

A win in Corvallis would boost UO

■ A struggling Oregon volleyball squad is confident and wants to make noise in the second half of Pac-10 play

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

Less than a month ago, the Oregon volleyball team was riding high after taking its first three Pacific-10 Conference opponents into the fifth game of the match — something the team failed to do even once last season.

Since Sept. 19, though, the wings have essentially stopped flapping.



GERLACH

The Ducks' only win in their last 10 matches came against a winless Portland State squad.

"It's been extremely frustrating," senior outside hitter Amy Banducci said.

"But we need to look ahead at what we can control. We've got nothing to lose now. We just have to rise above it."

After this Thursday's match at Oregon State — a team that Oregon narrowly lost to earlier this season — the Ducks will get a break from brutal Pac-10 competition and host the University of California-Riverside on Sunday.

"It's definitely disappointing that we haven't won," sophomore setter Sydney Chute said. "But we're not dwelling on the past. We're only looking to improve from here."

In comparison to recent years, the players know they have made improvements under first-year head coach Carl Ferreira. In their 3-1 match loss at Washington, the Ducks won their seventh individual game in the Pac-10 — two more wins than they had all of last season.

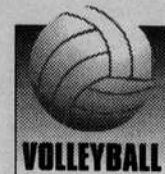
"We've had some key aspects of our game come together that weren't clicking before," Chute said.

Confidence is magic

Although they have yet to win a Pac-10 match, the Ducks are still remaining optimistic about the second half of the season.

"We know we can do it," Chute said. "We have confidence in the coaching staff and each other. We just have to prove what we can do."

A win this week could give the team a much-needed boost.



"We are hurting a little bit," Banducci said. "But we have been in a lot of close matches and showed that we can compete in this conference."

Setting the stage

Setter Julie Gerlach was on a mission Friday at Washington. The 6-foot junior from Scottsdale, Ariz., recorded 13 kills and hit .480, both career highs. The performance came after Gerlach was benched for a match against Arizona the previous week.

“We know we can do it. We have confidence in the coaching staff and each other. We just have to prove what we can do.”

Sydney Chute
Oregon setter

Her 2,193 career assists rank fifth all-time in school history. Gerlach and Chute are both benefiting from more touches with Ferreira's new offensive system. Together, the duo is averaging 10.3 assists per game.

In the leaderboard

A school record 7,298 fans watched the No. 5 Arizona Wildcats (15-2, 8-1) sweep Pac-10 powerhouse USC (14-1, 8-1) last Friday. The Women of Troy, the nation's top hitting team, were held to a mere .139 attack percentage in Tucson. As the nation's second-best attacking team, the Wildcats also hit a below-average .219 from the floor.

The 10th-ranked UCLA Bruins (12-5, 7-2) beat Arizona to give the Wildcats their first loss of the season Thursday night. The Bruins trail USC and Arizona by just one game atop the Pac-10 standings.

All three teams swept Oregon in their first meetings of the year

day, Steffen said. Versatile senior T.J. Johnson was also supposed to play this weekend and didn't.

Beth Bowler, the team's third-leading scorer, also missed last weekend's action, but Steffen said that she should return to the Ducks' lineup this Friday.

Breathing easier

This weekend will mark one of the few times this season that the Ducks will play a soccer game without facing a ranked opponent. Since the Tennessee Tournament in September, the Ducks have faced at least one top-25 team every weekend. Steffen insists the game still has as much importance as a top-25 game because it has as much intensity.

But past history would suggest this Civil War is a little less than intense. The Ducks will take on Oregon State Friday at 3 p.m. on Papé Field.

Soccer

continued from page 7

both Arizona and Arizona State last weekend by beating both teams.

Crystal phone home

Junior forward Crystal David's torn knee ligament must be worse than she originally thought.

The team's second leading scorer has now missed four games because of the injury. She was supposed to play last weekend against UCLA and USC but sat out both games. She is listed as probable to play on Fri-



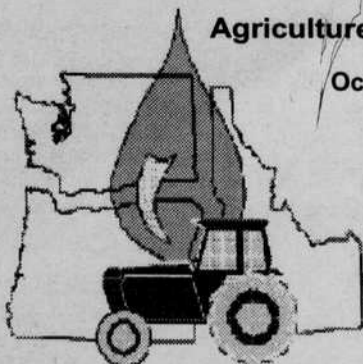
BOWLER

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