

UO wrestling road trip proves to be bumpy ride

■ The Ducks drop two matches against nationally ranked conference foes

By Matt O'Neill
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Two ranked opponents, two losses.

That was the outcome for the Oregon wrestling team as it wrapped up its recent three-match road trip.

Coming off a tough 20-19 win at Brigham Young, the Ducks hoped to build momentum heading into

the final stretch of the season by knocking off two ranked Pacific-10 Conference foes.

But that was not the case, as Oregon (10-5 overall, 5-3 Pac-10) fell to No. 22 Boise State (7-3, 3-0) and No. 13 Arizona State (9-7, 3-0), snapping its six-match winning streak.

In Idaho, the Oregon grapplers jumped out to an early 11-7 lead after the first four matches, but were unable to score another point for the rest of the night. The Ducks won the first match of the night, as Tony Overstake im-

proved his record to 18-7 on the season by beating former Oregon wrestler, Jay McGuffin (8-3).

The Ducks then suffered two defeats at the hands of Kirk White and Larry Quisel. Quisel defeated junior college transfer Eugene Harris (9-6) at the 157-pound weight-class, while White handed sophomore Leif Williams a 16-6 defeat at the 165-pound category.

The Lee brothers then rallied and propelled the Ducks to their only lead of the night. Freshman Matt Lee, wrestled up a weight-class and defeated BSU's Kyle Kl-

onizos to give Oregon an 8-7 lead. Then nationally-ranked Doug Lee extended that lead to 11-7, when he defeated Cash Edwards by a technical fall (18-1).

However, the Ducks' lead evaporated as the Broncos reeled off 17 consecutive points to win.

Oregon then headed to Tempe, Ariz. to take on ASU, but suffered their 15th loss to the Sun Devils.

The Ducks burst out of the gates quickly, jumping ahead 3-0. Harris got Oregon going when he won the first-match of the night at the 157-pound weight-class. The

sophomore recorded a 6-3 decision over Nick Frost.

But that lead was only temporary as the Ducks managed only two wins the rest of the night. Senior Doug Lee pinned Mike Marshall at the 3:23 mark in the match, and Eric Webb recorded a 7-3 decision over Randy Leydecker in the heavy-weight division.

Head coach Chuck Kearney was forced to juggle his line-up a because of an injury to Jake Lear at the 197-pound position. Kearney moved senior Jesse Kulp up a slot to 184-pounds.

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Pac-10 sweep for the first time since January 1996 — and its first at home since 1992.

Not at all an ideal situation for a team working hard to repeat as Pac-10 champions.

"I wouldn't call it worried," said head coach Jody Runge when asked about her feelings at that point in the game. "I think I was mad."

Suffice to say, Runge was happier after watching her team snap

back from the 13-point deficit.

"When we were down by 13, we had a choice," sophomore Shaquala Williams said. "We could either stay there or jump up over the wall. It was in our control. We said, 'This is our season right here; either we want it or we don't. We're gonna find out.'"

This is what they discovered: Kourtney Shreve wants it.

The freshman guard gave Oregon an unexpected and very necessary infusion of spunk — and 10 big-time points in 16 minutes.

Not surprisingly, forward Lind-

sey Dion — whose minutes are progressively increasing as she recovers from post-concussion syndrome — provided her typical all-out, all-important hustle plays.

And despite a "real bad" stomach ache early, Williams did what she does: defending, scoring, making things happen. She had 25 points, three steals and two assists.

Stimulated largely by the energy of those three, Oregon went on a whirlwind of a run, outscoring the Sun Devils 20-5 in the next 10 minutes. And beside starting to click on offense, the Ducks on the

floor also picked up their defense and rebounding.

Then Shreve capped the surge with a three-pointer that put the Ducks ahead 46-44 with 8 minutes, 4 seconds left.

Oregon, re-energized and refocused, didn't look back, outscoring Arizona State 20-11 the rest of the way.

"All of the time we're playing as hard as we can," Dion said. "But at times we're not doing the little thing and we're not executing, so it doesn't look pretty and it doesn't sit right with us."

Sunday's run, Runge hopes, will help bolster the Ducks' confidence that that type of production is attainable, night-in and night-out.

"We have players who are not playing with great confidence right now," Runge said. "It bears on this team to have individuals put together their best game every time we take the floor. That's what a championship team is all about."

"It's not that we have anything that's broken, it's just if it's coming together right now. I think that it's very probable that it is."

Men's hoops

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the baseline to cut the lead to 47-32, Arizona State started to unravel at the seams. Bryan Bracey, Jones, Smith, and Anthony Norwood scored consecutive baskets to push the Oregon lead to 22 before the Sun Devils' Donnell Knight stopped the bleeding with

a three that cut the Ducks' lead to 57-36.

Unfortunately for Arizona State, Oregon hadn't peaked yet. After two free throws from Smith and bucket by Flo Hartenstein — who had one of his best games of the season with nine points and eight boards on 4-of-6 shooting — the Ducks were embarrassing the Sun Devils, 63-38.

Arizona State's Kyle Dodd cut

the Sun Devils deficit to 79-68 on a steal from guard Darius Wright. But by that time there was under two minutes left and students were having a devil of a time trying exit the arena.

Oregon's defensive effort on House was nothing short of wizardry. House, one of the premier offensive players in the country, was virtually shut down by the Ducks. The Sun Devils' guard was

5 of 19 from the field and managed only 15 points.

The Ducks perimeter defense was so tough that House couldn't manage a three-pointer until there was under five minutes left.

"It was just a great defensive effort and a tremendous job on one of the premier players in the country in Eddie House," Kent said.

Smith, a fifth-year senior, is in uncharted territory. After the fi-

nal game of the first half of conference play, the Ducks have the best conference record in his tenure with the team and one of the best starts in Oregon history.

"It's a cliché, but we really have to take it one at a time," Smith said. "Tonight was a big win. There is a big difference between being 6-3 and 7-2. We're still with-in striking distance of Stanford and Arizona."

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