

Women

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Pac-10 coaches argue that four Pac-10 teams should receive invites to the NCAA Tournament, but they also agree that doesn't mean it will actually happen.

"The champion is a shoo-in," said head coach Jody Runge, whose teams have appeared in the Big Dance in each of her six seasons at Oregon. "But beyond that, a lot of things can happen."

"There's no room not to be worried about going to the NCAA Tournament at this time of the year. [Southern California] was a win we really needed, so it puts a lot of pressure on the next trip."

The pressure is on, and the co-defending Pac-10 champs are up to their necks in it. Especially after losing to the sixth-place Women of Troy last Saturday.

Oregon is at Arizona State (13-11, 6-8) today at 7 p.m. and then in Tuscon to take on the Wildcats in a Saturday game televised by Fox Sports Net at 1 p.m.

"We need to go down to Arizona and get a couple of big wins," said junior forward Lindsey Dion, who is expected to see limited playing time after further aggravating the lateral meniscus in her right knee against UCLA. "That loss to USC really backed us into a corner. Now we've gotta come out fighting."

It's not going to be an easy fight.

Both Arizona teams are celebrating senior weekend. So besides being jazzed about respective post-season implications, they'll also be determined to send their seniors — a total of eight on both teams — off on a positive note.

Surely the situation will give the Sun Devils a boost. But it could be especially dangerous against senior-driven No. 20 Arizona, a team that tends to thrive on emotion anyway.

"It's a very emotional week for us," Wildcats' head coach Joan Bonvacini said. "We have a number of seniors."

Starting guard Nicole Strange is the only senior on the Ducks' roster. She's shooting above 50 percent from the field on the season, thereby producing 10.4 points per game, to go with 3.2 rebounds, 2.5



Senior guard Nicole Strange doesn't want things to go foul in the Ducks' final road trip of the season. *Catharine Kendall Emerald*

assists and one steal. She is, in Runge's words, "maximizing her potential."

Understandably, these last few games are important for Strange, and that's why the USC loss stung her so much.

"Yeah, there is [a sense of urgency]," Strange said. "In the USC game I wasn't the only one playing with urgency, but it didn't seem like the whole team was, you know? After the game, some people weren't that upset ..."

To get wins this weekend, Oregon will need to find a way to match the Arizona schools' desire and intensity. The Ducks must also find a way to withstand on-the-court defensive pressure.

In this season's previous encounters, both the Sun Devils and the 'Cats — like the majority of the Ducks' opponents — applied

a variety of defensive presses, all of which served to effectively disrupt Oregon's offensive rhythm.

Last weekend, a USC press did the same, forcing the Ducks into a season-high 27 turnovers.

To counter, Oregon needs point guard Shaquala Williams to stay on her game. The sophomore is averaging a conference-best 17.6 points per game, and she could become the first Oregon player to lead the conference in scoring.

Angelina Wolvert supplements the offense with 11.9 points per game, thanks to her conference-leading 61.4 percent field goal percentage.

"We've got three games left in the regular season," Dion said. "We're not doing this very much longer. We've got to stay focused, take care of business."

Freshman Seminars

Spring 2000

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For more information, see page 75 in the Spring UO Schedule of Classes.

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