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Senior Flo Hartenstein and his Oregon teammates had their NCAA Tournament dreams crushed by Seton Hall in the first round. *Newark Star Ledger*

**Men's loss**  
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ble. As the Oregon bench stood waiting to celebrate the Ducks' first NCAA Tournament victory since 1960, he drove on Oregon seniors Alex Scales and A.D. Smith and let the ball roll off of the fingers on his right hand.

It seemed to glide in slow motion as it floated through the air, bounced off the top of the glass and sank through the net.

With that, Oregon's (22-8) dream sank as well.

And Seton Hall's (21-9) season continued all the way to the Sweet 16, while the Ducks parted ways to enjoy a lengthy spring break.

"I don't think it was one of our better games," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "I really felt like we were going to win the game, in regulation and in overtime."

And boy, the Ducks did have their chances to win in front of the sold-out crowd of 18,920.

Oregon was down 62-60 after the Pirates' Darius Lane drilled three of his 14 points with 1:36 left in regulation.

The Ducks then gave the ball to junior forward Bryan Bracey down in the post. Bracey created and hit a spinning bank to tie it up.

Oregon went right back to Bracey with 12.7 ticks left. Bracey was fouled and sank two free throws to give his team the two-point advantage, and possibly the win.

But Holloway dished to his teammate — senior Rimas Kaukenas — who proceeded to bank home a layin to force overtime.

"I don't know what [Oregon] was

thinking," Kaukenas said. "I'm just happy to make the layup."

Even when the whole season came down to five precious minutes, the Ducks still believed they'd win. After all, they'd been in do-or-die situations many times.

Except that this time, the last-second defensive collapse against Holloway meant that there would be no tomorrow.

Sure, there will be other college basketball games for Kent, Bracey and Jones.

But for Oregon's three seniors, the loss marked the end of three terrific collegiate careers.

"It's difficult to realize the finality of this right now," said a somber Smith in front of the visibly distraught Oregon locker room. "It's disappointing to go out like this. I think Seton Hall did a great job at containing our transition game."

Indeed, Oregon was often forced to play the half-court game. Scales could never get into his open court rhythm. He closed out his Duck career with 16 points, but went just six of 16.

A lasting memory will be Smith's face when Darius Wright's half-court heave fell woefully short.

Smith, who sat on the bench for most of the conclusion, stood still. Then in disbelief, he lowered his mask-covered face for a moment before looking back up slowly to see Seton Hall players celebrating.

Afterwards, Kent's reasoning for Smith's unusual late-game benching was the hot hand of Bracey.

"A.D. did a good job of getting us off to a good start," said Kent of Smith who scored 15 of his team-high 17 points in the first half. "But there was a point where he was kind of neutralized by their athleti-

cism. You shouldn't wonder when you look at Bracey's numbers. Bryan was in a good rhythm and we wanted to ride that rhythm."

Bracey scored all 10 of his points in the second half, but in the opening half it was Smith who kept the Ducks in it.

Seton Hall jumped out to a quick 12-4 lead, which was extended to 20-12 at the 12:30 mark.

But behind Smith's crafty play the Ducks went on a 23-16 run to close it to 36-35 at the half.

Oregon appeared to keep control in the second half, as Scales connected on a three-pointer to give the Ducks their first lead, 38-36, with 19:14 to play.

But in the ensuing 12 minutes the Pirates stormed to a ten-point lead thanks to a 21-9 run, capped by a Kaukenas jumper.

Then, as the Ducks were one or two more Seton Hall buckets away from having a fork stuck in them, came the Anthony Norwood show.

The sophomore guard almost single-handedly kept his team in it.

He began a 9-0 Duck run with back-to-back driving layups, and capped the run by banging home three of his nine points.

"It felt good, but I just wish I could have done more for our seniors," Norwood said. "Being here just makes me want to come back next year even more."

The future does seem to be in good hands with Kent and his returning players, but afterwards it was tough for the coach not to wonder "What if..."

"I just thought this win would reenergize us in terms of the next game," Kent said. "It would give us more confidence."

Kent can't go back in time and change the outcome of the game. He knows his team participated "in a great game for the fans to see" but he nonetheless wishes things would have gone differently.

Holloway, however, couldn't have written a better ending to his first NCAA Tournament game.

"Growing up as a little kid you watch the NCAA Tournament and see people doing stuff like that, and you think that one day I want to be a part of that," Holloway said. "It's just a great ending to a great story."

And a heartbreaking one for Oregon, which closed the book on a season that included some truly incredible chapters.

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