



Catharine Kendall Emerald

The Duck's bench performs its ritualistic cheer as a teammate sinks a free throw. Oregon's 73.6-percent shooting at the stripe ranks second in the Pac-10 conference.

Women

continued from page 7

ting up and wrapping her arms around her knees as teammates and trainers hovered around her. Mac Court became abruptly silent until Dion hobbled to the bench a minute later.

At that point the 7,465 in attendance — and the Oregon bench — let Phillman hear it, roaring in disapproval.

"I wanted to jump off the bench and go tackle that girl," sophomore forward Jamie Craighead said. "I don't know if she meant to do it, emotions get to you, but that was a pretty hard foul. And she took her down from behind. Everybody was pretty feisty on the bench; we were ready to go out and tackle the girl."

Phillman is close friends with Oregon senior guard Nicole Strange, who was on the court when the foul occurred. Strange turned to her pal before running to Dion's side.

"I went up to her, and I was like, 'What the hell is that, Marie?'" Strange said. "And she goes, 'I didn't mean to hit her.' And I was like, 'Do you know that if she gets one more concussion she's out? Do you know that she has a bad knee?' And she was like, 'No.' She felt really bad."

Indeed, Phillman and Dion embraced on the court when the game was over. And Phillman later sought out Dion in the trainer's room to apologize again.

"I'm sure it looked a lot worse than what she actually meant," Dion said. "I know Marie and that wouldn't be like her to try to hurt me, but she was caught up in the frustration of the game. She's apologized 100 times [because] she felt really bad."

Even so, the intentional foul has already taken a toll on the Ducks' hopes of reclaiming the Pacific-10 Conference title.

Appearing almost completely healthy, thanks in part to a cortisone shot she received last Mon-

day, Dion was a major contributor against UCLA, scoring a career-high 17 points and collecting a team-high seven boards. And while she was available for Saturday's 69-63 loss to Southern California, it was only on a limited basis. And not as the real Dion.

In 15 minutes, coming in chunks at the beginning and end of the game, she turned in a most un-Dion-like performance: 15 minutes, no points, no rebounds, no steals, no assists and six turnovers.

"I did as good as I could," said Dion. "I physically wasn't myself. If I can't play like myself there really isn't a point to it."

"If I can't dive after a ball or go in for a rebound then I'm not serving myself in any way; I'm not helping my team in any way. Then it's best if I just sat."

The next three games have bearing on not just the Pac-10 championship but also on the NCAA Tournament.

"Coach Runge mentioned that if we fall this weekend we could not make it to the tournament," Craighead said. "That's huge. The race is so tight right now; Oregon State could go if we lose and they win."

Winning-out was a must before the USC loss. Now, winning-out — on the road against Arizona State and Arizona on Thursday and Saturday, and then at home against Oregon State a week later — is more imperative, and harder without true play out of Dion, who's averaging 7.3 points and two assists per game.

To help the situation, Lisa Bowyer and Natasha O'Brien, last season's senior leaders, joined the team at practice Monday.

"That was cool," Craighead said. "They were trying to give us some more pressure situations. Obviously Lisa is, like, defensive queen. And Tash can score at will. I heard they [were coming], but I didn't know if that was rumor, so when I saw them walk in I was like, 'Oh, you guys are serious now — you must be trying to tell us something.'"

Yeah, the season is on the line.

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NBA briefs

Status of Smith, Grant in doubt for Lakers game

PORTLAND, Ore. — The decision on whether Steve Smith and Brian Grant will play Tuesday night against the Los Angeles Lakers will be a "game-time decision," Portland Trail Blazers coach Mike Dunleavy said Monday.

The players did not practice Monday.

Smith, who suffered a slightly sprained left ankle when he fell backwards over John Stockton in Sunday's 101-92 victory over the Utah Jazz, said his ankle was sore but that he expected to play against the Lakers.

Grant, who was limping in the second half of Sunday's game and came out with 5 1/2 minutes to go, has soreness on the bottom of his right foot.

Iverson has a torn rotator cuff

PHILADELPHIA — Allen Iverson may miss Tuesday's game against Dallas because of a partially torn right rotator cuff, a Philadelphia 76ers team doctor said Monday.

Iverson did not practice Monday after complaining of soreness in his right shoulder. An MRI test revealed a bruise and partial tear of the shoulder. Iverson's status is listed as day-to-day.

Heat 85, Knicks 76

MIAMI — The Miami Heat overcame Alonzo Mourning's absence and a 20-point first-half deficit Monday night, rallying

past the New York Knicks 85-76 to remain in first place in the Atlantic Division.

Sparked by Jamal Mashburn and Clarence Weatherspoon, the shorthanded Heat came back with smothering defense after they fell behind 37-17. The Knicks started 12-for-16 but shot just 30 percent the rest of the way.

Miami, which has led the division for nearly the entire season, pulled 1 1/2 games ahead of New York.

SuperSonics 84, Hornets 81

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Gary Payton scored 32 points and the SuperSonics held struggling Charlotte to 32 percent shooting in the second half.

Payton had 21 points in the second half, going 5-for-8 from 3-point range, to help send the Hornets to their third consecutive loss and their fifth in seven games.

Payton added nine rebounds, eight assists and two steals for Seattle, which began a five-game road trip by holding Charlotte to just three field goals in the final five-plus minutes.

Mavericks 108, Celtics 100

BOSTON — Dirk Nowitzki scored 26 points, including a pair of key 3-pointers in the fourth quarter, and Erick Strickland added 19.

Dallas improved to 4-4 since the arrival of Dennis Rodman, who was on his best behavior as he scored four points and grabbed 16 rebounds.

The Associated Press

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