

Ragland on a roll as Oregon State eyes tournament

■ OSU's Felicia Ragland has brought her team to the brink of an at-large NCAA berth

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

When Oregon State comes to McArthur Court Saturday, the Oregon women's basketball team's much-improved guards will face a superior test of skill.

Beaver guard Felicia Ragland will enter the game as the Pacific-10 Conference Women's Basketball Player of the Week.

Ragland, from Tulare, Calif., averaged 22 points and 8.5 rebounds last weekend as Oregon State swept the Arizona schools, a feat shared by the Ducks.

However, no one Duck can lay claim to the same monstrous numbers that Ragland collected against Arizona State: a career-high 32 points, a game-high nine rebounds — including her 500th career board — and 6-for-7 shooting from behind the three-point line.

"We were really excited to play the No. 1 team in the Pac-10," Ragland told the Associated Press after Saturday's ASU game. "It was our time to show that we are the No. 1 team in the pack, and we came out and did that."

This is Ragland's first Player of the Week honor, and that's almost hard to believe.

The junior guard leads the Pac-10 in scoring with 19.8 points per game, and is averaging 21.8 points per outing in conference play. Her Beavers have won five straight games.

Beaver head coach Judy Spoelstra credits much of Oregon State's success to Ragland.

"We've been able to prove that

we're just not all about Felicia Ragland, but this is where Felicia has taken this team," Spoelstra said. "It's just taken time for our other players to emulate her work, her mental toughness.

"I think the NCAA is a definite possibility. I don't know how the committee can't look at Oregon State. We're the hottest team in the conference right now."

Oregon forward Angelina Wolvert was nominated for Player of the Week honors.

Third is better than sixth

Not long ago, it seemed that Oregon was buried in the conference standings with almost no chance of making the NCAA Tournament.

Amazing how so soon, things can change.

While an NCAA berth remains at a distance, Oregon can finish as high as third place in the Pacific-10 Conference when the season ends this weekend.

A third-place finish is somewhat unlikely, but it would happen if the Ducks beat the Beavers and Stanford drops a pair of games in the desert to the Arizona schools. Such a finish would leave the Ducks and Cardinal tied for third.

Better for Oregon would be if Arizona lost to California, which would prevent a three-way tie for third between Oregon, Stanford and the Wildcats. Arizona and Cal are currently tied for fifth.

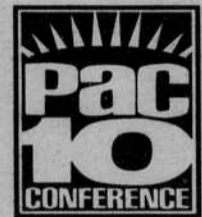
But Duck players said they are less focused on the standings and more focused on the upcoming Civil War.

"We think of all the different scenarios that could happen, but we really have nothing to lose," senior forward Brianna Meharry said after Oregon's win against Arizona Saturday. "[Oregon State] is our last game, we want to enjoy playing basketball, enjoy being at Mac Court for the first time. I think that's what we'll focus on."

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