

UO explodes for 49 runs, beats first four opponents

■ Oregon opens up its 2000 campaign with four straight wins but falls in the championship bracket

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

Rust? What rust? The Oregon softball team jumped out of the gate impressively, outscoring its first four opponents of the season, 49-10, in games played on Friday and Saturday.

The offensive and defensive

displays at the Texas-Arlington/Isuzu Motors Invitational in Grand Prairie helped propel the Ducks to a 4-0 start and move them into the championship bracket Sunday.

But then, the bats went silent. Oregon ran into No. 5 Southern Mississippi hoping of playing two more games, but the Ducks sim-

ply had no answer for Golden Eagle pitcher Courtney Blades and were shutout, 3-0.

Blades confused the Ducks all game by throwing seven innings of one-hit ball. She recorded 14 strikeouts and three walks, and no Oregon runner advanced past first base.

Oregon head coach Rick Gamez was disappointed with the game, but he was encouraged with the weekend overall.

"Today was tough," Gamez said. "We chased too many pitchers, and it took us out of offense. But I am pleased with the way we started the season."

In Friday's opening game, the Ducks crushed Tulsa 15-0. Freshman Andrea Vidlund threw five innings of one-hit ball in her first career start.

The Ducks scored 11 runs in the second inning.

In the next two games, Oregon

beat Bethune-Cookman 13-5 and Southwest Texas 10-2. Vidlund was the star again against Bethune-Cookman, striking out six in relief, and adding two hits and an RBI. Against SW Texas Custer went three-for-three with three RBIs.

On Saturday, Oregon knocked off the host Texas-Arlington Mavericks 11-3. Missy Coe (1), Jill Robinson (2) and Holly Ray (2) led the Ducks in home runs.

The West's stars shine

OAKLAND, Calif. — Vince Carter started things off with a dunk worthy of a contest, Tim Duncan and Shaquille O'Neal played like MVPs and Karl Malone got involved as little as possible.

In an All-Star game that was almost a microcosm of the first half of the season, each star had a chance to show his specialty — and most of them did.

Behind 24 points apiece from Duncan and Kevin Garnett, 22 from O'Neal and 14 assists from Jason Kidd, the West defeated the East 137-126 Sunday in the 49th version of the league's showcase event.

This was the first All-Star game since 1998 because last year's was canceled by the lock-out. Heavy on the fancy stuff, the players put on as much of a show as they could — and Carter's por-

tion of it happened right off the bat.

The first basket for the East was an alley-oop dunk by Carter off a pass from Allen Iverson, while the second bucket was a breakaway slam by Carter that closely resembled one from the dunk contest Saturday night.

Carter did a 360-degree spin to his right, rather than doing it the easy way by spinning left, and dunked the ball with two hands.

The East tried to give Carter another spectacular dunk in the first minute, but Grant Hill's alley-oop pass off the backboard was too hard. Later in the quarter when Eddie Jones tried to zip a pass to Carter and Iverson deflected it out of bounds, Jones grimaced at Iverson as if to say "It's him, not you."

The Associated Press

Men's hoops

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so effective, we knew they were going to come inside and try and take it away," said Kent, who's well on his way to leading the Ducks' to their first NCAA Tournament appearance in his three years with the team. "We also had Alex coming off a double screen, and Flo [Hartenstein] and Freddie [Jones] set a wonderful screen on the weak side. They set Alex up for a big-time three."

Added Scales: "Coach was talking about running one of our set plays, with me coming off the curl," said Scales, who finished with eight rebounds and five assists. "I was coming off looking for the curl, but the three was wide open, and they set a great screen for me. It was an opportunity to knock it

down, and that's what I did."

Scales wasn't finished. On California's next possession, he stripped the ball and fed it to Wright, who was fouled and made both of his free throws to extend Oregon's lead to 63-57.

The Golden Bears' Shantay Legans cut the lead in half with a quick three-pointer, and California had to foul Wright again with less than ten seconds left.

Wright — who was only 2-of-13 from the field in the Ducks' two Bay-Area games — more than made up for it at the line. After missing his first shot, Wright calmly hit his second to put the game out of reach.

Kent said Wright fought through overriding factors to hit some big free throws.

"He didn't eat breakfast this morning because he had a bad headache, and he was under the weather," Kent said. "But he gut-

ted it up in this environment, and he did other things on the floor that gave us the opportunity to get out of here with a victory."

California coach Ben Braun said he felt Wright found ways to contribute besides scoring.

"Our guys will probably look at the stats and see Wright was 1-of-7 from the field and feel he didn't play that well," Braun told the Register-Guard. "But he had no turnovers, and that's a tremendous accomplishment in a hostile environment. And he hit the free throws at the end."

Kent was impressed with his team's performance in one of the more hostile arenas in the country.

"We lost our composure a couple of times, but we really did a good job defensively," Kent said. "It was a tremendous victory out here because this is a tough environment to play in."

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 14). A brilliant conversationalist could convince you to settle down. Your dreams are glorious in February, but you could run into financial problems in March. Who needs money when you've got love? Find a new source of inspiration in April and apply elbow grease to get the structure you need in May. Play like a child in June and team up with a strong partner in August. Learn the truth about a friend in December. Be warmed by an older person's love in January.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Today is a 7 — You are full of questions, but you're not getting all the right answers. You shouldn't give up. You may not have completely dominated your competition yet, but you are wearing them down. Persistence is a marvelous skill to acquire. Practice.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Today is a 7 — Other people are in the mood to talk. So, ask leading questions of the people who know, and then take notes. You are naturally good at saving money, but you could be better. Don't learn more because you have to; do it because it's so much fun!

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) — Today is a 7 — You are amazingly intelligent right now. Not only are you curious and quick, but you also have patience and persistence. All of this is important if you're going to master a complicated subject. Get a friend to help, too, just for the fun of it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) — Today is a 6 — Dig through the papers and find all the good deals. The early bird gets the worm, right? Well, that goes for crustaceans, too. Think how miserable you'd be if you found a double coupon for your favorite item after it had already expired!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Today is a 6 — You could stumble into an interesting discussion. A friend of yours is an expert in something you'd like to know more about. Hang out around that person as much as possible now. You could pick up more valuable information than you would in a master class!

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Today is a 7 — A person who's pushing you hard could be right. There's plenty of work to be done, and you can learn to do it their way. Don't do it all for the same money, however. You're being trained, and the more well-trained you are, the more you're worth.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) — Today is an 8 — You are the lucky one, three out of three! You have a grand trine in air signs, and that's all good! Use your magnificent talent with words to talk your sweetheart into doing what you want. It'll be easy!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21) — Today is a 6 — You should be able to find a good deal or two. If you try to buy something from a private party, you're sure to hear a long story about its history. If you tell them what you think it's worth, however, that's probably all you'll have to pay for it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Today is a 6 — You could run into a few conflicts today — and possibly even an argument or two. That's partially because you're doing things differently than before. You're not content with the status quo. You're growing, but sometimes that's awkward. Relax.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Today is a 7 — Go through your correspondence carefully. There's a way of making or saving money that you haven't stumbled onto yet. It's practically underfoot, so it could happen at any moment. If you go through a nearby stack of paperwork, you may find it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Today is a 7 — You may run into a bit of a problem. Something you'd like to purchase for a loved one is simply too much money. A fix you've figured out for something at home could work, however. That doesn't cost you much at all. So, it all evens out in the long run.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Today is a 7 — You may discover things you didn't know about your home or family. If you're in escrow, this is good. Better you should find out now, than later. If you're not in escrow, you might be by the time the next few days are over. After that, you'll be in the mood to make big changes.

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GO DUCKS!