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Golfers finish last at Stanford

■ The women's golf team doesn't recover after dropping to last place on the second day of the Stanford/Pepsi Intercollegiate.

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

On the plane ride home from this weekend's tournament in Palo Alto, Calif., the Oregon women's golf team might as well have played some Citizen King over the speakers.

"I've seen better days," the song "Better Days," says. "And the bottom drops out."

The bottom dropped out on the Ducks this weekend, as they finished 18th of 18 teams at the Stanford/Pepsi Intercollegiate in Palo Alto.

The golfers were 16th after one round, but dropped to 18th after a second-round 321, the highest single-round score of the tournament

until Washington State matched it on Sunday. Oregon followed its 321 performance with a 320 on Sunday, and couldn't catch the Cougars, who finished six strokes ahead of the Ducks in 17th.

The 18th-place finish was the Ducks' worst of the year. Oregon finished 19th at the rain-shortened NCAA Preview in September, but the field was 21 teams there.

Top-ranked Arizona won the tournament by six strokes over No. 3 Southern California, continuing its unbeaten streak in complete tournaments to an unprecedented 10 competitions. The Wildcats, last season's NCAA Champions, beat

out nine other top-25 teams to take the title at the Stanford-Pepsi.

Arizona also beat heavy competition from its Pacific-10 Conference foes. Besides USC, No. 5 Stanford finished third, Arizona State finished seventh, UCLA finished eighth and California finished 12th.

Tulsa's Stacy Prammanasudh shot six under par through the tournament's final two days to win the individual title at the Stanford/Pepsi, beating Arizona's Lorena Ochoa by three strokes. Prammanasudh helped her team to a fourth-place finish. Arizona had three players—Ochoa, Natalie Gulbis and Cristina Baena—finish in the top 10, while USC had two.

Oregon's next tournament is the Hawaii Fall Golf Classic in Oahu, Hawaii, October 31-November 1.

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The Wildcats were trailing by four and had the ball at the Oregon 36-yard line. The game, and possession of first place in the Pacific-10 Conference, was on the line.

Autzen Stadium was in a nervous frenzy. Arizona quarterback Ortege Jenkins acted with calm confidence.

It was the perfect offense versus defense scenario.

First pass: Incomplete. Eighteen seconds left.

Second pass: Incomplete. Eleven seconds left.

Third pass: Incomplete. Two seconds left.

Fourth and final pass: A rainbow heave that floated through the air and fell crashing to the ground when Oregon cornerback Ryan

Mitchell batted the ball down.

For those brief seconds when Jenkins' hail-Mary floated, everyone in the stadium held their breath.

It was what college football is all about.

"Our defense has been the backbone and it was fitting that we were on the field in the end," Oregon defensive end Jason Nikolao said.

Yes, it would have been easier to play and watch if Oregon had beaten the Wildcats 52-17. But playing in a hard-nosed defensive battle where the game is always in doubt is good for the team to experience.

Especially since there is one game looming on the schedule that is bound to be a nail-biting showdown: The Civil War Nov. 18.

With No. 18 Oregon State beating UCLA on the road, it has become clear that the road to Pasadena comes through the state of Oregon.

But are any of the players letting such rosy aspirations slip out of their mouths and avoid their usual "one game at a time" mantra?

Nikolao is.

"Right now I'm thinking about uh... yeah, to tell you the truth, I'm thinking about the Rose Bowl," he said. "I'm not gonna lie. Go get your tickets and we'll meet you down there."

The 1994 Oregon team that went to the Rose Bowl has been hailed as one of the greatest teams in Duck history. That team also beat Arizona at home, but guess what the final score was?

A forgettable 10-9, Ducks.

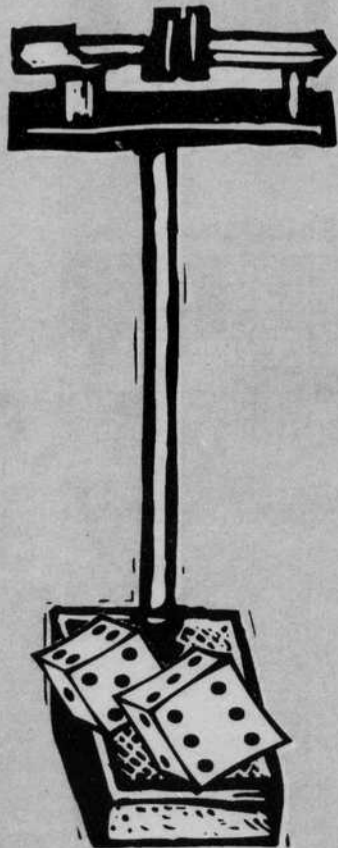
See, a win is a win is a win.

Jeff Smith is the sports editor of the Emerald. He can be reached at Smittside@aol.com.



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