

Ducks back to square one

■ Two weeks before the Pac-10s, women's golf struggles this weekend

By Peter Hockaday
for the Emerald

Ouch. This one hurt. After winning two straight tournaments, No. 24 Oregon women's golf traveled to Tempe, Ariz., and was run out of town at the Ping/Arizona State Invitational, finishing 13th of 15 teams. With the postseason looming,

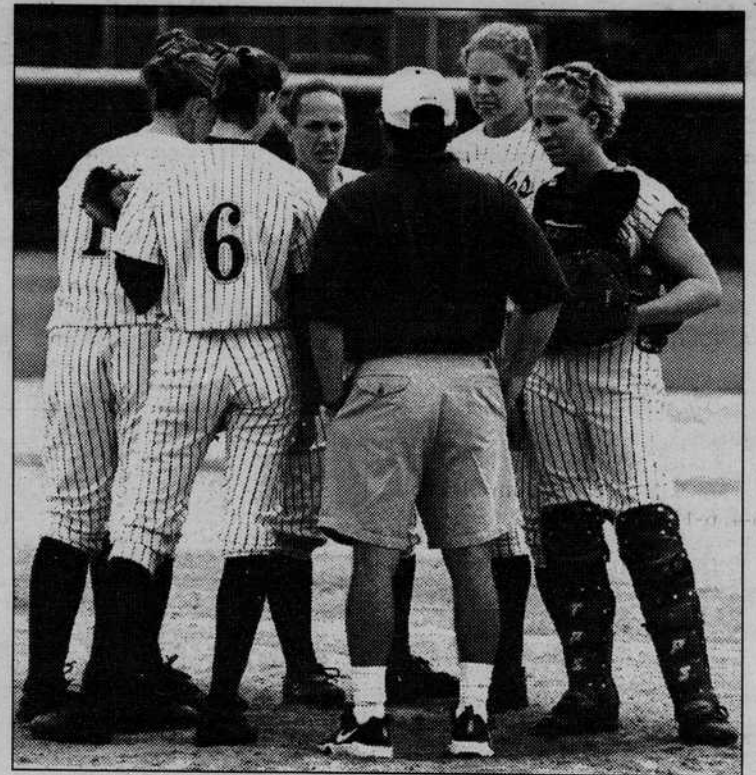
the poor performance does not bode well for the Ducks. In two weeks, Oregon hosts the Pacific-10 Championships at the Eugene Country Club, and the NCAA West Regionals follow in early May. The Ducks must return to top form before the regionals, or they may be traveling to Sunriver for the NCAA Championships as spectators rather than as players.

Individually, seniors Angie Rizzo and Anika Heuser were able to pull Oregon out of the cellar on the final day of play in Arizona. The

duo combined for a two-over par 146, Oregon's best two-round combo in the tournament. Led by Rizzo and Heuser, the Ducks moved up three spots on the final day.

Rizzo and fellow senior Pam Sowden had the Ducks' lowest scores, whooping 230 and tying for 44th overall. The Ducks were without a top-40 finisher at a tournament for the first time this season.

The Arizona schools dominated play. The No. 1 Wildcats stole the tournament from the host No. 4 Sun Devils.



Kevin Calame Emerald

Oregon tries to regroup after Washington scores the game's only run Sunday.

Ducks' bats quieted in weekend sweep

■ The Oregon softball team drops three games to two conference powers

By Matt O'Neill
Oregon Daily Emerald

There is no joy in Duckville. As No. 22 Oregon softball team totaled only eight hits all weekend as they dropped all three of its games of the home stand and lowered their record to 24-16 overall and 1-3 in the grueling Pacific-10 Conference.

The Ducks lost to No. 3 UCLA 6-0 on Friday and dropped two against top-ranked Washington 6-1 on Saturday and 1-0 on Sunday.

"This was the toughest weekend for us all together," head coach Rick Gamez said. "But by the same token, this is the level where we want to get to."

As the weekend progressed, Oregon seemed the gain more confidence with the way they played. Connie McMurren (9-11) pitched a three-hitter in Sunday's 1-0 loss.

"I felt like I threw one of the best games I've thrown," McMurren said. "I felt that I had control of all my pitches today and I was hitting all my spots."

The only trouble spot for McMurren was in the fourth where she gave the only run of the game. The inning started for the Huskies when Kim Depaul was hit by a pitch. Jaime Clark then walked to put runners on first and second with none out.

McMurren then induced a double play ball from Jenny Topping before Jennifer Spediacci singled to score Depaul from third for the only run of the game.

The Ducks had only two real scoring threats against Spediacci (23-1) and the Huskies. In the top of the first, Oregon loaded the bases with one out before Spediacci closed the door with two of her 13 strikeouts.

"When you have an opportunity like that, you better take advantage," Gamez said. "Because there's not going to be very many more."

The only other time the Ducks got a runner in scoring position was in the fourth when Holly Ray led off with a double, but was un-

able to score as the next three batters went down in order.

Saturday's game saw the Ducks get outscored 6-1 by the same Washington team. The Huskies were led by Clark at the plate and Spediacci again on the mound. Clark, a freshman from Tustin, Calif., went two for three with four runs batted in and a three-run homer. Spediacci pitched a complete game shut out, striking out eight on the day.

The big inning for the Huskies came in the top of the third when Kelly Hauxhurst started the inning with a single. Rosie Leutzinger was hit by a pitch to put runners on first and second. Depaul sacrifice-bunted to move the runners and Clark followed with her round tripper.

Freshman Andrea Vidlund scored the only run for the Ducks on a solo four-bagger in the bottom of the seventh, her first of the year. She also pitched 3 1/3 innings of one-hit ball in relief of starter Danielle Haag.

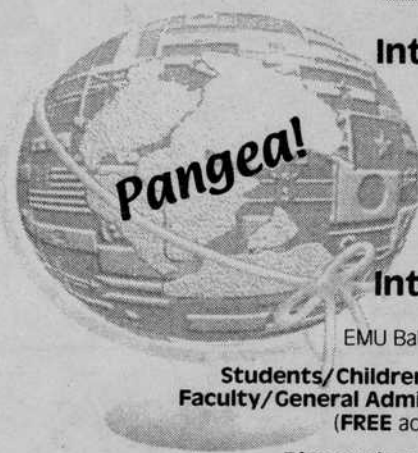
"[Vidlund] has pretty good pop, she's a big talent," Gamez said. "She can play the outfield, she can pitch, and she can play the infield. She can play just about anywhere on the field and I would feel confident with at any position. It's just a matter of her gaining her confidence and being ready to go."

The weekend opened with a 6-0 loss to UCLA in a game marred by five errors by the Ducks. The Bruins came alive in the fifth inning to score three runs, two of them unearned as Oregon committed two of their errors in the inning.

"We lost our focus today, and we lost some intensity," Gamez said. "We have to be tough mentally here at home."

UCLA starter Amanda Freed went the distance to pick up her 12th win on the season. Freed, an alternate on the U.S. Olympic team, got stronger as the game went along, not allowing a hit after the second inning and only walking three.

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