 and 18.3 points per outing rank first and second in the Pac-10.

"They have two guards who shoot the ball really well," Runge said. "Megan and Loree are playing with a lot of confidence. I think [the Huskies] had a whole lot of adversity with injuries inside. They're coming back through, adjusting to that."

The Huskies also may be playing with some extra motivation because beating the Ducks would give them their 500th win in program history. Only Stanford has that many Pac-10 wins.

Nonetheless, Williams is confident that Washington will have to wait at least one more game. When Oregon lost at Santa Barbara, 74-61 in December, the Gauchos had just returned from a lengthy road trip of their own.

The result was an unleash of pent-up energy that weary Oregon couldn't handle.

According to Williams, it is the Ducks' turn to unleash.

"Washington will definitely get the energy," she said. "It's kind of like when we went to Santa Barbara; it's the same exact situation. It's going to be the same thing here."

UO men

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the Ducks always carries extra meaning:

"I would never characterize it as nasty, but it is very intense," said Bender, who has a 5-8 record against Oregon. "In our seven years, there have always been good games. You never have an easy time."

Last season was no exception, as the Huskies prevailed at home in overtime by a score of 86-76 on Jan. 16.

But on Feb. 13, Oregon got its revenge at McArthur Court by sending the Huskies home with a 94-81 loss.

Bender, who played college ball at Indiana, got well acquainted with the Oregon program back when he was a high school senior. In 1975, then-Oregon head coach Dick Harter unsuccessfully recruited Bender.

"I visited Oregon when I was in high school during the Kamikaze Kids [days]," Bender said. "I knew the Washington-Oregon game was big before I heard the stories."

The rivalry dates back to 1904, with the Huskies holding the 169-93 series lead, including winning three of the last four.

Bender has taken his Huskies to two straight NCAA Tournament berths and four straight postseason appearances, and he sees a win against Oregon as a stepping stone to March.

"When I first came to Washington, one of the first games coach Marv Harshman always talked about was the Oregon game," Bender said. "We've got our program into the tournament for two years, and that's where they want to be. I see the whole Northwest rivalry getting better and better."

This season, however, the tide seems to have turned in the Ducks' direction.

The Huskies are not expected to make much noise in the league this season after losing the towering presence of 7-foot Todd McCulloch and the scoring threat Donald Watts. But thus far they have managed to play competitive ball.

"We have two big road games that we feel we have a chance to win," senior forward A.D. Smith said. "If we can come out of next week 4-1, then we'll be in great shape."

"But we have to take Washington very seriously. They're a hard-nosed team and probably play as hard as anyone in the conference. They're going to be ready."

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