

SPORTS

Monday

Best Bet

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It's all over: Ducks drop out in first round

■ Oregon's overtime loss to Iowa is symbolic of its tumultuous season

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

SALT LAKE CITY — In 45 up-and-down minutes, Saturday's Oregon-Iowa women's basketball game summed up the Ducks' season.

There were highs, lows, comebacks and a whole lot in between.

Iowa's thrilling 89-82 overtime victory over Oregon in the first round of the NCAA Tournament was a fitting way to end the Ducks' year, one of the most turbulent in school history.

Oregon found itself down in both Saturday's game and throughout its season, but was able to come back in both situations, to no avail.

When the Ducks dug themselves a 15-point hole midway through the second half, they responded with a 15-4 run to put themselves back in the game. Much like they did when they were losers of eight of 10 games during the regular season and responded by winning their final four games to reach the NCAA Tournament.

"We just said in a timeout that we weren't going to go out like that and we're a much better team," senior forward Lindsey Dion said. "We played our hearts out."

The game that had eight lead changes and three ties reflected on Oregon's streaky, up-and-down season in which the Ducks had winning streaks of seven, four and four more along with losing streaks of five, three and two.

During Oregon's bleakest moments in both Saturday's game and in the regular season, the Ducks looked to be on the brink of disaster. Seniors Angelina Wolvert and Jenny Mowe were both playing with four fouls in the second half, while fellow senior Brianne Meharry already had fouled out. Junior sharp-shooter Jamie Craighead was ice cold from the field, with her team desperately needing one of her trademark three-pointers.

The wheels were falling off of Oregon's big green machine faster than they were in late February, when tensions between head coach Jody Runge and Duck players reached an all-time high.

But Oregon battled back. Just like the Ducks did when Runge and her frustrated players set aside their differences and focused on earning their eighth straight NCAA Tournament bid.

"When [the Ducks] were down 60-45 and they came back like that, it doesn't look like a team that has adversity on its side," Iowa coach Lisa Bluder said.

In the overtime period of Saturday's first-round game, Wolvert and Mowe committed zero fouls, and Craighead connected on two key three-pointers to keep Oregon's hopes alive, but it just wasn't enough.

Iowa's seven-point margin over the Ducks at the end of the overtime period is deceptively



Oregon's Angelina Wolvert (40) battles past Iowa's defense to score two of her team-high 18 points.

■ The careers of five Oregon seniors come to a dramatic finish in the 89-82 overtime loss to Iowa

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

SALT LAKE CITY — Trailing by 15 points in its NCAA Tournament matchup against Iowa, the Oregon women's basketball team called for a timeout with 11 minutes left to play.

The Ducks told each other they'd get back into the game. Their five seniors didn't want to end their careers by being blown out.

Oregon did rally, staging a heart-pounding 29-11 run en route to a 74-71 lead with 21 seconds left to play. The small contingent of Duck fans among the 3,119 in attendance was on its feet, cheering and stomping, and it seemed that Oregon's seniors might have lived to dance another day.

But as quickly as the Ducks came back, their season came to a painful end.

Hawkeye guard Lindsey Meder's three-pointer with 12 seconds left sent the game into overtime, and fourth-seeded Iowa scored six unanswered points at the start of the extra period to beat Oregon, 89-82, in the first round of Midwest Regional action.

"I feel like our kids never gave up and kept fighting," head coach Jody Runge said. "We just didn't get enough open looks."

The game's dramatic finish — reminiscent of last season's one-point overtime loss to UAB in the Tournament's first round — was a harsh reality for Oregon's seniors to swallow.

The disappointment was obvious in senior forward Lindsey Dion's solemn expression and teary eyes.

"Nobody expected us to do anything, except ourselves," said Dion, her voice shaking with emotion. "I'm glad we didn't fold up our tents when we were down by 15 in the second half."

"It would have been better to end it on a win," said senior center Jenny Mowe, who tried to be cheerful with reporters after the game. "You can play pretty well and still feel bad when you lose a game."

The game even took its toll on often-outspoken Angelina Wolvert, who struggled to describe her feelings.

"It's a different kind of loss than we've had before," Wolvert said. "We've lost by buzzer beaters, we've lost by three-point shots, whatever — but we haven't lost by a significant amount."

The 13th-seeded Ducks failed to advance past the second round for the eighth straight season.

Oregon didn't go down without some heroic efforts, though. Along with two blocks, Wolvert notched team-highs with 18 points and 13 rebounds. Mowe scored 17 points,

Turn to Analysis, page 18

Turn to Tournament, page 18

Oregon wrestlers struggle in season-ending NCAAs

■ The Ducks' season comes to a close as none of their individuals advance to championship competition

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

It was a quiet end to an impressive season.

The Oregon wrestling team sent seven wrestlers to Iowa City, Iowa, for the NCAA Championships, but not a single one was around for Saturday's final round.

The 17th-ranked Ducks' year ended Friday when four wrestlers dropped consolation wrestling matches in front of a crowd of

12,960 at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. "We're obviously disappointed," Oregon head coach Chuck Kearney said.



Oregon had high hopes for its individuals, especially for senior All-American Doug Lee. Lee entered the 184-pound bracket as a sixth seed and had a legitimate chance to compete

for the coveted national championship.

Lee won his first match Thursday but dropped his second and was sent to the wrestlingback bracket. He still had a chance to salvage his tournament with a strong showing Friday, but was upset by unseeded Kyle Hanson of Northern Iowa, 13-10.

What made the loss all the more frustrating for Lee was that he had taken a 4-1 lead to open the match. Hanson then came back and had the score knotted at seven before he could secure the victory in the third period with a series of take-

downs and escapes.

"Doug had an outstanding season and career, and we hate to see him end his career this way," Kearney said.

Oregon did have one winner Friday. Junior Eugene Harris captured a wire-to-wire 9-5 victory against Shaun Shapert of Edinboro. Harris jumped out to a 5-1 advantage after the first period and never looked back.

Harris' season ended in his next match, though, as he dropped a 5-3 decision to Boise State's Kirk White.

Oregon junior Shaun Williams

and freshman Luke Larwin also ended their respective seasons with defeats on Friday. Williams lost to Penn State's Josh Moore by a count of 10-3, while Larwin took his lumps against 11th-seeded Ben Boozer of Edinboro in a 17-0 defeat.

Despite some of the lopsided scores, Kearney took some positives out of the matches because he knows the experience of NCAA Tournament competition will pay dividends down the line.

"Our returners have now seen what it takes to compete at this level," Kearney said.