

Women's

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the Ducks with 13.7 points per game. "I think Texas plays a lot quicker game than us."

Oregon was hampered by foul troubles, with Texas converting 22 of 25 from the line, while Oregon could only muster a 9-for-19 performance from the charity stripe.

"Texas is a good team," senior center Jenny Mowe said. "They didn't get the respect they deserved in the preseason, but they were ready for us, and we came out flat."

Four nights later, in Lubbock, Texas, the Ducks looked to get back on the winning track and spoil No. 11 Texas Tech's 34-game home winning streak. The wins continued for Texas Tech, as Oregon lost a hard-fought battle in overtime, 79-75.

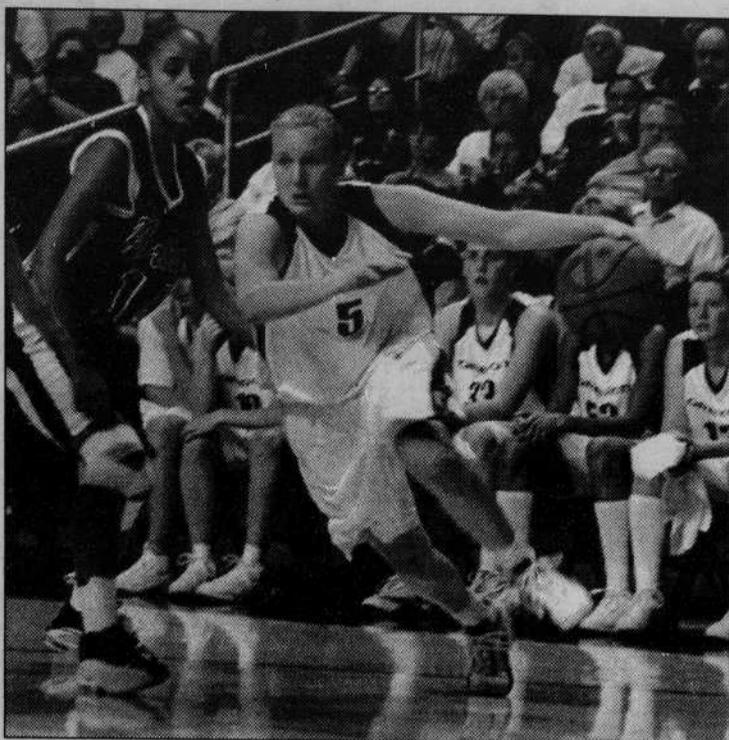
The Ducks had a season-high 32 turnovers in front of 12,822 fans at the United Spirit Arena, including five in the five-minute overtime session.

Dec. 16 was another disappointing day for the Ducks, as Utah forced Oregon to commit 21 turnovers. Utah held Wolverton to zero points in just eight minutes, while the Ducks shot a season low 35 percent from the floor.

"We didn't shoot the ball well," Runge said. "We didn't hit open outside shots. Utah had a great game plan and executed it well. We have been very lethargic."

Senior forward Brienne Meharry sprained her left ankle against the Utes and missed Oregon's next two games.

The one-week falter was Oregon's first three-game slide since the 1995-96 season.



Laura Smit Emerald

Sophomore Kourtney Shreve is averaging 7.0 points and 1.8 rebounds per game.

"It was a long road trip," said Mowe, who is pacing Oregon with a .589 field goal percentage and 5.6 rebounds per game. "We had to step back after that and figure out what our goals are for this year. And that definitely helped us refocus."

Rest and refocus proved wonders for the lingering Ducks, who went on to win their final two games in December, and their first two to open the year 2001. In its final tune-up before the Pac-10 opener, Oregon demolished Boise State 67-29 — the lowest point total Oregon has ever held an opponent.

Additionally, Oregon won its Pac-10 opener at Oregon State last week, 71-67 (although it was the closest Civil War in four years.) Meharry made her return against the Beavers and led the Ducks

with 24 points.

Now, the Ducks seem to be back on track, and back up to the 20th spot in the polls. They know that some people may have doubts about them due to their December losing streak, but the Ducks don't mind.

Oregon knows what it can do and is poised and ready to battle California (4-8, 0-2) and Stanford (7-5, 1-1) at McArthur Court this week in two big Pac-10 games.

And, as the story goes, the Ducks are nearly unbeatable at home under Runge, who has compiled an impressive 81-17 record in her eight years at The Pit.

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Wrestling

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impressed the national pollsters. The Ducks placed sixth at the Reno Tournament of Champions, placing four wrestlers. Webb continued his tear in recent matches, earning three wins en route to Oregon's only finals appearance.

Junior's Shaun Williams and Eugene Harris each placed third at 125 and 157 pounds, respectively.

Oregon faced stiffer competition the week after Christmas at the Midlands tournament in Evanston, Ill. Although only three Ducks placed, their points were good enough for 10th place out of 53 teams.

Sonnen led the Oregon contingent, placing third while knocking off a ranked opponent from Iowa State.

"Chael wrestled very consistent and very controlled," Kearney said. "I'm pleased with how he wrestled and his loss came to a defending national champion."

The matches that may have taught Oregon players the most, however, were the three losses they sustained earlier this month.

Oklahoma, Oklahoma State and Iowa — three of the greatest wrestling powerhouses in the nation, who between them have won 60 of the last 73 NCAA titles — were all on the Oregon schedule within a period of five days.

"We scheduled tough opponents so we could compete against the best wrestlers," Kearney said. "When you wrestle against top teams, you need to finish matches and fight through tough situations."

On Jan. 2, Oregon put up a tough fight against No. 6 Oklahoma, but dug themselves too deep a hole. After falling behind 24-0, Lee sparked a valiant comeback with a technical fall over the Sooners' Nick Curcio. Sonnen, Webb, Williams and sophomore Brian Watson followed with wins but it was too little, too late. Final score: Oklahoma 24, Oregon 21 in Norman, Okla.

The next day Oregon traveled 82 miles up I-35 to face No. 2 Oklahoma State in Stillwater. The road-weary Ducks ran out of gas against the Cowboys, who fielded

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Chuck Kearney
Head coach

nine ranked wrestlers to Oregon's five.

Williams won a 9-7 overtime nailbiter over Oklahoma State's Matt Brown for the Ducks lone score. Final score: Oklahoma State 33, Oregon 3.

Oregon faces easier times ahead with mostly in-state matches for the rest of the season. The Ducks will travel to Portland on Friday for the Oregon Classic Duals, where they will face four teams in one day.

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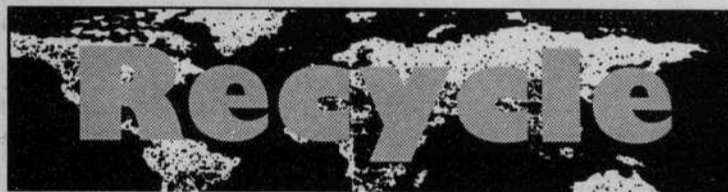
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