

Catharine Kendall Emerald

Freshman guard Kourtney Shreve was a major spark for the Ducks Sunday.

Pesznecker

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by eight at halftime.

"I came in pretty confident," Shreve said. "I knew I needed to play hard and be in rhythm. Lately I haven't been in rhythm because I haven't been ready, but once I got in there I knew I was going to play good and the team was together. And knowing that the team was behind you, that was a good thing."

Those who haven't seen Oregon's up-and-coming point guard may say that the gambling Runge happened to shoot the moon, and that despite Shreve's heroics, her 3-for-8 shooting performance suggests she has much growing up to do.

But those who saw Shreve's McArthur Court debut in early November recall the freshman's immediate on-the-floor hustle plays. Fans who have watched Shreve since then have watched her continually fit better into the offense.

From the beginning, Shreve's intensity has been there. On Sunday, the rest of her game caught up.

"Kourtney gave us a huge lift from the outside," Runge said. "Also from a mentality standpoint, [she] very aggressively drove it to the basket and drove it on transition. Just a great mentality that we needed from not being a tentative offensive group to being a very aggressive offensive group."

Shreve was the key player in Oregon's comeback, scoring all 10 of her points in the Ducks' 20-5 run to recapture the lead. Her first points came when she was fouled on a layup and hit the ensuing free throw, cutting Arizona State's lead to six with 16:04 to go.

Shreve hit two more free throws with 11:26 to play. Three possessions later, the freshman sank a jumper that cut the Sun Devils' lead to one.

And then the back-breaker. Shreve, playing with as much

poise and confidence as any starter on either team, stepped up and sank a three-pointer, giving the Ducks its first advantage since leading 22-21 in the first half.

Shreve's dagger sank deep into the heart of Arizona State, which never regained the lead.

"I'm real proud of her," starting point guard Shaquala Williams said. "She stepped in and hit some huge shots, and was the difference in the game."

The 'Shrivel/Shaq' combination was especially effective down the stretch. With both Oregon guards hot from the outside, Arizona State had to extend its defense in the second half, allowing the Ducks several easy buckets in the inside.

"A lot of times I'll let her play the one and [I'll] play the two, but

sometimes she makes me mad because she doesn't call the offense. In the game, I just told her to slide to the two, and be ready to shoot the ball when you get it. She didn't hesitate."

Forward Lindsey Dion, known for her own hustle plays, complemented Shreve for being all over the place.

"I had support definitely from the fans, but the team too," Shreve said. "They were encouraging me a lot, and that helped."

As Shreve walked off the floor with the game in hand, she was embraced by her coach on the sideline, her teammates heartily cheered her and 4,569 fans all showed their love for Oregon's smallest guard.

Scott Pesznecker is Assistant sports editor the Emerald.

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