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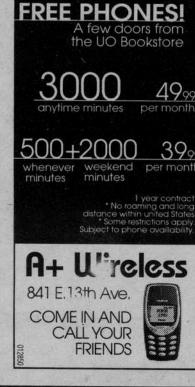
Ducks lose to Stanford, 3-1

The Oregon volleyball squad loses to Stanford in four, but not before taking a game from one of the best in the country

By Hank Hager Oregon Daily Emerald

If only for a few moments, the Oregon volleyball team switched places with the No. 4 team in the country Friday.

But it didn't last, as the Oregon women lost a tough four-game (30-25, 29-31, 30-13, 30-18) match to the Stanford Cardinal (20-2 overall, 12-1 Pacific-10 Conference) at McArthur Court.



A record crowd of 1,863 saw the Ducks fall behind early in the second game, 12-11, only to come back strong and with authority. At 16-14, the Ducks (8-16, 0-13) took the lead for good on a kill by senior Monique Tobbagi.

It was anything but smooth sailing for Oregon the rest of the way.

A kill by All-Pac-10 player and former Olympian Logan Tom evened the game at 22, but her service error and an emphatic kill by junior Lindsay Closs put the Ducks back ahead at 24-22. A virtual tug-of-war took place until Stanford pulled even once again at 29 when Tom produced another of her 17 kills.

But that would be the end for the Cardinal. Closs again came up strong for the Ducks with one of her five blocks in the match. With game two and a vital piece of momentum on the line, sophomore Lindsay Murphy came up with her last and most important service ace of the match. At 31-29, the Ducks had won a game against one of the top teams in the country.

"We were stoked," Closs said.
"We had just beaten the No. 4 team
in the nation. We just played our
butts off. It was exciting."

Closs led the Ducks, both mentally and physically, in their one-game win. She accounted for six of the first seven Duck points in the game, including three kills and three blocks. She filled in with vigor in place of junior Stephanie Martin, who sat out her first match of the season due to a leg injury suffered against California on Thursday.

Also coming up big for the Ducks was Tobbagi, who finished with 18 kills in the match.

"It feels really good to play

against the No. 4 team in the nation when you're not having the greatest season record-wise," she said. "I don't think you'll find another team in this nation that's as resilient as us. We work hard every day, and if you came in and watched us at practice, you'd think we were 13-0 instead of 0-13."

In games three and four, the Ducks again looked flat against the dominating Stanford offense. In game three, the Cardinal had runs of five and seven points, respectively. Freshman Ogonna Nnamani led Stanford in both games, coming out of the shell she had been in during the first two games. Nnamani had a match-high 20 kills and an amazing .594 hitting percentage on the night.

Despite the Ducks' inability to maintain the same confidence and momentum in the last two games, most felt the night was an overwhelming success for the team.

"You wonder where all the resiliency comes from," head coach Carl Ferreira said. "It says a lot about the players who are involved in this program."

Tobbagi led the Ducks in kills with 18, while Closs backed her up with 10. Redshirt sophomore Heather Gilmore also came in and provided a spark for Oregon, pestering the Cardinal for nine kills and seven digs.

"I thought we gave it our all," freshman Lauren Westendorf said, who also came in with five kills. "We gave everything we had on the court and gave Stanford a run for their money. It's just a great feeling that we had the performance we did tonight."

Hank Hager is a sports reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. He can be reached at hankhager@daily emerald.com.

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