

2 Oklahoma State players die in crash

By Nick Wadhams
The Associated Press

BYERS, Colo. — Two Oklahoma State basketball players and six staffers and broadcasters associated with the team were killed when their plane crashed in a snowstorm Saturday while returning from a game in Colorado.

All 10 people aboard died, officials said. The plane, one of three chartered by the school, crashed about 40 miles east of Denver after taking off from Jefferson County Airport.

"There's luggage and parts of seats and pieces of clothing. Everything that would be on an airplane was scattered and shattered," police Sgt. Craig Coleman said. "It is very

gruesome."

Wreckage was strewn over about a quarter of a mile. A team of National Transportation Safety Board investigators was to arrive Sunday.

The school said the 10 people killed were: Oklahoma State players Nate Fleming and Dan Lawson, sports information employee Will Hancock, director of basketball operations Pat Noyes, trainer Brian Luinstra, student manager Jared Weiberg, broadcast engineer Kendall Durfey, broadcaster Bill Teegins, pilot Denver Mills and co-pilot Bjorn Falstrom.

"The players are handling this with each other and obviously are grieving very deeply," Oklahoma State sports information director

Steve Buzzard said during a news conference in Stillwater.

Buzzard said coach Eddie Sutton called the families of those who died.

Big 12 officials were to meet Sunday to discuss whether to postpone Oklahoma State's Tuesday night game at Texas Tech. Weiberg was the nephew of Big 12 commissioner Kevin Weiberg.

"This is indeed a very sad day for Oklahoma State University," school president James Halligan said.

The Beechcraft King Air 200 C-pass, which seats 11 passengers, crashed at about 5:35 p.m., said Jerry Snyder, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration.

"All we heard was a real loud en-

gine sound. It sounded like a shrill noise. Then I saw a big fireball," said Larry Pearson, a dairy farmer who was working outside when the plane crashed.

Pearson, who was about a quarter mile from the plane when it crashed, said he called 911 and cut a fence so emergency vehicles could reach the crash site.

The King Air 200 turboprop would be "less prone to get above the weather" than the other two planes the team chartered, which were corporate jets, Stillwater airport manager Gary Johnson said.

NTSB investigator Arnold Scott said no flight-data recorders were found Saturday night.

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the floor, while the Ducks hit nearly 36 percent of their shots.

"Our defense really stepped it

up in the second half, and they couldn't get any open looks," junior guard Jamie Craighead said.

Taking care of the ball has been a problem for Oregon recently. Following a 25-turnover performance Thursday, the Ducks handed over

another 23 to UCLA on Saturday.

But the freebies were falling Saturday. After a woeful 16-for-32 performance at the free-throw line against USC, the Ducks shot 74 percent at the charity stripe (14-for-19) Saturday.

"Hopefully, we're only going up from here," said Meharry, who had a game-high nine rebounds while adding eight points.

"I think we're on the right track ... and tonight could be the turning point."

Pez Sez

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sey Dion walked into Mac Court's media room, bowed her head and told reporters that she didn't have confidence in herself when she missed three late-game shots.

Ducks head coach Jody Runge knew there was a problem coming into Saturday's matchup, comparing her team's current funk to a three-game road losing skid during the nonconference schedule.

But they've said it all season, and they showed it on Saturday: You can't keep a good Duck down.

Not point guard Kourtney

Shreve, who was the straw in breaking UCLA's back before leaving the game in the second half with a mild concussion.

Not center Jenny Mowe, who grabbed seven rebounds and blocked three shots while clogging up the Bruins' inside offense. Or freshman forward Cathrine Kraayeveld, who overshadowed poor shooting by getting six boards and initiating defensive stops and UCLA turnovers.

Senior forward Angelina Wolvert, playing for the first time since injuring her left knee against Washington Jan. 18, returned to the lineup earlier than anyone predicted.

"I think we're going to be fine,"

said Wolvert, who quietly recorded seven points, three rebounds and a steal in 17 minutes. "A couple people had to work on their confidence, and I think they came back just fine."

Runge said Wolvert's presence was a shot in the arm for the lately lethargic Ducks.

"It's very important emotionally for this team that she's back on the floor and back on the mend," Runge said.

Oregon's character will be put to the test again next Thursday. The Ducks take on Arizona, then Arizona State on Saturday, in what Runge said will be the toughest road trip of the season.

The regrouping Ducks say they

are ready.

"We're looking forward to the challenge," Wolvert said. "We need something to fire us up and I think this trip is going to do it."

Fittingly, Oregon was struggling with its confidence toward the end of last season after losing at home to USC, when it traveled to the desert to take on the Arizona schools.

The result was a thrilling victory over the Wildcats — one of the craziest comeback wins in Oregon women's basketball history — and an eventual, outright Pac-10 title.

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