

Women

continued from page 7A who went off for 31 points in last season's win at The Pit. "This is different because they're a half game behind us. It has huge implications for the Pac-10 and the tournament, so it's a must-win but every game from now is.

Twice in a row, Oregon has beaten the higher-ranked Bruins by a combined margin of: 36 points.

'We've beaten them twice," Jody Runge said. "That's going to be salt in their wounds, and this is a difficult place to play for them." Which is why the Bruins have

spent this week's practice working on communication skills.

"Any time you go into Mac Court you gotta be ready for an unbelievable amount of noise," UCLA head coach Kathy Olivier said. "We need to be good communicators, something haven't done a great job of this year."

the whole aura of playing at

UCLA is gone for most of us," said

Smith, who leads the team in

scoring (15.6) and rebounding (6.0) per game. "They have the opportunity to play well against

great teams, and sometimes they

don't play as well against teams they should beat.

"We're confident going in, and we realize they are looking for kind of a payback, because there was a lot of emotion when we

UCLA's loss at McArthur Court

on Jan. 29 was the beginning of

what might turn out to be the end

for the Bruins. Despite an early

lead, the then-No. 20 Bruins lost

their composure and were run out

We're a matter of degrees

played them here.

Men

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Oregon is coming off a downto-the-wire victory at Washington, in which the Ducks found themselves capable of formidable resilience, coming back from an eight-point deficit in the final minutes for the 70-69 win. It was an especially compelling comeback because it happened with Shaq on the sidelines for the final 6 1/2 minutes after she fouled out for the first time in her career.

"Of course we don't want [Williams] out of the game," said freshman point guard Kourtney Shreve, who took over for Shaq. "But if we're in those kinds of situations we can fight back and get a good outcome out of it; it boosts our confidence knowing that."

UCLA is also fresh off a big win. The Bruins beat Arizona 80-66 on Saturday, knocking the Wildcats out of first place.

Sophomore Michelle Greco came through with an admirable performance. The reserve guard who - like Oregon's Lindsey Dion - has had to deal with con-

cussion-like symptoms throughout the season, was 7 of 7 from the field and finished with 22 points and six steals.

"She has come in and provided some excellent minutes," Olivier said. "I think she's definitely the best sixth player in the Pac-10."

The Ducks, it should be noted, have a outstanding sixth player themselves

Forward Brianne Meharry is averaging 10.6 points and 6 rebounds per game, compared to Greco's 10.5 and 3.3.

Dion, having recovered from her concussion, is struggling with a knee injury.

"She was in a lot of pain in the Washington game," Runge said. "It is a distraction, she just isn't as productive a player as she is when she's not in pain."

Nonetheless, Oregon is 15-3 with Dion in the starting lineup and 4-3 without.

Bruins' senior Marie Philman is six points away from recording her 1,000th career point.

of The Pit, 73-58.

"They put us in a hole, and we were really fortunate to get our running game going," said Oregon head coach Ernie Kent, who is 50-33 in three years as head coach. "Then they became stagnant, and we did some things defensively to give them problems. And that was the difference in the game." Since then, UCLA has fallen

hard. The Bruins have lost six of their last seven games, and the Los Angeles media blasted them for their lack of effort in two embarrassing losses to the Arizona schools last weekend.

Despite their poor performanc-es of late, Oregon doesn't expect to face a UCLA team that is going to roll over and die.

'When they lost to Arizona and Arizona State, both those teams took the fight to UCLA and took some things out of them," Kent said. "UCLA showed up to play; they just got neutralized in some

"It's a fallacy to think that a team with the tradition of UCLA, with the athleticism they have, and with the McDonald's All-Americans on their roster, that the team is not going to come out ready to play hard and aggressive. The key thing is how we respond and neutralize some things. In no way is that team going to just lie down and quit." "I think they're one of the most

talented teams in the league, and we'll have to play well to win down there," Smith said. "We've played well down there the last two years and had great opportu-nities to win. We'll have to play equally as well to give ourselves a chance to win this time around."

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