

Ducks hope to catch winning bug in Arizona

■ The Oregon volleyball squad searches for a second Pac-10 victory against Arizona and Arizona State

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

In a conference that features three of the nation's top-10 teams and four of the top-15 teams, the Oregon volleyball squad never has an easy night.

And this week's schedule is no exception.

The Ducks (9-12 overall, 1-11 Pacific-10 Conference) are in Arizona for back-to-back matches against the Sun Devils and the No. 4 Wildcats tonight and Friday, respectively. For an Oregon team that is not satisfied with its overall performance this season, this is its chance to shine.

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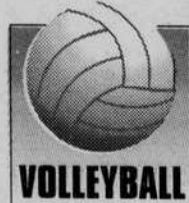
Carl Ferreira
head coach
Oregon volleyball

Tonight's contest against fourth-place Arizona State (15-8, 7-6) is one the Ducks know they can win.

“When we played [Arizona State] last time, we definitely didn't give our best performance, and that's frustrating because they are a very beatable team,” sophomore setter Sydney Chute said. “We need to go down there with our

heads up, ready to go out strong.”

En route to a 3-0 sweep of the Ducks at McArthur Court on Oct. 6, the Sun Devils outkilled Oregon 49-29, led by senior hitter Amanda Burbridge's 17 kills. Burbridge is second in the Pac-10 with 5.63 kills per game. The Sun Devils hold a six-match winning streak against the Ducks. Arizona State head coach Patti Snyder-Park, who is 20-3 all-time against Oregon, needs just one more victory to give her 100 conference wins in her

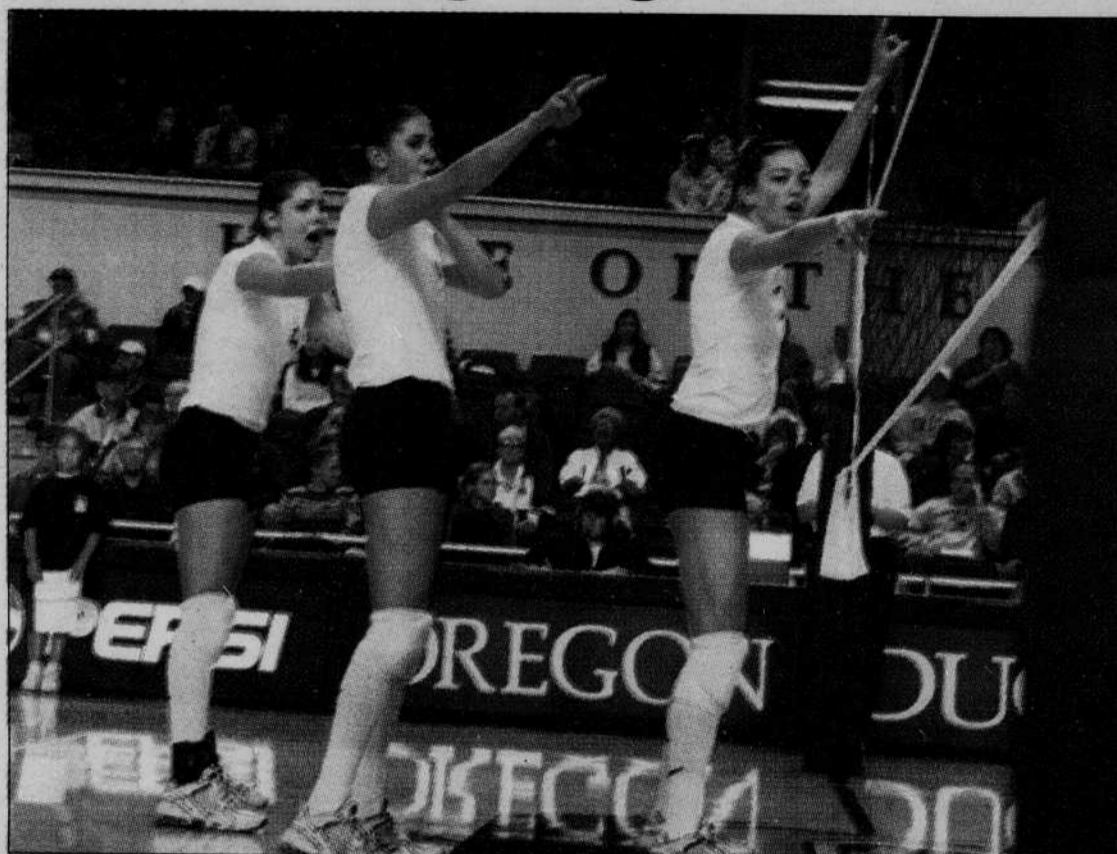


12-year career in Tempe. Only four other coaches have ever achieved that feat. Can the Ducks spoil the party plans?

“All we can do is give the best we've got,” said senior Halie Mazza, who is in the conference's top-10 with a .315 hitting percentage. “In the Pac-10, playing these high-caliber teams gives us the opportunity to get some big wins. We just have to play hard and execute hard.”

The Arizona Wildcats have one of the fiercest combinations in the country: Marisa DaLee and Allison Napier. DaLee was named the conference's Player of the Week last week, and she leads the nation with a .458 attack percentage. In limited action, DaLee and Napier combined for 24 kills in a 3-0 decision against Oregon earlier this season.

Arizona swept No. 17 Stanford



Junior setter Julie Gerlach, junior hitter Monique Tobbagi and sophomore blocker Amanda Porter look to point the Ducks in the right direction this weekend as they travel to No. 4 Arizona and Arizona State.

Dan Brunell Emerald

and California last week for the first time in school history.

“In the past we have been a team on the way up,” Napier told the Arizona Daily Wildcat. “Now we are on top, and we have higher expectations than sweeping Cal and Stanford. It is nice to have swept them, but it really does not fire us up.”

As a team, the Wildcats — who

are ranked third according to Volleyball Magazine — share the Pac-10 lead with a 12-1 conference record (19-2 overall). Arizona leads the conference in three major categories: kills, assists and attack percentage.

“Against these top teams, you have to give yourself an opportunity to win,” Oregon head coach Carl

Ferreira said. “You have to take a punch and ask yourself, ‘What are you made of?’ Because good teams make it hard to execute, and we need to be as good as Oregon can be on both sides of the ball.”

With six conference matches remaining, winning in the home of one of the nation's best would surely fire up the Ducks.

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