

Emerald

Forward Angelina Wolvert earns All-Pac-10 honors for the first time in her career for her consistent post play throughout the season.

Women's recap

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Blazer head coach Lynn Dustin and Runge are "definitely friends; we just don't have time to stay in touch," Runge said. "It will be fun to show her what Oregon is really like."

Despite the postseason and the Pac-10 title, the 2000 basketball season wasn't peaches and cream.

There were plenty of moments Oregon could have done without, like when Southern California guard Tiffany Elmore — who beat California with a buzzer-beater on Saturday — overturned the Ducks with a possibly late shot as time expired.

Or in the preseason, when Brianna Meharry missed a free throw with no time left that could have tied the game against Southwest Missouri. Or when then-No. 22 Oregon lost to unranked San Francisco. "I would rather not have had the losses, but things happen for a reason," Runge said earlier this season.

Perhaps the darkest moment was in Palo Alto, Calif., when Stanford roared back from a 26-point deficit and won by 16 on national television. The Ducks' disbelief with their loss was apparent in Williams' on-line diary.

"I feel like the worst point guard in the country," the Pac-10 Player of the Year said. "How did I let my team lose a 26-point lead?"

But a few sentences later, Williams summarizes in a nutshell what was yet to come for her team: "You live and learn, I guarantee you that I will never lose again like I did at Stanford."

Williams was right on the money.

The Ducks did lose three more times — to Arizona and twice to the Trojans — but nothing like what happened at Maples Pavilion.

Oregon returned the Cardinal's favor by beating them in a pivotal game at Mac Court in February, putting the two teams in a tie for the conference lead.

Wins that kept Oregon within

striking distance of first place throughout the season would not have been possible without the depth of the bench. Kourtney Shreve, Alyssa Fredrick, Ndidi Unaka and Courtney Moore all contributed breakout games at what seemed to be just the right moments.

For example: Shreve scored 10 points in the Ducks' 20-5 scoring run against Arizona State, including the three-pointer that put Oregon up 46-44 with eight minutes, four seconds to play.

And then there were moments when the Ducks came through with the entire season hanging in the balance.

The Ducks trailed Washington on the road, 67-58, with 4:19 to play. A loss at that point would have meant no title, no NCAA home berth and a broken streak of beating Northwest teams 26 times.

It was a game that the Huskies were on their way to winning until Jamie Craighead made something happen, albeit inadvertently.

Catching the ball outside the three-point line, the sophomore guard/forward swung the ball high above her head, connecting with and breaking Washington's Megan Franza's nose with her elbow. Not only did the elbow take Franza out of the game, but it got Oregon back into it. They outscored the Dawgs down the stretch and won, 70-69, on an Angelina Wolvert layin.

Again, with everything on the line against Arizona in Tucson, Oregon staged a heroic comeback from a 22-point deficit early in the second half, winning 75-71.

"They've worked tremendously hard and have been through a lot of very difficult things," Runge said. "The thing that's possibly most special about this team is how close they stay together."

"Sometimes when you go through hard struggles you have one choice or the other, which is come together or be selfish and not come together. I think this team has no tough things to handle, and they did a great job of putting it together."

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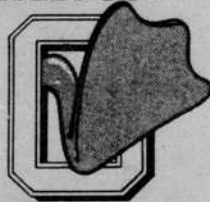
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