

SPORTS

Wednesday

Best Bet

NBA Playoffs: Milwaukee at Charlotte
5 p.m., TNT

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Struggling Duck softball plans to fight to the end

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“Winning isn't everything — it's the only thing.”
So went the famous line from legendary football coach Vince Lombardi's mouth.

Well, when it comes to the 2001 Oregon softball team, winning has become as scarce as scoring a run off of Boston's ace hurler Pedro Martinez and his 1.45 earned run average.

The Ducks currently sit at the bottom of the Pacific-10 Conference with a 1-17 league record, 15 games behind league-leading Arizona. One and 17, folks. That's the kind of record that will eat at you from the inside out and build up some serious frustration.

Of course, Oregon does compete in the best conference in the nation, with seven teams being ranked in the top 14, including No. 1 Arizona, No. 2 UCLA and No. 4 Stanford. But still, going out to the ballpark day-in and day-out and not winning can really wear on a team.

Losing to top-ranked teams is one thing, but Oregon definitely felt the sting from being swept on the road by Portland State in a doubleheader April 3.

With that in mind, the Ducks hosted those same Vikings Wednesday at Howe Field in another doubleheader, hoping to extract some revenge and also some much-needed wins. In the first game, though, Oregon couldn't hold on to its 2-0 lead and lost, 4-2 — and all four PSU runs were unearned.

After the tough defeat, you weren't sure what kind of Ducks team would show up in game two. Would it be a lethargic bunch who would just go through the motions? Or would it be a pride-filled team that would recognize it is better than its opponent?

The answer came immediately.

Oregon's Lisa Wangler saved a base hit in the first inning with an all-out diving catch in center, and then the Ducks' bats got rolling in the bottom of the inning, scoring three runs.

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Jon House Emerald

Senior first baseman Triawn Custer and the Ducks battled back from a game one loss to shut out the visiting Vikings in game two Wednesday.

Ducks split in rematch with PSU

■ Connie McMurren's struggles end in the circle as the Ducks win 7-0 in the second game of a doubleheader against PSU

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

The day opened with another tragic display, anchored by a dismal four errors and a late letdown in a 4-2 loss.

But after a 20-minute break, the Oregon softball team began the second half of its day against Portland State with a newfound resilience, smashing out 11 hits en route to a 7-0 win in game two of a doubleheader at Howe Field Wednesday.

Sophomore second baseman Alyssa Laux, Oregon's No. 3 hitter, tripled with one out in the bottom of the first to score Lynsey Haij and give the Ducks an early lead in game two.

Laux scored on the next pitch when sophomore Andrea Vidlund laid down a squeeze bunt and reached first on an error. Two batters later, Amber Hutchison's single scored Vidlund, giving the Ducks a 3-0 lead.

From then on, it was all Connie McMurren.

The junior ace — who has struggled all season to find her rhythm — no-hit Portland State through 3 1/3 innings and finished the game with a five-hit shutout, her first win since March 10. She improved to 9-17 on the year.

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Junior Billy Pappas is ranked second among returning Pac-10 decathletes. He placed fourth at the Pac-10s last season.

A family affair

■ The Pappas family has produced many successful decathletes in recent years, including Oregon's Billy Pappas

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

It's not uncommon to see the name "Pappas" in track and field record books.

For the past decade, one of three Pappas brothers has competed in multi-events at either Oregon, nearby Lane Community College or at tiny Glendale High School in southern Oregon.

Oregon junior decathlete Billy Pappas is the youngest of the three, and he has a lot to look up to. Middle brother Tommy, who placed fifth at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, owns the collegiate national record in the decathlon with 8,463 points. The eldest Pappas,

Paul, was a four-year letter-winner for Oregon from 1994 through 1997 and now ranks ninth on the all-time school record list with 7,303 points.

Together, the three own the unofficial sibling point record for three brothers in the world.

Billy is living up to the reputation set by his older brothers as Oregon's No. 2 decathlete and an NCAA provisional qualifier last season. The youngest Pappas hopes to clinch a trip to the NCAA Championships this weekend at the Pacific-10 Conference meet in Berkeley, Calif.



PAPPAS

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