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UO drops final matches of the year

■ The Ducks fall twice in New Mexico to end the season at 10-19 — the best since 1996

By Adam Jude
 Oregon Daily Emerald

Consecutive losses in Las Cruces, N.M., finished off an improving, yet still disappointing season for the Oregon volleyball squad.

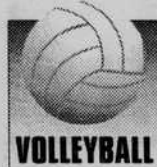
The expectations of a breakthrough year under first-year head coach Carl Ferreira officially came to an end during Thanksgiving weekend. The Ducks' 10-19 record, though, is the school's best since the 1996 team was 11-20.

Despite crushing New Mexico State and Texas-El Paso in the first games of both matches, the Ducks could not hold off their opponents

and fell in both cases at the Hilton Classic.

On Saturday, Oregon opened the match with a 15-2 win against UTEP, but was plagued by errors throughout the contest to allow the Miners to come-from-behind and win the final three games.

After narrowly losing games two (12-15) and three (14-16), Oregon committed 11 errors in the fourth set to end their season with a 3-1 loss.



Junior Monique Tobbagi paced the Ducks with 19 kills, eight digs and four service aces. In her final match for Oregon, senior Halie Mazza recorded a double-double (17 kills, 10 digs) and

led the team with four blocks.

Sophomore setter Sydney Chute just missed her second consecutive triple-double with eight kills, 27 assists and 13 digs.

As a team, Oregon tallied a .215 hitting percentage, but were out-killed (72-65) and outblocked (18-12). The Ducks also recorded 11 service aces.

Friday's match against the host school would have belonged to the Ducks — if it were played on paper.

Oregon posted a better hitting percentage — .210 to .113 — and had more kills, assists, digs and blocks than New Mexico State.

But Oregon ended up losing the five-game thriller.

After an easy 15-1 victory in game one, the Ducks found them-

selves down 2-1 heading into game four. A 15-8 win forced the Aggies into a deciding fifth game on their home floor.

And the 404 fans helped their team pull out the victory, 15-13.

With 10 kills, 30 assists and 12 digs, Chute had her second triple-double of the year.

Mazza (15 kills, seven digs, seven blocks) and Tobbagi (13 kills, 17 digs, four blocks) again led the Ducks, posting .375 and .333 attack percentages, respectively.

Senior Amy Banducci finished her career with a double-double — 12 kills and 11 digs.

The Aggies (14-17 overall) defeated UTEP on Saturday to win the Hilton Classic Championship.

Chargers finally earn first win of the season

By Bernie Wilson
 The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The San Diego Chargers won't go 0-for-2000 after all.

"This gets us out of the history books," a relieved coach Mike Riley said after the Chargers beat Kansas City 17-16 Sunday, stopping their season-opening losing streak at 11.

The Chargers were spared a dirty dozen losses, thanks to John Carney's 52-yard field goal with 2:14 left.

San Diego's defense then went all-out as Kansas City got one last shot behind an ineffective Warren Moon, who turned 44 eight days earlier. Safety Michael Dumas raced in and sacked Moon on third down, then punched his fists into the air.

After Moon's fourth-down pass sailed incomplete with 1:10 to play, linebacker Junior Seau fell to his knees at midfield and stayed there for an extra moment, relieved that the ugliness that made the Chargers a national joke was finally over.

The Chargers are no longer in danger of becoming the first NFL team to go 0-16.

Still, all that losing was taking its toll.

"When you're putting your kids to bed and their prayer at night is 'God, please let daddy win, sometime,' you know it's getting bad," said Seau, a father of three.

Walking off the field, Ryan Leaf threw the game ball into the crowd, one of his better passes all day. Leaf threw two touchdown passes to tight end Freddie Jones in the first half, but he was intercepted twice in the second half when both offenses were awful.

The Chargers tried to give it away by committing five turnovers, but it came down to Carney, a 14-year veteran who earlier this season became the first player in team history to score 1,000 points.

Carney kicked the ball straight through the uprights, then jumped up and down and leapt into the

arms of holder Darren Bennett. He then went around and head-butted his blockers.

"It felt pretty good coming off my foot," Carney said. "But that doesn't mean that they always go through when they feel like that. I watched this one until it did."

"This has been a tough time for all of us. It feels great to get into the win column."

With Moon making just his second start in two years, the Chiefs (5-7) lost their fourth straight game. Moon started in place of Elvis Grbac, who has a sore right index finger.

Coincidentally, San Diego also beat Kansas City in 1975 after starting 0-11.

"It's tough to keep our heads up, losing four in a row and then coming out here to San Diego and losing to a team that hasn't won a game all year," cornerback Eric Warfield said.

The Chargers seemed to be just minutes away from setting the team record for consecutive losses at 12, which also would have been the worst NFL start since Indianapolis went 0-13 in 1986.

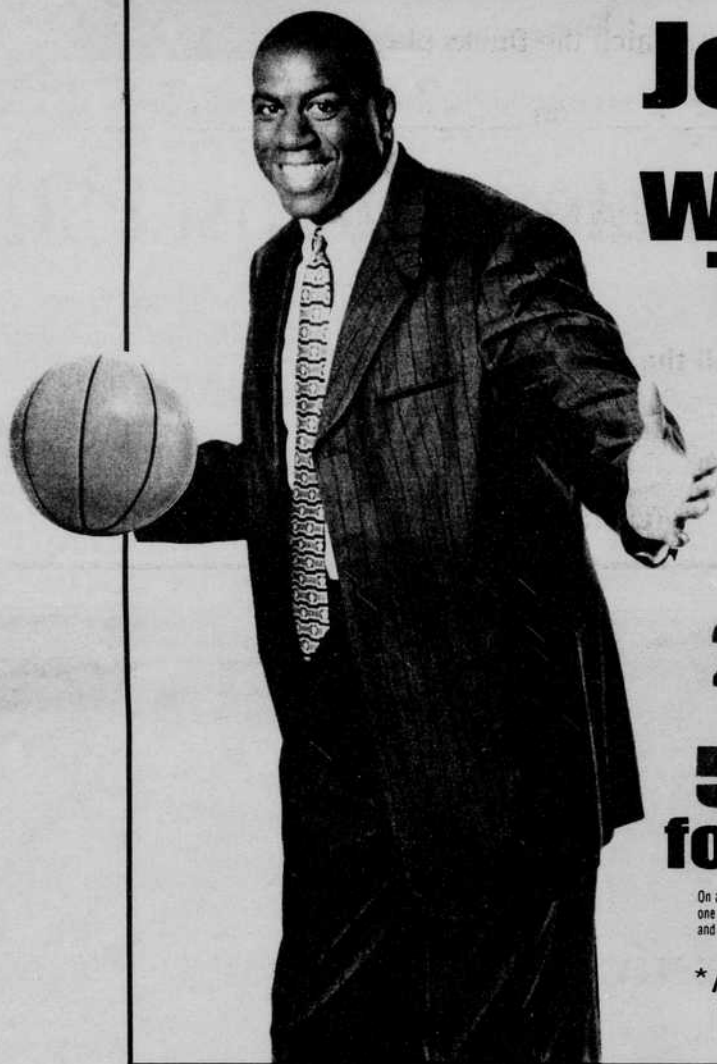
But Nate Jacquet returned a punt 35 yards to the Kansas City 36 to set up Carney's kick for a fourth-quarter lead that held. During their losing streak, the Chargers had blown late fourth-quarter leads six times.

"We know how to win," defensive tackle John Parrella said. "We just had forgotten how to knock people out."

Leaf gave the Chargers a 14-6 halftime lead with touchdown passes of 20 and 7 yards to Jones on consecutive drives.

But on the second play of the second half, linebacker Marcus Patton intercepted Leaf and returned it 24 yards for a touchdown to pull the Chiefs to 14-13. It was the second time Leaf has had an interception returned for a touchdown this season.

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